

# 11.4.1 Lesson 4

## Introduction

In this lesson, students prepare for the Mid-Unit Assessment in the following lesson by engaging in an evidence-based discussion analyzing Tim O’Brien’s “On the Rainy River” from *The Things They Carried*. This lesson provides the first opportunity for students to discuss the story in its entirety, specifically focusing on how certain parts of the text contribute to the overall meaning and structure of the text. Student learning is assessed via peer assessment of a small-group discussion at the end of the lesson: Choose a specific part of the text and analyze how it contributes to overall structure and meaning in the text.

For homework, students review and expand their notes, tools, and annotations from “On the Rainy River” in preparation for the Mid-Unit Assessment in the following lesson.

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## Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.11-12.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
SL.11-12.1.a, c	<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> <p>a. Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.</p> <p>c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.</p>
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 small-group discussion at the end of the lesson. Students discuss the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- Choose a specific part of the text and analyze how it contributes to the overall meaning and structure of the text.
- This assessment will be evaluated using the relevant portions of the 11.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric.

**High Performance Response(s)**

A High Performance Response should:

- Determine a specific part of the text (e.g., The story’s introduction in which the narrator tells readers “This is one story I’ve never told before” (p. 37). The narrator describes how he has “had to live with [his story]” for two decades and calls it a “confession” (p. 37). The narrator also identifies the reason he tells the story now is a hope “to relieve at least some of the pressure on [his] dreams” (p. 37).).
- Analyze how this part of the text contributes to the overall meaning of the text (e.g., O’Brien’s introduction makes readers aware of the story’s importance to the narrator or the “confession” the narrator is about to tell (p. 37). The narrator confesses a long-kept secret for the first time, a story in which he is not the “secret hero” who has a “secret reservoir of courage,” giving the impression that the story will be about his personal lack of heroism or courage (p. 37).).
- Analyze how this part of the text contributes to the overall structure of the text (e.g., Through the introduction, O’Brien establishes the story as a reflection. The narrator describes wanting “to relieve at least some of the pressure on [his] dreams,” indicating he needs validation or at least a break from the burden of his past shame, which he hopes to attain by confiding in readers via his confession (p. 37).).
- Adhere to the criteria of the 11.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist.

## Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
• None.*
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
• None.*
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
• None.*

\*Because this is not a close reading lesson, there is no specified vocabulary. However, in the process of returning to the text, students may uncover unfamiliar words. Teachers can guide students to make meaning of these words by following the protocols described in 1e of this document: [http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/9-12\\_ela\\_prefatory\\_material.pdf](http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/9-12_ela_prefatory_material.pdf).

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards: RL.11-12.5, SL.11-12.1.a, c, W.11-12.9.a</li> <li>Text: “On the Rainy River” from <i>The Things They Carried</i> by Tim O’Brien</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>2. Homework Accountability</li> <li>3. 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tool</li> <li>4. Small-Group Discussion</li> <li>5. Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5%</li> <li>2. 10%</li> <li>3. 30%</li> <li>4. 50%</li> <li>5. 5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

- Copies of the 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tool for each student
- Student copies of the 11.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist (refer to 11.4.1 Lesson 3)

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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.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
►	Indicates student action(s).
☞	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
ⓘ	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

### Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and assessed standards for this lesson: RL.11-12.5 and SL.11-12.1.a, c. In this lesson, students prepare for the Mid-Unit Assessment by completing the 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tool and engaging in small group discussion about how specific parts of the text contribute to its overall structure and meaning.

- Students look at the agenda.

### Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: What purpose does telling the story serve for the narrator?) Instruct students to form pairs to discuss their responses.

- Student pairs discuss the homework from the previous lesson.

**What purpose does telling the story serve for the narrator?**

- Student responses may include:
  - The narrator wants to relieve some of the guilt and shame associated with his story, which is why he describes it as a “confession,” through which he can “relieve at least some of the pressure on my dreams” (p. 37).

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- The narrator directly addresses readers to validate his choices, remembering the “terrible squeezing pressure” and tightness in his chest from twenty years earlier, and tells readers “I want you to feel it” (p. 54).
- The narrator seeks empathy for his lack of courage and conviction when he describes how he wants readers to put themselves in his situation. He asks readers to imagine themselves as “twenty-one-year-olds” and “scared,” facing a similar conflict (p. 54).

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Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied a focus standard to their text. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied a focus standard to their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) text.

- 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: 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tool

**30%**

Instruct students to stay in their pairs from the previous activity. Instruct student pairs to discuss the following questions:

**How does O’Brien begin the story?**

- O’Brien begins the story with the narrator admitting he is about to share a story he has “never told before” that makes him “squirm” (p. 37). The narrator refers to his story as a “confession” that is “hard ... to tell” (p. 37).

**How is the story organized?**

- Student responses may include:
  - After introducing the story as an event from his past, the narrator tells a story that begins in “the summer of 1968” (p. 37). From this point, the story unfolds chronologically through the events that surround the receipt of his “draft notice” (p. 39), his “work[] in an Armour meat-packing plant” (p. 40), and his time at “an old fishing resort called the Tip Top Lodge” (p. 45).
  - O’Brien organizes the story as a reflection of the narrator’s past. The narrator refers to the story as “an act of remembering” (p. 37).
- Explain to students that “reflection” refers to consideration of a subject, idea, or past event.

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**How does O'Brien end the story?**

- O'Brien ends the story by confessing "I was a coward. I went to the war" (p. 58), and in so doing, makes it clear he is still ashamed "twenty years" (p. 37) later that he did not stay true to his "convictions" (p. 39) about the war.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Explain to students that their responses to these questions are examples of structural choices. Structural choices can refer to how a story is ordered, including how it begins and ends, as well as how an author manipulates time.

- Students were introduced to RL.11-12.5 in 11.1.2 Lesson 1.
  - Students listen.
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Display and distribute the 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tool. Explain to students that this tool is used to guide their discussion in the following activity. Explain to students that this activity and the following discussion prepare them for the Mid-Unit Assessment in the following lesson.

- Students follow along.

Instruct students to independently review "On the Rainy River" in its entirety and record evidence and analysis in response to the Mid-Unit Assessment prompt, which they will discuss in the next activity:

**Choose a specific part of the text and analyze how it contributes to the overall meaning and structure of the text.**

- Students independently review "On the Rainy River" and complete the 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tool.
- See the Model 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tool at the end of this lesson for sample student responses.
- This activity supports students' engagement with W.11-12.9.a, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider modeling the 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tool to support student understanding during this activity.

**Activity 4: Small-Group Discussion****50%**

Instruct students to form small groups of 3-4 to discuss the Mid-Unit Assessment prompt they were introduced to in the last activity. Explain to students that this activity's small-group

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discussions comprise the lesson assessment, and as such, require students to use the 11.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist for SL.11-12.1.a, c to assess their group members' participation and contributions to the discussion.

- Students form small groups and review the relevant portions of the 11.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist.

Instruct students to refer to their 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tools from the previous activity to inform their small-group discussions. Remind students to take additional notes during their discussions to prepare for the Mid-Unit Assessment in the following lesson. Instruct students to discuss the following prompt:

**Choose a specific part of the text and analyze how it contributes to the overall meaning and structure of the text.**

- Student groups engage in discussion while reviewing their 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tools and take notes to prepare for the Mid-Unit Assessment.
- See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

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- Circulate and support students in their discussions as needed. Pause student discussions once during the allotted time to provide space for reflection and assessment. Provide additional time at the end of the lesson for students to complete the peer assessments.

Explain that students have time once during discussion and again at the end of discussion to complete the 11.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist for SL.11-12.1.a, c for each peer in their group.

- Students complete peer assessments for SL.11-12.1.a, c on the 11.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist.

## Activity 5: Closing

**5%**

Instruct students to review and expand their notes, tools, and annotations in preparation for the following lesson's Mid-Unit Assessment.

## Homework

Review and expand your notes, tools, and annotations in preparation for the following lesson's Mid-Unit Assessment.

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## 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tool

<b>Name</b> :		<b>Class</b> :		<b>Date</b> :	
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**Directions:** Use this tool to collect and identify evidence in preparation for the small-group discussion and Mid-Unit Assessment: Choose a specific part of the text and analyze how it contributes to the overall meaning and structure of the text.

Specific Part of the Text	Contribution to Overall Meaning	Contribution to Overall Structure

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## Model 11.4.1 Mid-Unit Evidence Collection Tool

<b>Name</b> :		<b>Class</b> :		<b>Date</b> :	
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**Directions:** Use this tool to collect and identify evidence in preparation for the small-group discussion and Mid-Unit Assessment: Choose a specific part of the text and analyze how it contributes to the overall meaning and structure of the text.

Specific Part of the Text	Contribution to Overall Meaning	Contribution to Overall Structure
In the introduction, the narrator tells readers, “This is one story I’ve never told before” (p. 37). He describes how he has “had to live with it” for two decades and calls it a “confession” (p. 37). The narrator also identifies the reason he tells the story now is a hope “to relieve at least some of the pressure on my dreams” (p. 37).	The introduction makes readers aware of the story’s importance to the narrator. The narrator confesses a long-kept secret for the first time, a story where he is not the “secret hero” who has a “secret reservoir of courage” (p. 37). Instead, the narrator uses the introduction to establish that his story demonstrates his lack of heroism or courage.	Through the introduction, O’Brien establishes the story as a reflection. The narrator describes wanting “to relieve at least some of the pressure on [his] dreams,” indicating he seeks validation or at least a break from the burden of his shame which he hopes to attain by confiding in readers via his “confession” (p. 37).

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<p>Out in the boat on the Rainy River, the narrator recalls the “sudden tightness in [his] chest” (p. 53) from twenty years before and interrupts his reflection to engage the reader by saying, “as I write this, I can still feel that tightness” (p. 54). The narrator asks his readers to imagine themselves in his same situation, telling them “I want you to feel it ... You’re at the bow of a boat on the Rainy River. You’re twenty-one years old, you’re scared, and there’s a hard squeezing pressure in your chest” (p. 54). The narrator further engages readers by asking a series of hypothetical questions, starting with “What would you do?” (p. 54)</p>	<p>Breaking the structure of the narrative pulls the reader into the intensity of the narrator’s conflict. By directly addressing the reader in this section of text, the narrator creates feelings of empathy and further clarifies the meaning of the story, which is his ongoing struggle to resolve the conflict between his shame and his beliefs. The narrator wants the reader to envision themselves as young, scared, and facing a life-changing decision that tests their convictions because he seeks validation and relief from his shame.</p>	<p>This structural choice contributes to the overall structure of the text by momentarily breaking the narrator’s reflection. Following this break, the narrator returns to the story by addressing his reflections at the beginning of the story about why he “never told this story before” (p. 54), thus, connecting the past to the present.</p>
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<p>The narrator recalls his past as though it happened “in some other dimension,” even though “[n]one of it ever seemed real” (p. 52). The narrator recalls, “[e]ven now I can see myself as I was then” (p. 52).</p>	<p>O’Brien manipulates time by shifting between the narrator’s present observations and recollections of the past. The narrator tells the burdensome story from his past, while showing he still struggles with the shame of it in the present, referring to the memory “like watching an old home movie” (p. 52). The narrator tries to get readers to empathize with his situation and even his feelings about it in the present, even though when “[he] [tries] to explain some of [his] feelings ... there aren’t enough words” (p. 52). The narrator tries to make the reader understand that his feelings from the past are different from his feelings now, and part of telling this story is working through this understanding of himself: who he was then versus who he is now.</p>	<p>O’Brien manipulates time in the story by shifting between the narrator’s present observations and recollections of his past. This shift in time contributes to the reflective structure of the story, as the narrator shares both his thoughts from when the events happened and from present day.</p>
<p>In the conclusion, the narrator admits, “I was a coward. I went to the war” (p. 58).</p>	<p>This conclusion contributes to the overall meaning of the text because the narrator’s conflict is not resolved; it is not a “happy ending” (p. 58) because he still feels “shame” (p. 37).</p>	<p>The story’s conclusion also contributes to the overall structure of the text in that it ends without a resolution.</p>