

# 12.4.1 Lesson 8

## Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze Scene Ten of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (from “*It is a few hours later that night*” to “*The hot trumpet and drums from the Four Deuces sound loudly*”), in which Stanley and Blanche are alone together in the apartment, and Stanley physically assaults Blanche. Students discuss how Blanche and Stanley’s interactions contribute to the development of their respective characters and how their interactions further develop and refine the play’s central ideas. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How do the interactions between Stanley and Blanche further develop two central ideas in this scene?

For homework, students read and annotate Scene Eleven of *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

## Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RL.11-12.2	Determine two or more themes or 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 produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.
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. 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”).
L. 11-12.4.a	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. 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.
L.11-12.5	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

## 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 do the interactions between Stanley and Blanche further develop two central ideas in this scene?

**High Performance Response(s)**

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify two central ideas further developed in the interactions between Stanley and Blanche (e.g., power dynamics and identity).
- Analyze how the interactions between Stanley and Blanche further develop two central ideas (e.g., The conflict between Stanley and Blanche in Scene Ten further develops the central ideas of identity and power dynamics. Blanche attempts to prove that she is socially and morally superior to Stanley, claiming that Stanley and Mitch are pigs, when she states, “I have been foolish—casting my pearls before swine!” (p. 156). Stanley interprets Blanche’s insult, and her hoity-toity attitude, as a threat to his identity, so he attempts to regain power by destroying the idealized identity Blanche has created for herself. He discredits Blanche’s stories, stating, “[T]here wasn’t no wire at all,” and “There isn’t no millionaire!” and “Mitch didn’t come back with roses” (p. 157). The struggle between Stanley and Blanche demonstrates how power dynamics and identity interact; each character’s attempts to gain power are directly connected to challenging the other character’s identity.).

## Vocabulary

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**Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)**

- spectral (adj.) - of, relating to, or suggesting a ghost
- red-letter (adj.) - especially important or happy
- put on the dog (idiom) - to pretend that you are very stylish or rich
- improvising (v.) - composing and performing or delivering without previous preparation
- destitute (adj.) - extremely poor
- grotesque (adj.) - odd or unnatural in shape, appearance, or character
- inert (adj.) - unable to move

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

- transitory (adj.) - lasting only a short time

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

- exhilaration (n.) - a feeling of great happiness and excitement
- decked out (idiom) - clothed in a very fancy way
- wire (n.) - another word for telegram (see *telegram* below)
- bury the hatchet (idiom) - to stop being angry or upset about (something)
- incompatible (adj.) - not able to exist together without trouble or conflict
- telegram (n.) - a message sent by an old-fashioned system of sending messages over long distances by using wires and electrical signals
- rough-house (v.) - to play in a rough and noisy way

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

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Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards: RL.11-12.2, RL.11-12.3, W.11-12.9.a, L.11-12.4.a, L.11-12.5</li> <li>Text: <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> by Tennessee Williams, Scene Ten</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>Homework Accountability</li> <li>Reading and Discussion</li> <li>Quick Write</li> <li>Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5%</li> <li>20%</li> <li>55%</li> <li>15%</li> <li>5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.4.1 Lesson 1) (optional)

## 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%

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Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standards for this lesson: RL.11-12.2 and RL.11-12.3. In this lesson, students read Scene Ten of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and analyze how Blanche and Stanley's interactions develop and refine the play's central ideas.

- Students look at the agenda.

## Activity 2: Homework Accountability

**20%**

Instruct students to take out their responses to the first part of the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Analyze the character not discussed in this lesson's Quick Write, responding briefly to the same Quick Write prompt: Select either Mitch or Blanche. To what extent does this character exercise power in Scene Nine and to what extent is he or she successful in doing so?) Instruct students to form pairs and discuss their responses.

- See the High Performance Responses from 12.4.1 Lesson 7 for sample student responses.

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Instruct students to take out their responses to the second part of the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read Scene Ten of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and annotate for the interaction between character development and central ideas.) Instruct student pairs to share their annotations.

- Student annotations may include:
  - “I think of myself as a very, very rich woman! But I have been foolish—casting my pearls before swine!” (p. 156) - Blanche describes how she believes she has a beautiful mind and spirit, but she has made the mistake of associating with men who do not deserve or appreciate her. Blanche's claim supports the central idea of identity by demonstrating how Blanche views herself differently than Stanley views her.
  - “There isn't no millionaire! And Mitch didn't come back with roses 'cause I know where he is—” (p. 157) - Stanley directly confronts Blanche, telling her that her story is based on lies. This interaction increases the tension between Blanche and Stanley and develops the central idea of power dynamics. Stanley accuses Blanche of lying in order to demonstrate his control over her.
  - “We've had this date with each other from the beginning!” (p. 162) - Stanley's attempts to assume power over Blanche culminate with a sexual assault at the end

of Scene Ten. This event refines the central idea of power dynamics because Stanley overpowers Blanche in her attempts to stop the rape.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

### Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

55%

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss.

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

**How do Blanche and Stanley communicate in this scene? How does their communication further develop two central ideas?**

Instruct small groups to read Scene Ten, pages 151-156 (from “*It is a few hours later that night*” to “[*He goes back to the kitchen with the coat over his arm.*]”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss (W.11-12.9.a).

Provide students with the definitions of *spectral*, *red-letter*, and *put on the dog*.

- Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer the definitions before providing them to the group.
  - Students write the definitions of *spectral*, *red-letter*, and *put on the dog* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *exhilaration*, *decked out*, *wire*, and *bury the hatchet*.
  - Students write the definitions of *exhilaration*, *decked out*, *wire*, and *bury the hatchet* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

**What does Blanche’s behavior in the beginning of Scene Ten suggest about her emotional state?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Blanche’s unusual behavior in the beginning of Scene Ten suggests that she is distraught after realizing that Mitch does not want to have a respectful relationship with her. As the scene opens, Blanche sits alone and “*has been drinking fairly steadily since Mitch left*” (p. 151). Blanche has “*decked herself*

out” (p. 151) in an extravagant but dirty outfit. And, she talks as if she is addressing “*a group of spectral admirers*” (p. 151).

- Blanche’s reference to death, in the context of her drunken and depressed state, suggests that she may be considering death as an escape from her traumatic situation and the threatening environment in which she lives. When addressing her “*spectral admirers*” (p. 151), Blanche speaks of taking a “moonlight swim at the old rock-quarry” (p. 151). She warns that if any divers “hit a rock [they] don’t come up till tomorrow” (p. 151).
  - Blanche’s violent action of “*slam[ing] the mirror face down*” (p. 151) illustrates how upset she is by her outward appearance, which is now falling apart after Mitch has learned of and accepted Stanley’s version of Blanche’s past.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posing the following extension question to deepen students’ understanding:

**How does Blanche’s appearance in the beginning of Scene Ten further develop a central idea in the text?**

- Blanche’s appearance further develops the central idea of identity because there is a contrast between how Blanche wants other characters to perceive her and how they actually perceive her. Blanche wears a “*white satin evening gown*” and “*silver slippers*” (p. 151), items that represent the upper-class image Blanche wants others to see. However, Blanche’s fine clothes are “*somewhat soiled and crumpled*” and her shoes are “*scuffed*” (p. 151), which represents how Blanche’s idealized image is tarnished as a result of Stanley’s slander. Additionally, Blanche’s “*rhinestone tiara*” (p. 151), in contrast to a tiara made of real jewels, reflects how Blanche’s identity is based on an illusion, rather than being completely authentic.

**What is the mood in the apartment when Stanley arrives home from the hospital?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Even though Blanche is distraught over her breakup with Mitch, Stanley creates a lighthearted and pleasant mood in the apartment because he is excited about “having a baby” (p. 155). Williams describes Stanley as “*grinning amiably*” (p. 152) when he tells Blanche about the baby, and later he suggests that he and Blanche should “bury the hatchet” (p. 155) or resolve their differences by having a drink. Although Blanche is sad about her recent experience with Mitch, she laughs when Stanley compliments her “tiara” (p. 153). Even though Stanley likely knows that Blanche’s story about the telegram is false, he does not challenge her about it at first, but instead exclaims, “Well, it’s a red letter [sic] night for us both” (p. 155).



- Though the mood overall is more joyful than past scenes, there is still tension between Stanley and Blanche. Stanley seems happy when he arrives home because his wife Stella is close to giving birth. Blanche does not immediately have conflict with Stanley, but her question, “Does that mean we are to be alone in here?” (p. 152), creates a tense mood because she is uncomfortable being home alone with him. Tension builds when Blanche is uncomfortable with Stanley undressing and states, “Close the curtains before you undress any further” (p. 154).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct small groups to read Scene Ten, pages 156-158 (from “When I think of how divine it is going to be” to “*Ha—ha—ha! [He walks into the bedroom.]*”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Consider providing students with the definitions of *improvising* and *destitute*.

- Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer the definitions before providing them to the group.
  - Students write the definitions of *improvising* and *destitute* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- Consider providing students with the definitions of *incompatible* and *telegram*.
  - Students write the definitions of *incompatible* and *telegram* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

**What does Blanche’s response to Stanley on page 156 imply about the meaning of the phrase “interfere with your privacy” in this context? (L.11-12.5)**

- When Stanley questions whether Shep Huntleigh will “interfere with [Blanche’s] privacy” (p. 156), Blanche responds by saying, “It won’t be the sort of thing you have in mind. This man is a gentleman and he respects me” (p. 156). Blanche’s response suggests that the “sort of thing” Stanley has “in mind” (p. 156) is a purely physical relationship. Stanley uses the phrase, “interfere with your privacy” (p. 156) as a substitution for sexual actions.
- Explain to students that the phrase “interfere with your privacy” is an indirect expression for sexual actions. This kind of indirect substitution is called a *euphemism*: “the substitution of a mild, indirect, or vague expression for one thought to be offensive, harsh, or blunt.”

**How do Blanche's claims about beauty provide context for the meaning of *transitory*? (L.11-12.4.a)**

- Blanche contrasts physical beauty with “beauty of the mind and richness of the spirit and tenderness of the heart,” which are not “taken away” (p. 156). In contrast, she describes physical beauty as “passing” (p. 156); so, *transitory* likely means “temporary” or “not lasting.”
- Consider explaining that “casting my pearls before swine” is an allusion to the Bible. The allusion describes what happens when a person shares something valuable or holy with people who do not appreciate it and may destroy it.

**How do Blanche's monologues on pages 156 and 157 impact Stanley's reactions to her?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Stanley becomes hostile toward Blanche after her monologues on pages 156 and 157. Blanche states that she is a “very, very rich woman” who has been foolish for “casting her pearls before swine” (p. 156), suggesting that Stanley and Mitch are like pigs who do not appreciate her. She also states she could not have a relationship with Mitch, because “[their] ways of life are too different” and “[their] backgrounds are incompatible” (p. 157). Stanley knows that Blanche's account of Mitch's visit is false, and he feels threatened by Blanche's attempts to prove she is superior to him. Thus, Stanley's begins to discredit Blanche's story, point-by-point, stating, “there wasn't no wire at all” and “[t]here isn't no millionaire!” and “Mitch didn't come back with roses” (p. 157).
  - Stanley stops playing along with Blanche's story about Shep Huntleigh and begins to verbally attack her after her monologues on pages 156 and 157. Blanche describes Shep Huntleigh as a “gentleman” who “respects” her and only wants her “companionship” (p. 156). Stanley detests Blanche's lying, her superior attitude, and her misguided image of herself, so he finally becomes angry and accuses her of “lies and conceit and tricks” (p. 158).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

**How does Blanche's explanation of Mitch's visit contribute to Stanley's and Blanche's development as characters?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Blanche's version of the story combines facts with illusion. She begins with the true account of Mitch coming to the apartment “in his work-clothes” to “repeat slander” (p. 157) that he heard from Stanley. However, Blanche adds false details

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to the story when she outlines how Mitch “returned with a box of roses” and “implored [Blanche’s] forgiveness” (p. 157).

- Stanley further demonstrates his ability to use verbal aggression to harm and deceive Blanche. When Stanley realizes that Blanche’s story is inaccurate, he asks her questions to trap her in her lies. For example, when Blanche claims that she asked Mitch to leave, Stanley just asks, “You did, huh?” instead of immediately disclosing that he has already spoken with Mitch so Blanche will continue lying.

**How does Stanley and Blanche’s exchange on pages 156-158 further develop a central idea in the text?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Stanley and Blanche’s exchange on pages 156-158 further develops the central idea of power dynamics. Blanche attempts to exercise power over Stanley by proving that she is morally and socially superior to him. She describes him as “swine” (p. 156) and accuses him of “slander” (p. 157). In response, Stanley seeks power over Blanche by discrediting her idealized identity. Stanley questions Blanche’s stories about a telegram from Shep Huntleigh and a visit from Mitch, stating, “there wasn’t no wire at all” and “[t]here isn’t no millionaire!” and “Mitch didn’t come back with roses” (p. 157). As a result, all Blanche can say to defend herself is, “Oh!” (p. 158).
  - Blanche and Stanley’s exchange on pages 156-158 further develops the central idea of identity. Stanley destroys the illusion Blanche has created about Shep Huntleigh, telling her “there isn’t a goddam thing but imagination” (p. 158) and that her identity is based on “lies and conceit and tricks” (p. 158).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct small groups to read Scene Ten, pages 158-162 (from “Don’t come in here!” to “*The hot trumpet and drums from the Four Deuces sound loudly*”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *grotesque* and *inert*.

- Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer the definitions before providing them to the group.
- Students write the definitions of *grotesque* and *inert* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definition of *rough-house*.
  - Students write the definition of rough-house on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

**How does Blanche’s call to the operator contribute to Blanche’s development as a character?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Blanche’s call to the operator shows how afraid and alone Blanche feels after Stanley has taken total control of the situation, telling Blanche, “I’ve been on to you from the start!” (p. 158). When the operator is unable to connect Blanche to Shep Huntleigh, Blanche pleads helplessly, “Please understand, I—No! No, wait! ... One moment! Someone is—Nothing! Hold on, please!” (p. 159).
  - Blanche’s call to the operator shows how Blanche is helpless to escape from the situation in which Stanley has her trapped. When Blanche needs help, she calls the operator and asks for “Mr. Shep Huntleigh of Dallas” (p. 159). Blanche tells the operator she is “[c]aught in a trap” (p. 160), but the only support she can ask for is from Shep Huntleigh, who cannot save her because he is part of the illusion she has created as part of her own idealized identity.

**How does Williams use stage directions to demonstrate the effect that Stanley has on Blanche?**

- Williams uses the sounds and shadows that surround Blanche to demonstrate how Stanley’s emotional and verbal attacks affect Blanche. “*Lurid reflections*” (p. 158) and “*shadows ... of a grotesque and menacing form*” (p. 159) appear on the walls. These reflections and shadows suggest that Blanche feels trapped and endangered by Stanley.

**How does the physical struggle between Blanche and Stanley refine a central idea in the text?**

- The physical struggle in Scene Ten develops the central idea of power dynamics. Blanche attempts to protect herself when she says, “I could twist the broken end [of this bottle] in your face!” (p. 162), but Stanley uses his physical strength to overpower Blanche, and she becomes an “*inert figure*” (p. 162) who cannot defend herself. By the time Stanley rapes Blanche, he has already destroyed her identity and caused her significant emotional pain. Thus, he completes his attack by “carr[y]ing [Blanche] to the bed” (p. 162) against her will in order to physically demonstrate that he has total power and control over her.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students are unable to infer what happens at the end of Scene Ten when Stanley “carries [Blanche] to the bed” (p. 162), explain that Stanley rapes Blanche.

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:

**How do the interactions between Stanley and Blanche further develop two central ideas in this scene?**

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in 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.
- Consider using the Short Response Rubric to assess students’ writing. Students may use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

## Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate Scene Eleven of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (from “*It is some weeks later. Stella is packing Blanche’s things*” to “*This game is seven-card stud*”) (W.11-12.9.a).

- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider reminding students that they should annotate for character development, central ideas, and structural choices.

## Homework

Read and annotate Scene Eleven of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (from “*It is some weeks later. Stella is packing Blanche’s things*” to “*This game is seven-card stud*”).

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