

11.2.1**Lesson 16****Introduction**

In this lesson, students reread and briefly analyze the epigraph to “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” from *The Souls of Black Folk* (from “O water, voice of my heart, crying in the sand” through “water all night long is crying to me”). The epigraph is “The Crying of Water,” a poem by Arthur Symons that describes the experience of a speaker listening to the sea. Students identify and explore related or similar ideas and images in Symons’s poem and “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” in their analysis of how the poem contributes to the overall meaning and tone of the text.

After analyzing the poem, students revisit the text as a whole and work in groups to analyze how Du Bois uses figurative language or rhetoric to develop a central idea in the text. Student learning is assessed via the Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool at the end of the lesson. This work directly prepares students for the Mid-Unit Assessment in the following lesson, in which students write a multi-paragraph response analyzing how Du Bois uses rhetoric or figurative language to develop a central idea in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings.”

For homework, students organize and expand their notes and add to their Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tools in preparation for the Mid-Unit Assessment in the next lesson.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.11-12.2	Determine two or more central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to provide a complex analysis; provide an objective summary of the text.
RI.11-12.6	Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.

Addressed Standard(s)	
W.11-12.9.b	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>b. Apply <i>grades 11–12 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., <i>The Federalist</i>, presidential addresses]”).</p>
SL.11-12.1	<p>Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues</i>, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.</p>
L.11-12.4.a, b	<p>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 11–12 reading and content</i>, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</p> <p>a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</p> <p>b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., <i>conceive, conception, conceivable</i>).</p>

Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>Student learning is assessed via the Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool at the end of the lesson. Students identify two central ideas and analyze how rhetoric or figurative language contributes to the development of these central ideas.</p>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a central idea in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” (e.g., self-consciousness). Identify at least two examples of rhetoric or figurative language that Du Bois uses to develop this idea (e.g., “He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world” (par. 4) and “If, however, the vistas disclosed as yet no goal, no resting place, little but flattery and criticism, the journey at least gave leisure for reflection and self-examination; it changed the child of Emancipation to the youth with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect” (par. 9).).

- Analyze how these examples develop the central idea (e.g., Du Bois uses the image of “bleach[ing]” an African American “soul in a flood of white Americanism” to develop the idea that self-consciousness involves being true to one’s self by embracing and celebrating one’s own racial identity, rather than trying to mask or cover up one’s true self by assuming an identity other than one’s own. Du Bois uses the metaphor of a “child of Emancipation” growing into a “youth with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect” (par. 9) to develop the idea that education was a necessary step towards “self-consciousness” (par. 9) for African Americans, because it enabled them to gain more knowledge about themselves after Emancipation. Du Bois’s choice of the word *youth* rather than *adult* suggests that the search for self-consciousness is an ongoing process.).

① See the Model Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool for additional examples of High Performance Responses.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None.
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unresting (adj.) – characterized by trouble or uneasiness
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> None.

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RI.11-12.2, RI.11-12.6, W.11-12.9.b, SL.11-12.1, L.11-12.4.a-b Text: <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> by W.E.B. Du Bois, Chapter 1: “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” Epigraph 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Masterful Reading Reading and Discussion Group Text Analysis Activity and Assessment Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 10% 5% 25% 50% 5%

Materials

- Copies of the Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool for each student
- Student copies of the Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tool (refer to 11.2.1 Lesson 6)—students may need additional blank copies
- Student copies of the Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 11.2.1 Lesson 2)—students may need additional blank copies

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
►	Indicates student action(s).
💬	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
①	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standards for this lesson: RI.11-12.2 and RI.11-12.6. In this lesson, students return to the epigraph of “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” and reread and analyze Arthur Symons’s poem in relation to the rest of the chapter. Next, students analyze the entire chapter and discuss how Du Bois uses rhetoric or figurative language to develop central ideas in the text. This comprehensive chapter review prepares students for the Mid-Unit Assessment, which follows in the next lesson.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied a focus standard to their AIR texts. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson’s AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied their focus standard to their AIR texts.

- Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied a focus standard to their AIR texts from the previous lesson’s homework.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

5%

Have students listen to a masterful reading of the epigraph to “Of Our Spiritual Strivings,” a poem by Arthur Symons. Remind students that they read and discussed this poem in 11.2.1 Lesson 1. Explain to students that they are revisiting the epigraph now that they have read and analyzed the entire chapter.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

What is happening in the poem? Listen for verbs that describe what the speaker is doing. Listen for nouns that explain where the speaker is.

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

25%

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss.

Explain that the focus of rereading and analyzing the poem is to determine how the poem contributes to the overall meaning and tone of “Of Our Spiritual Strivings.”

- ① Consider instructing students to pay close attention to the use of figurative language when reading and analyzing poetry.
- ① Consider instructing students to refer to their notes and annotations to revisit their analysis of the epigraph and its tone in 11.2.1 Lesson 1.

Instruct student groups to reread Symons’s poem (from “O water, voice of my heart, crying in the sand” to “water all night long is crying to me”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle to comprehend the literal meaning of the poem, consider asking the following scaffolding question:

Who is the speaker in the poem? Where is the speaker? What is the speaker doing?

- 💬 Symons does not identify the speaker in the poem, but he reveals that the speaker is lying somewhere near a beach because he can hear the water “crying in the sand” (epigraph, line 1). The speaker listens to the water “all night long” (epigraph, lines 2, 6, 12).

Whom does the speaker address in the first stanza of the poem? Which details reveal whom the speaker addresses?

- The speaker addresses the water. The speaker begins the poem with “O Water” (epigraph, line 1). The speaker also asks the water a question, “Is it I? Is it I?” (epigraph, line 5), which shows that the speaker is talking to the water.

What is the meaning of *unresting* in the second stanza? Use the context and the word’s structure to infer the meaning.

- Symons writes “there shall never be rest” (epigraph, line 7), which provides context about what *unresting* means. The root *rest* describes a calm state and the prefix *un* means “not,” so *unresting* describes water that is not calm and is always moving or characterized by uneasiness.

① Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.11-12.4.a, b through the process of using context and word parts to make meaning of a word.

What is the impact of the word *never* (epigraph, line 7) on the tone of the poem? What other words and phrases from the stanza have a similar impact on the tone of the poem?

- The word *never* (epigraph, line 7) creates a sense of hopelessness and permanence. Other words such as *last* (epigraph, line 8), which is repeated twice, and other phrases such as “all life long” (epigraph, line 11) and “all night long” (epigraph, lines 2, 6, 12) further reveal the speaker’s sense of hopelessness or despair.

What is a central idea developed in the poem? How do specific details shape the central idea?

- Symons develops the central idea that striving or struggle is constant. The speaker listens to the water “all night long” (epigraph, lines 2, 6, 12), but still “cannot understand” (epigraph, line 3) the answer he is searching for. The speaker asks “Is it I?” (epigraph, line 5), but receives no answer. The speaker also reflects that “there shall never be rest” (epigraph, line 7) for the water, which he compares to “the voice of [his] heart.” This suggests that the restless water represents the speaker’s own inability to be at peace.

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct small groups to shift their focus to the relationship between the poem and the rest of “Of Our Spiritual Strivings.” Specifically, explain that students are going to analyze how Du Bois’s choice to begin his chapter with Symons’s poem contributes to the overall meaning and tone of the text.

Instruct student groups to answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

How do Symons’s metaphors and imagery relate to Du Bois’s figurative language in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”?

Student responses may include:

- Du Bois uses the metaphor of the “little boat on the mad waters of the world-sea” (par. 12) to describe the conflict that African Americans experience as they continue to search for true liberty. The image of “mad waters” (par. 12) that Du Bois uses to describe the current climate in America connects to the image of “unresting water” (epigraph, line 7) in Symons’s poem.
- The speaker in Symons’s poem describes a personal connection to the water when he says the water is the “voice of [his] heart” (epigraph, line 1). Du Bois expresses a similar connection to African Americans when he writes that his purpose is to describe the “striving in the souls” of African Americans with “loving emphasis” (par. 14).
- Du Bois describes African Americans as “turning hither and thither in hesitant and doubtful striving” after Emancipation because of “the contradiction of double aims” (par. 5) that makes them unsure about their identities. This description connects to the imagery of the restless and questioning speaker who “cannot understand” (epigraph, line 3) and cannot “rest” (epigraph, lines 5, 7) and constantly asks “is it I, is it I?” (epigraph, line 5).
- In paragraph 6, Du Bois describes how African Americans continue to experience the cruel legacy of slavery with the phrase “[i]n vain do we cry to this our vastest social problem:— ‘Take any shape but that’.” This image of crying out “in vain” (par. 6) connects to the image of the speaker “crying without avail” (epigraph, line 11) in Symons’s poem.
- The image of “the fire of the end” (epigraph, line 9) in Symons’s poem connects to the image of the “pillar of fire” that Du Bois uses to describe the ideal of education in paragraph 8.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider asking the following optional extension question to deepen students’ understanding:

What is the relationship between the tone of Symons’s poem and the tone of Du Bois’s writing in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”?

Student responses may include:

- Symons uses phrases like “crying without avail” (epigraph, line 11) to develop the poem’s sorrowful and conflicted tone. Du Bois develops a similar tone with phrases like “[i]n vain do we cry to this our vastest social problem” (par. 6).
- Symons uses phrases like “there shall never be rest” (epigraph, line 7) and “crying without avail” (epigraph, line 11) to develop a negative and hopeless tone. Du Bois, in contrast, develops a serious tone but includes some details that reveal his hope for progress. For example, Du Bois writes about “human opportunity” (par. 13) and his aspiration for “human

brotherhood,” or an America in which “two world-races may give each to each those characteristics both so sadly lack” (par. 12).

How is a central idea developed in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” related or similar to a central idea developed in Symons’s poem?

💬 Student responses may include:

- The central idea of constant striving or struggle in Symons’s poem is related to Du Bois’s central idea of true liberty. Du Bois describes the pursuit of liberty as a constant and exhausting “vain search for freedom, the boon that seemed ever barely to elude [African Americans’] grasp” (par. 9), and uses metaphors like the “steep and rugged” “mountain path to Canaan” (par. 9) to describe how African Americans struggled to attain their freedom. These descriptions develop the idea that the pursuit of liberty requires constant striving and little rest, just like the speaker experiences in Symons’s poem.
- The central idea of constant striving or struggle in Symons’s poem is related to Du Bois’s central idea of double-consciousness. Du Bois describes double-consciousness as the feeling of “two unreconciled strivings” (par. 3), and writes that “the history of the American Negro is the history of this strife,” (par. 4) which indicates that this struggle has been a constant reality for African Americans.
- The central idea of constant striving or struggle in Symons’s poem is related to Du Bois’s central idea of self-consciousness because Du Bois explains that the “spiritual striving” (par. 13) of African Americans, or their “strife” (par. 3), will come to an end once they achieve “true self-consciousness” (par. 3).

① Consider reminding students to use their Ideas Tracking Tools to recall central ideas developed in the text.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 5: Group Text Analysis Activity and Assessment

50%

Distribute copies of the Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool to all students. Instruct students to work in small groups to complete the Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool. Explain that although this is a collaborative activity, each student submits a copy of the tool as the assessment for this lesson.

Explain that this tool prepares students for the Mid-Unit Assessment in the next lesson. Post or project the Mid-Unit Assessment Prompt:

Identify a central idea in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” and analyze how Du Bois uses figurative language or rhetoric to develop this central idea.

- ▶ Students examine the prompt.

Encourage students to refer to the Rhetorical Impact Tracking Tools they completed throughout the unit to identify Du Bois's use of rhetoric and figurative language, and the Ideas Tracking Tools they completed throughout the unit to identify Du Bois's central ideas.

- ▶ Students listen.

Instruct small groups to spend the remainder of the lesson reviewing “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” to identify examples of how Du Bois uses rhetoric or figurative language to develop central ideas in the text.

- ▶ Students work in groups to complete the Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool.

① If students struggle to complete the Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool, consider modeling how to add a rhetoric example and a figurative language example to the tool. See Model Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool at the end of this lesson for examples.

Lead a whole-class discussion of students' work on their Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tools. Ask students to look at their responses from their tools and discuss the following question:

How do the examples of rhetoric or figurative language that you identified develop a central idea in the text?

- ☞ See Model Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool at the end of this lesson.

Remind students that they have the opportunity to continue to add to their Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tools for homework.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to organize, expand, and revise their notes from “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” to prepare for the Mid-Unit Assessment. Remind students to add to their Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tools from this lesson.

Remind students of the Mid-Unit Assessment Prompt:

Identify a central idea in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings” and analyze how Du Bois uses figurative language or rhetoric to develop this central idea.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Organize, expand, and revise your notes in preparation for the Mid-Unit Assessment. Remember to add to your Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool as you expand your notes.

Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
--------------	--	---------------	--	--------------	--

Directions: Identify two central ideas in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings.” Select at least two examples of rhetoric or figurative language that contribute to the development of these central ideas. For each example, write a brief statement explaining how the rhetoric or figurative language develops a central idea in the text.

Text:	“Of Our Spiritual Strivings” from <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> by W.E.B Du Bois
--------------	---

How does Du Bois use rhetoric or figurative language to develop a central idea in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”?

Central Idea	Example of Rhetoric or Figurative Language	How does this example develop the central idea?

Model Mid-Unit Assessment Evidence Collection Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
--------------	--	---------------	--	--------------	--

Directions: Identify two central ideas in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings.” Select at least two examples of rhetoric or figurative language that contribute to the development of these central ideas. For each example, write a brief statement explaining how the rhetoric or figurative language develops a central idea in the text.

Text:	“Of Our Spiritual Strivings” from <i>The Souls of Black Folk</i> by W.E.B Du Bois
--------------	---

How does Du Bois use rhetoric or figurative language to develop a central idea in “Of Our Spiritual Strivings”?

Central Idea	Example of Rhetoric or Figurative Language	How does this example develop the central idea?
Self-consciousness	“He would not bleach his Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for he knows that Negro blood has a message for the world.” (par. 4)	Du Bois uses this figurative language to develop the idea that self-consciousness involves being true to one’s self by embracing and celebrating one’s own identity, rather than trying to mask or cover up one’s true self by assuming the identity of someone else.
Self-consciousness	“If, however, the vistas disclosed as yet no goal, no resting place, little but flattery and criticism, the journey at least gave leisure for reflection and self-examination; it changed the child of Emancipation to the youth with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect.” (par. 9)	Du Bois uses the metaphor of a “child of Emancipation” growing into a “youth with dawning self-consciousness, self-realization, self-respect” (par. 9) to develop the idea that education was a necessary step towards “self-consciousness” (par. 9) for African Americans, because it allowed African Americans to gain more knowledge about themselves on their own terms after Emancipation.

Central Idea	Example of Rhetoric or Figurative Language	How does this example develop the central idea?
Self-consciousness (continued)		Du Bois's choice of the word "youth" rather than "adult" suggests that he believes that this process of development is ongoing.
The ideal of human brotherhood	"Will America be poorer if she replace her brutal dyspeptic blundering with light-hearted but determined Negro humility? or her coarse and cruel wit with loving jovial good-humor? or her vulgar music with the soul of the Sorrow songs?" (par. 12)	This series of rhetorical questions establishes strengths of African Americans and contrasts these with weaknesses of white Americans. These contrasts develop the idea of "the ideal of human brotherhood" (par. 12), because they emphasize that African Americans have "characteristics" (par. 12) that white Americans "so sadly lack" (par. 12). By highlighting the different and valuable "characteristics" (par. 12) of African Americans, Du Bois develops the idea that respecting and "fostering and developing the traits and talents of Negro" will result in a unifying exchange of skills and traits between both "world-races" (par. 12).
The ideal of human brotherhood	"and, all in all, we black men seem the sole oasis of simple faith and reverence in a dusty desert of dollars and smartness." (par. 12)	This simile suggests that the "simple faith" of African Americans offers a welcome "oasis" (par. 12), or pleasant respite, in a country that has been corrupted by money. This comparison develops the idea of the ideal of human brotherhood, because it suggests that African Americans embody "the greater ideals of the American Republic" (par. 12) that many Americans have lost touch with. Therefore, the ideal of human brotherhood

		requires respecting and “fostering and developing the traits and talents” (par. 12) of African Americans “in larger conformity to the ideals of the American Republic,” rather than “in opposition to or contempt for other races” (par. 12).
--	--	---