

11.4.2 Lesson 18

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze chapters XXXVIII-XXXIX of *The Awakening* (from “Edna still felt dazed when she got outside in the open air” to “and the musky odor of pinks filled the air”), in which Robert leaves and Edna returns to Grand Isle for a final swim. Students respond to a two-part assessment question. First, students discuss the first part of the Quick Write assessment prompt in pairs, followed by a whole-class discussion. Then students transition into small groups to discuss the second half of the assessment prompt. Student analysis focuses on Chopin’s choices in concluding the text and how those choices contribute to the meaning and aesthetic impact of the narrative. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: What choices does Chopin make about how to conclude the text? How do these choices contribute to meaning and aesthetic impact?

For homework, students return to the Mid-Unit Assessment prompt and expand and refine their responses based on their completed reading and analysis of *The Awakening*. Additionally, students continue their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) through the lens of a focus standard of their choice.

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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.
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>
SL. 11-12.1.a, c, d	<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> <p>d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.</p>

Assessment

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Assessment(s)

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

- What choices does Chopin make about how to conclude the text? How do these choices contribute to meaning and aesthetic impact?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Determine Chopin's choices in concluding the text (e.g., Chopin emphasizes Edna's physical state while she is in the water, including "[h]er arms and legs were growing tired" (p. 127), "[e]xhaustion was pressing upon and overpowering her," and "her strength was gone" (p. 128). These details demonstrate Edna is physically overwhelmed by her situation).
- Analyze how these choices contribute to the meaning and aesthetic impact of the text (e.g., Chopin creates a parallel between Edna's physical suffering and her emotional suffering as she swims. Before leaving for the ocean, Edna tells Doctor Mandelet that she would rather "suffer" than remain complacent to "illusions," or beliefs that are not real or true (p. 123). Edna demonstrates these ideas as she suffers physically and emotionally during her last swim. She recalls her emotional struggles, as she thinks of "Léonce and the children" (p. 127), while at the same time, she grows increasingly "exhaust[ed]" (p. 128). In her final moments, Edna also recalls her last communication with Robert, "'Good-by—because, I love you,'" and briefly considers that there may have been another way to reconcile, but concludes that "it was too late" (p. 128). Edna knows she only wants to be with Robert, yet cannot be with him because he, like the Pontellier family, will "never understand" (p. 128) Edna's refusal to conform to societal expectations. The combination of all of these memories and recollections, with the emphasis on Edna's physical exhaustion, adds to the tragedy of the text because it demonstrates the accumulation of Edna's physical and emotional toil in the novel).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- inconsolable (adj.) - incapable of being comforted
- provision (n.) - something that is supplied or provided
- quaffed (v.) - drank copiously and heartily

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

- None.

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

- dread (v.) - to fear something that will or might happen
- multitude (n.) - a great number
- torture (n.) - something that causes mental or physical suffering; a very painful or unpleasant experience
- abroad (adv.) - in a foreign country
- illusions (n.) - incorrect ideas; ideas that are based on something that is not true
- decoy (n.) - a person or thing that attracts people's attention so they will not notice someone or something else
- dupe (n.) - a person who is easily deceived or tricked
- intoxication (n.) - overpowering excitement that suggests the effect of alcohol or a drug
- elude (v.) - to avoid or escape by speed, cleverness, trickery

Lesson Agenda/Overview

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Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.11-12.5, W.11-12.9.a, SL.11-12.1.a, c, d Text: <i>The Awakening</i> by Kate Chopin, Chapters XXXVIII-XXXIX 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Reading and Discussion 4. Small Group Discussion 5. Quick Write 6. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 20% 3. 30% 4. 30% 5. 10% 6. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the 11.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist (refer to 11.4.1 Lesson 3)
- 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.
ⓘ	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.11-12.5. In this lesson, students complete their reading of *The Awakening*. Students participate in whole-class and small-group discussions, focusing their analysis on the conclusion of the text and how the conclusion contributes to the meaning and aesthetic impact of the narrative.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

20%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read and annotate chapters XXXVII-XXXIX of *The Awakening* (from “Edna looked in at the drug store” to “musky odor of pinks filled the air”)). Instruct students to form pairs to discuss their responses.

- Student pairs discuss their annotations from the previous lesson's homework.
- Student annotation may include:
 - Star near:
 - “I’m not going to be forced into doing things” because this phrase demonstrates Edna’s self-awareness and her empowerment (p. 123).

- “[S]he would never sacrifice herself for her children” because this phrase shows Edna is fully aware of her own convictions and is willing to rebel against the societal expectations of motherhood (p. 126).
 - Exclamation mark near the phrase “Good-by—because I love you” because it is surprising Robert left Edna after they both professed their love for each other (p. 124).
 - Arrow from “they need not have thought that they could possess her, body and soul” to “[e]xhaustion was pressing upon and overpowering her” because her conflict with societal expectations regarding her family contributes to her exhaustion of spirit and body (p. 128).
 - Question mark at the end of chapter XXXIX, “the musky odor of pinks filled the air” because it is not clear what has happened to Edna or what this imagery represents (p. 128).
- This annotation supports students’ engagement with W.11-12.9.a, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.
-

Instruct student pairs to share and discuss the vocabulary words they identified and defined in the previous lesson’s homework.

- Students may identify the following words: *inconsolable*, *provision*, and *quaffed*.
 - **Differentiation Consideration:** Students may also identify the following words: *dread*, *multitude*, *torture*, *abroad*, *illusions*, *decoy*, *dupe*, *intoxication*, and *elude*.
 - Definitions are provided in the Vocabulary box in this lesson.
-

Instruct student pairs to take out their responses to the second part of the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: How does Edna’s experience at the Ratignolles impact her character development?) Instruct students to share and discuss their responses in pairs before sharing out with the class.

- The questions below focus on chapter XXXVII only; students analyze chapters XXXVIII and XXXIX in the following Reading and Discussion activity.

How does Edna’s experience at the Ratignolles impact Edna’s character development?

- Edna’s experience at the Ratignolles further separates her from the societal expectations of women and establishes her opposition to motherhood. Edna finds herself “seized with a vague dread” after Madame Ratignolle gives birth and does not

think of the joy of the baby but sees the child as an addition to the “great unnumbered multitude of souls that come and go” (p. 122). Edna’s feelings of unease and distress result because she is not comfortable with the idea of motherhood and she considers the birth of Madame Ratignolle’s child a “scene of torture,” which shows that she considers childbirth an awful experience for women (p. 122).

Post or project the following question for student pairs to discuss before sharing out with the class:

How does Edna’s conversation with Doctor Mandelet in chapter XXXVIII further demonstrate the interaction of two central ideas?

- The conversation between Edna and Doctor Mandelet demonstrates the interaction of the central ideas of sense of self and societal expectations because this is one of the first times in the novel that another character maintains a similar perspective or understands Edna’s evolving sense of self in the face of social obligations. Doctor Mandelet refers to societal expectations as “‘a decoy to secure mothers for the race’” and feels these expectations are “‘arbitrary,’” which means that they are unnatural, false, and unnecessarily oppressive to women (p. 123). Edna also tells the doctor she is “‘not going to be forced into doing things’” and that she does not want anything but her “‘own way’” (p. 123). Edna shares this knowledge of herself as a way to show that she will no longer conform to societal expectations, as she will no longer remain a “dupe to illusions” (p. 123).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

30%

Instruct students to remain in pairs from the previous activity. Post or project the first part of the assessment prompt for students to discuss. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss.

- This activity differs from previous lessons’ Reading and Discussion activities by allowing students more independence in analyzing the text before the lesson assessment. For the reading and text analysis in this lesson, students work in pairs to analyze the first part of the assessment prompt, identifying evidence that supports their analysis of the author’s choices in concluding the text. Students then discuss their evidence and further their analysis in small group discussions about the second part of the assessment prompt.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

How does Chopin conclude the novel?

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Instruct student pairs to reread chapters XXXVIII-XXXIX of *The Awakening* (from “Edna still felt dazed when she got outside in the open air” to “and the musky odor of pinks filled the air”) and discuss the first part of the assessment prompt before sharing out with the class.

- Student pairs reread the text and discuss the following prompt.

What choices does Chopin make about how to conclude the text?

- Student responses may include:
 - Chopin chooses to end the novel at Grand Isle, the place Edna becomes a “newly awakened being” (p. 51).
 - Chopin chooses to recall events that occurred over the course of the text that reflect Edna’s developing sense of self, including recalling the “night she swam far out” when she first learned to swim (p. 127).
 - Chopin has Edna remember Mademoiselle Reisz’s words from earlier in the text about the artist who must have “the courageous soul that dares and defies” and says that Mademoiselle Reisz may have “laughed, perhaps sneered” at Edna’s actions (p. 128).
 - Chopin chooses to bring finality to Robert and Edna’s relationship. Throughout *The Awakening* it is uncertain what will happen between Robert and Edna, but in the conclusion it is clear that “[Robert] would never understand” Edna’s position as a self-aware woman who is not anyone’s possession (p. 128). Robert wants to possess Edna as Mr. Pontellier had, but Edna explicitly says, “I give myself where I choose,” and this is an idea that Robert may not understand.
 - Chopin chooses to end *The Awakening* with Edna swimming out farther and recalling memories of the past, including the sounds of “her father’s voice and her sister Margaret’s” and “spurs of the cavalry officer,” all signifying Edna’s childhood (p. 128).
 - Chopin chooses to conclude *The Awakening* with a tragic yet ambiguous ending. Chopin does not illustrate Edna’s drowning but it can be inferred that she drowns as she gives up because Robert and others “would never understand” (p. 128).
 - Chopin emphasizes Edna’s physical state while she is in the water, moving back and forth between these physical descriptions and her inner thoughts: “[h]er arms and legs were growing tired” (p. 127), “[e]xhaustion was pressing upon and overpowering her,” and “her strength was gone” (p. 128).
 - Chopin chooses to have Edna confront the “old terror” she experienced during her first swim away from shore (p. 128). However, that fear recedes, and Edna does not turn back to the beach.

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- Chopin uses the same language in the conclusion to describe “the voice of the sea” and “the touch of the sea” (p. 127) as she did in chapter VI when Edna starts to recognize herself as an “individual to the world” (p. 16).
- Chopin concludes the text by repeating the bird symbolism from earlier in the text by describing a “bird with a broken wing”; this bird is the only “living thing in sight” as Edna embarks on her final swim (p. 127).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** As students identify Chopin’s choices in the conclusion, consider instructing students to reread certain portions of the text to generate discussion in their small groups: pages 15-16 (Chopin’s description of the sea and Edna’s understanding of herself as a human being), pages 20-21 (Edna’s reflections on her past romances), pages 31- 32 (Edna’s first swim), pages 70-71 (Edna’s conversation with Mademoiselle Reisz about artists), and page 92 (Edna’s conversation with Arobin).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posing the following scaffolding questions to support discussion:

What is the “old terror” that seizes Edna (p. 128)?

- The “old terror” describes the fear of death Edna had when she first swam away from the shore on her own (p. 128).

How does the narrator describe Edna during her last swim?

- The narrator describes Edna’s “white body” (p. 127) as overpowered by “[e]xhaustion” (p. 128), and states that Edna’s “arms and legs were growing tired” (p. 127) as Edna swims farther away from the shore. The narrator does not say that Edna is afraid, only that she is tired and “her strength was gone” (p. 128). Edna also feels hopeless and melancholy because she only wants to be with Robert but she also realizes even Robert will “melt out of her existence” (p. 127) and will “never understand” (p. 128) that she is no longer a possession.

Who does Edna recall during her last swim?

- Student responses should include:
 - Edna thinks of her family, who are “a part of her life” (pp. 127-128), although they could not “possess her, body and soul” (p. 128).
 - Edna thinks of Mademoiselle Reisz and her words about the soul of a true artist: “The artist must possess the courageous soul that dares and defies” (p. 128).
 - Edna thinks of Doctor Mandelet and that he may have “understood” her situation (p. 128).

- Edna thinks of Robert and his inability to accept her new status as a self-possessed woman, “He would never understand” (p. 128).
- Edna thinks of her father and sister, and the first man she fell in love with, the “cavalry officer” (p. 128).
- Consider reminding students of their previous work with SL.11-12.1.a, c, d, and instruct them to use the 11.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist to guide their discussion.

Lead a whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Small Group Discussion

30%

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project the second part of the assessment prompt for students to discuss. Instruct student groups to discuss the second part of the assessment prompt.

How do these choices contribute to meaning and aesthetic impact?

- Student responses may include:
 - Chopin’s choice to conclude *The Awakening* at Grand Isle contrasts pre- and post-awakening Edna. When the narrator introduces Edna at the beginning of the story, it is from the perspective of her husband as his “valuable piece of personal property,” and Edna has just returned from swimming with Robert (p. 4). At the end of the story, Edna “had come alone” to Grand Isle (p. 125), as a liberated individual who has a plan to “elude” the “soul’s slavery” of motherhood and being a wife (p. 127). Chopin further develops this distinction and the beauty of Edna after her awakening and return to Grand Isle, when Edna sheds her bathing suit and is like a “new-born creature” that has a “white body” (p. 127), rather than a body “‘burnt beyond recognition’” (p. 4).
 - Chopin uses repetition of vivid memories and previous experiences to create beauty in the conclusion and to bring Edna’s awakening full circle. Chopin repeats previous descriptions of the “voice of the sea” as something that is enticing, “never ceasing, whispering, clamoring, murmuring, inviting the soul to wander in the abysses of solitude” (p. 127). This language creates cohesion across the text and recalls the first instance of Edna’s awakening, when Edna begins to realize “her relations as an individual to the world within and about her” (p. 16).
 - Chopin further uses the repetition of symbolism to add beauty and meaning when she mentions the “bird with a broken wing” that was “reeling, fluttering, circling disabled down” (p. 127). This broken bird represents Edna and symbolizes a

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conversation between Mademoiselle Reisz and Edna when the Mademoiselle asks if “[her] wings were strong” and says that it takes a bird with strong wings to rise above “tradition and prejudice” (p. 92). The repetition of this symbolism suggests that Edna has not been strong enough to break away from tradition or societal expectations, which contributes to the tragedy of the text.

- Chopin creates a parallel between Edna’s physical suffering and her emotional suffering as Edna swims. Edna tells Doctor Mandelet that she would rather “suffer” than remain complacent to “illusions,” or beliefs that are not real or true (p. 123). Edna physically struggles during her last swim, as “[h]er arms and legs were growing tired” and she recalls her emotional suffering, as “[s]he thought of Léonce and the children” (p. 127). Chopin’s choice to structure the text by interweaving Edna’s physical toil and emotional thoughts adds to the beauty of the text because it demonstrates Edna’s physical and emotional toil in the novel’s conclusion.
 - Chopin’s choice to provide a tragic but ambiguous ending to *The Awakening* adds to the beauty of the text because Edna’s death is a literal tragedy, but also represents the end of her inner struggle with the societal expectations she has been fighting against. The ending is ambiguous in that Edna’s death is not explicitly represented in the text, since the novel ends just as she is growing tired. However, since her death is inevitable, the reader is left to infer Edna’s death. In the novel’s conclusion, Edna remains sad and isolated, plagued by periods of “despondency” (p. 127) and “dread” (p. 122). These feelings, along with Edna’s lack of “strength” as she swims farther from Grand Isle add to Edna’s tragic conclusion (p. 128). But Chopin also maintains Edna’s strength as an individual. Edna’s empowerment demonstrates itself by her reaction to her old fear of death, which rises and then recedes, as it “sank again” (p. 128). Edna faces her tragic life with strength, but whether she gives up or succeeds is never solved. Therefore, the conclusion leaves the reader to contemplate the fate of a self-aware woman in a society that has different expectations than what she desires. By leaving out the physical description of Edna’s actual death, Chopin creates an ending where the reader can contemplate Edna’s awakening over the course of the entire text.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students need additional support to generate conversation around this question, consider asking the following scaffolding questions to support student discussion:

How does the “bird with a broken wing” (p. 127) impact the meaning of the conclusion?

- The “bird with a broken wing” (p. 127) refers to Mademoiselle Reisz’s question about Edna’s “‘wings,’” which need to be strong in order to rise above “‘tradition and prejudice’” (p. 92). Since the bird’s wing is broken, is it not able to fly high or rise above the earth. This image suggests that Edna remains incapable of fully breaking away from the societal expectations that restrain her individuality and desire for freedom.

How does Chopin’s description of Edna’s final swim impact the conclusion of the text?

- Chopin provides details of Edna’s physical exhaustion, stating that “[Edna’s] strength was gone,” and also shows Edna’s despair: “[h]e would never understand ... it was too late” (p. 128). These details create a sense of tragedy in the novel’s conclusion. Edna demonstrates physical weakness and emotional exhaustion and, although she understands herself as an individual, Chopin’s description makes Edna seem overwhelmed by the conflict between the person she has become and the world she inhabits.

Activity 5: Quick Write

10%

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

What choices does Chopin make about how to conclude the text? How do these choices contribute to meaning and aesthetic impact?

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask 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 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to return to the Mid-Unit Assessment prompt (How does the development of Edna’s character contribute to two interrelated central ideas in the text?) and expand and refine their response based on their completed reading of Chapters XXIX-XXXIX of *The Awakening*.

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Additionally, students should continue reading their AIR texts through the lens of a focus standard of their choice and prepare for a 3-5 minute discussion of their texts based on that standard.

- Students follow along.

Homework

Return to the Mid-Unit Assessment prompt (How does the development of Edna's character contribute to two interrelated central ideas in the text?) and expand and refine your response based on your completed reading of chapters XXIX-XXXIX of *The Awakening*.

Also, continue to read your Accountable Independent Reading text through the lens of a focus standard of your choice and prepare for a 3-5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.