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| 11.4.2 | Lesson 1 |

# Introduction

In this first lesson of the unit, students begin an exploration of *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin. Students read and analyze chapters I–II of *The Awakening* (from “A green and yellow parrot, which hung in a cage” to “the little Pontellier children, who were very fond of him”), in which the characters of Mr. Pontellier, Mrs. Pontellier, and Robert are introduced. Students focus on the impact of Chopin’s choice to introduce Mr. Pontellier before his wife in the text. Additionally, students consider the relationships between Mr. and Mrs. Pontellier, and Mrs. Pontellier and Robert. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does introducing Edna Pontellier through the perspective of Mr. Pontellier develop Edna’s character?

For homework, students read and annotate chapter III of *The Awakening*, and identify and define unfamiliar words. Students also respond briefly in writing to a prompt that asks students to analyze the relationship between Mr. Pontellier and Edna Pontellier.

# Standards

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| 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). |
| Addressed Standard(s) | |
| W.11-12.9.a | Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.   1. Apply *grades 11–12 Reading standards* 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”). |
| L.11-12.4.a, b | Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on *grades 11–12 reading and content*, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.   1. 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. 2. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., *conceive, conception, conceivable*). |

# 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.   * How does introducing Edna Pontellier through the perspective of Mr. Pontellier develop Edna’s character? * Throughout this unit, Quick Writes will be evaluated using the Short Response Rubric. |
| High Performance Response(s) |
| A High Performance Response should:   * Analyze how the introduction of Edna Pontellier through the perspective of Mr. Pontellier develops her character (e.g., *The Awakening* opens with the perspective of Mr. Pontellier “look[ing] about him” (p. 3). The first time Edna appears in the text, Mr. Pontellier watches her “approach slowly” from the beach (p. 4). This introduction begins to shape Edna’s character in that she is first seen as her husband’s wife, his “personal property,” rather than as her own person (p. 4). Mr. Pontellier’s introduction of Edna first develops her character through her husband’s perception rather than her own sense of self.). |

# Vocabulary

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| Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction) |
| * society (n.) – companionship * telling her beads (idiom) – to say one’s prayers using rosary beads * folly (n.) – the state or quality of being foolish; lack of understanding or sense * countenance (n.) – appearance, especially the look or expression of the face * languor (n.) – lack of energy or vitality * mercantile (adj.) – engaged in trade or commerce * dilution (n.) – the act of lessening the strength of (something) |
| Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions) |
| * frankly (adv.) – candidly; openly * frankness (n.) – openness |
| Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly) |
| * quitting (v.) – leaving * bustling (v.) – moving or going in a busy or hurried way * demurely (adv.) – in a way that is not showy or flashy * surveyed (v.) – looked at and examined all parts of (something) * maze (n.) – a complicated and confusing system of connected passages * handsome (adj.) – pleasing to look at; men are more frequently described as *handsome* than women * engaging (adj.) – very attractive or pleasing in a way that holds your attention * incessantly (adv.) – continuously; without stopping * fond (adj.) – feeling or showing love or friendship |

# Lesson Agenda/Overview

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| Student-Facing Agenda | % of Lesson |
| **Standards & Text:**   * Standards: RL.11-12.3, W.11-12.9.a, L.11-12.4.a, b * Text: *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin, Chapters I–II |  |
| **Learning Sequence:**   1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Reading and Discussion 4. Quick Write 5. Closing | 1. 10% 2. 10% 3. 65% 4. 10% 5. 5% |

# Materials

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

# Learning Sequence

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| 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.** |
| *Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.* |
| ⏵ | Indicates student action(s). |
| 🗨 | Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions. |
| 🛈 | Indicates instructional notes for the teacher. |

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda 10%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.11-12.3. In this first lesson of the unit, students begin their reading and analysis of the text for 11.4.2, *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin. In this lesson, students focus on the introduction of key characters in the text.

* Students look at the agenda.
* **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider reminding students that *The Awakening* was first published in 1899, and contains several antiquated words and phrases, as well as references to racial classifications (e.g., *quadroon* on page 4) that are products of the time in which the text was written. While these words and phrases are not essential to student understanding and analysis of the text, it is important that students understand these terms are from a particular time and place.
* Draw students’ attention to the text’s Explanatory Notes and Glossary, which can support their understanding and analysis of key vocabulary and specific elements of the text, including the use of French phrases, Creole culture, and details specific to the time in which the novel was written.

In this unit, students read *The Awakening* in its entirety, and consider the interrelatedness of setting, plot, and character development in developing related central ideas. Students complete reading and analysis of key chapters in class while also reading some chapters outside of class for homework. Also, students consider the text’s structure and how it contributes to the text’s meaning, as well as its aesthetic impact.

Additionally, students continue to practice and refine their narrative writing skills, producing new pieces as well as editing and refining the pieces they produced in the first unit. Students build on their narrative writing work from the first unit as they practice using a variety of narrative techniques to sequence events, include descriptive language, and craft compelling conclusions.

* Students listen.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability 10%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Read and annotate chapters I–II of Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* (from “A green and yellow parrot, which hung in a cage” to “the little Pontellier children, who were very fond of him”).) Instruct students to form pairs to discuss their responses.

* Student pairs discuss their annotations from the previous lesson’s homework.
* Student annotations may include:
* Box around the French phrases in the text, such as *“‘Allez vous-en! Allez vous-en! Sapristi!,’”* since they are untranslated and their meaning is unfamiliar (p. 3).
* Star near “looking at his wife as one looks at a valuable piece of personal property,” since this is a significant detail in the description of Mrs. Pontellier through the perspective of her husband (p. 4).
* Question mark near “*‘*I see Léonce isn’t coming back,’ she said, with a glance,” since it is unclear how Mrs. Pontellier feels about her husband’s absence (p. 6).
* This annotation supports students’ engagement with W.11-12.9.a, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion 65%

Instruct students to form pairs. 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.

* **Differentiation Consideration:** If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the text before students begin independent analysis in this lesson and subsequent text analysis lessons.
* **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

How does the narrator introduce Mr. Pontellier and Mrs. Pontellier in the story?

Instruct student pairs to reread pages 3­–4 of *The Awakening* (from “A green and yellow parrot, which hung” to “followed them about, with a far-away, meditative air”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *society* means “companionship” and *telling her beads* means “to say one’s prayers using rosary beads.”

* Students write the definitions of *society* and *telling her beads* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
* **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *quitting* means “leaving,” *bustling* means “moving or going in a busy or hurried way,” and *demurely* means “in a way that is not showy or flashy.”

Students write the definitions of *quitting, bustling,* and *demurely* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

From which character’s perspective is the story introduced?

* The story begins through the perspective of Mr. Pontellier, sitting on a porch while he “looked about him” (p. 3). The opening descriptions relate the events and objects Mr. Pontellier sees as he sits and reads a newspaper “before the front door of his own cottage” (p. 3).

How does the narrator introduce the character of Mr. Pontellier in this opening excerpt?

* The narrator introduces Mr. Pontellier as a person that seems easily annoyed; he is “unable to read his newspaper” because of two birds, and leaves them with “an expression and an exclamation of disgust” (p. 3). The narrator describes him as tidy: “His hair was brown and straight” and “[h]is beard was neatly and closely trimmed” (p. 3). He reads his paper “restlessly” and seems to be distracted by the actions going on around him (p. 3).

How does the narrator introduce the setting of the excerpt?

* The narrator uses Mr. Pontellier’s perspective to describe the setting, which is a group of cottages in the summertime. The narrator describes the setting as noisy, with many activities happening at once. Mr. Pontellier hears “chattering and whistling birds,” “[t]wo young girls … playing a duet,” and Madame Lebrun “giving orders in a high key” (pp. 3–4). Also, Mr. Pontellier sees his “two children” playing (p. 4).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to reread pages 4–7 of *The Awakening* (from “Mr. Pontellier finally lit a cigar and began to smoke” to “the little Pontellier children, who were very fond of him”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *folly* means “the state or quality of being foolish; lack of understanding or sense,” *countenance* means “appearance, especially the look or expression of the face,” *languor* means “lack of energy or vitality,” *mercantile* means “engaged in trade or commerce,” and *dilution* means “the act of lessening the strength of (something).”

* Students write the definitions of *folly, countenance, languor, mercantile,* and *dilution* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
* **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *surveyed* means “looked at and examined all parts of (something),” *maze* means “a complicated and confusing system of connected passages,” *handsome* means “pleasing to look at; men are more frequently described as *handsome* than women,” *engaging* means “very attractive or pleasing in a way that holds your attention,” *incessantly* means “continuously; without stopping,” and *fond* means “feeling or showing love or friendship.”

Students write the definitions of *surveyed, maze, handsome, engaging, incessantly,* and *fond* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

* **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the necessary support to understand the geographical references in the text, and orient them to these locations, including *New Orleans, Mississippi,* and *Kentucky.*

How does the narrator first introduce the character of Edna Pontellier?

* The narrator uses Mr. Pontellier’s perspective to first introduce Edna. Mr. Pontellier watches as Edna approaches their cottage, but does not really describe her in any significant way. The description shows only Mr. Pontellier “fix[ing] his gaze upon a white sunshade,” which he knows belongs to his wife (p. 4).
* Throughout this question sequence and subsequent lessons, the character of Edna Pontellier will be referred to by her first name, but be sure students understand that “Edna” and “Mrs. Pontellier” are the same character.

What language does Mr. Pontellier use to describe Edna? What does this language suggest about their relationship?

* Mr. Pontellier calls Edna’s swimming “‘folly,’” because she allows herself to get “‘burnt’” (p. 4). Mr. Pontellier sees Edna as a possession, and looks at her like “a valuable piece of personal property which has suffered some damage” (p. 4). This language suggests a relationship in which a husband feels ownership over his wife.

How does the narrator further describe Edna in this excerpt?

* The narrator describes Edna in detailed, physical terms as “rather handsome than beautiful,” and her eyes as “quick and bright” (p. 5). In terms of her personality, Edna seems to be an easy-going woman. She does not seem to be upset by her husband’s judgment of her actions as “‘folly’” and quickly “began to laugh” with her friend (p. 4). She also does not seem upset when her husband will not be home for dinner and “laughed, nodding good-by to him” (p. 5).

How can the meaning of *frankly* in chapter I help define the word *frankness* in chapter II?

* In chapter I, *frankly* means to say exactly what you mean, since Robert “admitted quite frankly” that he wanted to spend time with Edna rather than accept Mr. Pontellier’s invitation (p. 5). In chapter II, *frankness* is used to describe the “captivating” look of Edna’s face and “expression,” so *frankness* must mean to have your face show exactly what you are thinking (p. 5).
* 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.

How do Edna and Robert interact in this scene?

* Student responses may include:
* Robert and Edna interact differently than Edna and her husband do. Edna “looked across at Robert and began to laugh” (p. 4), and Robert “preferred to stay where he was and talk to Mrs. Pontellier” (p. 5), so it seems like Edna and Robert have an affectionate friendship.
* Both Edna and Robert are “interested in what the other said,” and they have a real interest in each other, which seems different from Edna’s relationship with her husband (p. 6). In chapter I, Mr. Pontellier tries to listen to Edna’s story but thinks it is “some utter nonsense” (p. 4), whereas Robert “preferred to … talk to Mrs. Pontellier” (p. 5), and engages Edna in conversation.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Quick Write 10%

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

How does introducing Edna Pontellier through the perspective of Mr. Pontellier develop Edna’s character?

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 5: Closing 5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate chapter III of *The Awakening* (from “It was eleven o’clock that night when Mr. Pontellier returned” to “forced to admit that she knew of none better”). Also, direct students to box any unfamiliar words from chapter III and look up their definitions. Instruct them to choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text. Additionally, after completing reading and annotation, students should respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

**How do events and specific details in chapter III further develop the relationship between Mr. and Pontellier and Edna?**

# Homework

Read and annotate chapter III of *The Awakening* (from “It was eleven o’clock that night when Mr. Pontellier returned” to “forced to admit that she knew of none better”). Box any unfamiliar words from chapter III and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text. Additionally, after completing reading and annotation, respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

**How do events and specific details in chapter III further develop the relationship between Mr. Pontellier and Edna?**