

11.4.1 Lesson 8

Introduction

In this lesson, students begin their reading and analysis of Louise Erdrich’s “The Red Convertible” from *The Red Convertible*. Students read pages 1-4 (from “I was the first one to drive a convertible” to “it gave us a beautiful performance when we needed it”), in which Marty introduces himself and recounts a trip he took with his brother Stephan in a red convertible. Analysis focuses on the development of the narrator, Marty, and his brother, Stephan, and specifically on how Marty’s point of view impacts the character development of Stephan. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: What is the impact of Erdrich’s choice to introduce Stephan through Marty’s point of view?

For homework, students read and annotate pages 4-10 of “The Red Convertible.” Additionally, students respond in writing to several questions about this excerpt.

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Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.11-12.3	Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
RL.11-12.6	Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant (e.g., satire, sarcasm, irony, or understatement).
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.11-12.9.a	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <p>a. Apply <i>grades 11-12 Reading standards</i> to literature (e.g., “Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics”).</p>

Assessment

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Assessment(s)

Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students answer the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- What is the impact of Erdrich's choice to introduce Stephan through Marty's point of view?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Provide examples of Marty's description of Stephan (e.g., Marty describes Stephan as fun-loving or humorous. For example, Marty describes Stephan putting Susy on his shoulders and pretending he has "long pretty hair" (p. 3) and everyone laughs, and Marty says, "it was a funny sight" (pp. 3-4). Marty also describes how Stephan forgot he "signed up" to join the Army, which demonstrates Stephan's carefree attitude (p. 4).).
- Discuss the impact of Erdrich's choice to introduce Stephan through Marty's point of view (e.g., Erdrich's choice to tell the story through Marty's point of view impacts the reader's understanding of Stephan because the reader only knows Stephan before the war, through the perspective of his brother. For example, the reader learns about Stephan through his brother's descriptions, including teasing Marty about his "Indian nose" (p. 4) and referring to them as a unit: "we got up there and never wanted to leave" (p. 3). Marty's point of view shows that Stephan and Marty as close siblings did things together, like purchasing a car: "the car belonged to us and our pockets were empty" (p. 2). They spent a whole summer traveling anywhere they wanted, living "here to there" (p. 2). The impact of Marty's point of view demonstrates Stephan's lighthearted and playful attitude before he left for the Vietnam War.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- repose (v.) - to lay at rest

Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- None.

Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)

- convertible (n.) - a car with a roof that can be lowered or removed
- reservation (n.) - an area of land in the U.S. that is kept separate as a place for Native Americans to live
- big break (idiom) - significant good luck or opportunity
- greener pastures (idiom) - a better or more exciting place
- marine (n.) - a member of the U.S. Marine Corps (one of a class of naval troops serving both on shipboard and on land)
- outhouse (n.) - a small outdoor building that is used as a toilet

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.6, W.11-12.9.a • Text: “The Red Convertible” from <i>The Red Convertible</i> by Louise Erdrich, pages 1-4 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Reading and Discussion 4. Quick Write 5. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 15% 3. 60% 4. 15% 5. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 11.4.1 Lesson 1)

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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: RL.11-12.3 and RL.11-12.6. In this lesson, students read and analyze pages 1-4 of “The Red Convertible” and consider the impact of Erdrich’s choices concerning point of view, and how these choices influence character development.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to take out the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Continue to revise your narrative writing piece based on peer feedback, and come to class prepared to discuss 1-2 revisions.) Instruct students to form pairs and share 1-2 revisions based on their peer review and alignment to W.11-12.3.a. Instruct students to submit their revised narrative writing pieces after their discussion.

- Student responses will vary depending on their narrative writing pieces. Students should use the language of W.11-12.3.a in discussion.
- Differentiation Consideration:** Consider reminding students to use the relevant portions of the 11.4 Narrative Writing Rubric and Checklist to guide their discussions if necessary.

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- Consider instructing students to read aloud their drafts in pairs before discussing their revisions.
 - Collect students' narrative writing pieces and keep the writing for student use in 11.4.2. Consider using a class blog as a repository for the students' narrative writing over the course of the module.
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Instruct pairs to discuss their initial reactions and questions about “The Red Convertible.” (Read the entire text (pages 1-10) of “The Red Convertible” by Louise Erdrich (from “I was the first one to drive a convertible” to “going and running and going and running and running”) and record your initial reactions and questions about the text.)

- Student pairs discuss their initial reactions and questions about “The Red Convertible.”
- Student responses may include:
 - This is a story about two brothers and how the older brother, Stephan, changed after going to war.
 - The red convertible is something both the brothers share until the end of the story.
 - The story is told from the point of view of the younger brother Marty.
 - What happened to Stephan at the end of the story?
 - Why did Marty dump the convertible into the river at the end of the story?
 - What happened to Stephan during the war that changed his behavior so dramatically?

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Remind students that as they analyze the text many of their initial questions will be answered.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

60%

Instruct students to stay in pairs. Post or project each set of questions below for student pairs to discuss before sharing out with the class. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the text before students begin independent analysis. This optional masterful reading will add approximately one day to the length of the module.

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

What details does Marty provide about Stephan?

Instruct student pairs to reread and annotate pages 1-4 of “The Red Convertible” (from “I was the first one to drive a convertible” to “it gave us a beautiful performance when we needed it”).

- Students reread and annotate pages 1-2 of “The Red Convertible.”
- This annotation supports students’ engagement with W.11-12.9.a, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.

Instruct student pairs to reread pages 1-2 of “The Red Convertible” (from “I was the first one to drive a convertible” to “Anyway, it was where we met the girl”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definition: *repose* means “to lay at rest.”

- Students write the definition of *repose* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *convertible* means “a car with a roof that can be lowered or removed,” *reservation* means “an area of land in the U.S. that is kept separate as a place for Native Americans to live,” and *big break* means “significant good luck or opportunity.”
- Students write the definitions of *convertible*, *reservation*, and *big break* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- Explain to students that the Chippewa, also called Ojibwa, are a large tribe of Native Americans living in Canada and the U.S., principally in the region around Lakes Huron and Superior but extending as far west as Saskatchewan and North Dakota.

How does Louise Erdrich choose to introduce Stephan and Marty?

- Erdrich introduces Stephan through the point of view of his younger brother Marty: “I owned that car along with my brother Stephan” (p. 1). Erdrich introduces Marty in the context of his relationship to his older brother Stephan: “his younger brother Marty (that’s myself)” (p. 1).

What is the effect of Marty’s direct address on the tone of the story?

- The direct address, “I’ll tell you when we first saw it” develops a reflective or nostalgic tone (p. 2). Like the narrator in “On the Rainy River,” Marty reflects on the events of “The Red Convertible” from the present. This story of Marty and his brother, Stephan, has already occurred and Marty now retells the story to the reader.

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- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posing the following question to scaffold student understanding to the previous question.

How does the phrase “I’ll tell you when we first saw it” (p. 2) develop point of view in the story?

- This phrase develops Marty’s point of view of narrator or storyteller because Marty, as the narrator, directly addresses the reader and indicates that he is telling a story. Marty’s statement, “That time we first saw it!” indicates that the action happened in the past (p. 2).

What does Marty’s statement “Some people hang on to details when they travel, but we didn’t let them bother us” (p. 2) demonstrate about the brothers and their trip?

- Marty says that they did not let the details “bother [them]” (p. 2). Thus, Marty and Stephan were not interested in where they were or where they were going; they enjoyed being with each other and living carefree or “here to there” (p. 2).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Considering posing the following question to scaffold student understanding to the previous question.

How does Marty describe the summer trip?

- Marty describes the trip in a very general way, “I can’t tell you all the places we went to,” and although he mentions a few specific locations such as “Wakpala” and “Montana,” Marty does not provide many specific details about the locations or what they did during their trip (p. 2). The only place Marty does describe in detail is the “one place with willows” but the location did not matter, “it could have been anywhere” (p. 2).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to reread pages 3-4 of “The Red Convertible” (from “All her hair was in buns around her ears” to “it gave us a beautiful performance when we needed it”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

- Explain to students that Khe Sanh is a city in Vietnam that was the site of a major battle during the Vietnam War.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *greener pastures* means “a better or more exciting place,” *marine* means “a member of the U.S. Marine Corps (one of a class of naval troops serving both on shipboard and on land),” and *outhouse* means “a small outdoor building that is used as a toilet.”

- Students write the definitions of *greener pastures*, *marine*, and *outhouse* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Why do the brothers “never want[] to leave” (p. 3) Alaska?

- They do not want to leave Alaska because they have a feeling of peace or freedom “like an animal in nature” (p. 3). Additionally, they do not need to “sleep hard” or face obligations while they are there, so they are able to “put away the world” (p. 3).

How do the interactions with Susy further develop the characters of Stephan and Marty?

- Student response may include:
 - The interactions with Susy demonstrate that Stephan and Marty make decisions together. For example, when the brothers first meet Susy, it is Stephan who tells her to “Hop on in,” and it is Stephan who agrees with Marty when Marty says “[w]e’ll take you home,” even though she lives in Alaska (p. 3).
 - When Stephan picks up Susy and pretends he has “‘long pretty hair’” (p. 3) it further develops his character by showing his sense of humor: “it was a funny sight, the way he did it” (p. 3-4).

What is the impact of the pronoun “we” in the description of the summer trip?

- The use of the pronoun “we” demonstrates the close relationship between the brothers. In this section of text, and throughout Marty’s description of their trip, he refers to the both of them. “That time we first saw it” (p. 2), “We went places in that car” (p. 2), and “we got up and took leave of those people” (p. 4) are all examples of their unity and close bond as brothers.

How does the sentence, “We got home just in time, it turned out, for the Army to remember Stephan had signed up” (p. 4), further develop Stephan’s character?

- This sentence shows that Stephan was enjoying himself so much on the road trip that he forgot or did not “remember” about the agreement he made to join the Army (p. 4). On the road trip, he “put[s] away the world” and therefore is not thinking about his future (p. 3).

How does the phrase, “it gave us a beautiful performance when we needed it” (p. 4), further develop the relationship between Stephan and Marty?

- Marty’s description of the convertible’s “performance” as “beautiful” demonstrates that Marty appreciates and treasures the memory of the road trip with Stephan (p. 4). The summer trip in the convertible represents a significant event for Marty and Stephan before Stephan has to leave for “Khe Sanh” or the Vietnam War (p. 4).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Quick Write

15%

Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

What is the impact of Erdrich's choice to introduce Stephan through Marty's point of view?

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Instruct students to use this lesson's vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses. Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

- Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.
- Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition to the independent Quick Write.

- Students independently answer the prompt, using evidence from the text.
- See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate pages 4-10 of “The Red Convertible” (from “It was at least two years before Stephan came home again” to “the sound of it going and running and going and running and running”).

Additionally, instruct students to briefly respond in writing to the following questions:

How does the scene on pages 4-5 impact the character development of Marty and Stephan?

How does “that picture” further develop Stephan and Marty’s relationship?

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read and annotate pages 4-10 of “The Red Convertible” (from “It was at least two years before Stephan came home again” to “the sound of it going and running and going and running and running”).

Also, respond briefly in writing to the following questions:

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How does the scene on pages 4-5 impact the character development of Marty and Stephan?

How does “that picture” further develop Stephan and Marty’s relationship?

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