

12.4.1 Lesson 5

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze Scene Six of *A Streetcar Named Desire* (from “*It is about two A.M. on the same evening*” to “*Sometimes—there’s God—so quickly!*”), in which Blanche and Mitch return from their date. Students read the scene aloud in pairs, and then independently identify three instances in this scene that demonstrate the central ideas of power dynamics and identity. Students use their notes and annotations to guide small group discussions about what roles power dynamics and identity play in Blanche’s interactions with Mitch. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: What roles do power dynamics and identity play in Blanche’s interactions with Mitch in this scene?

For homework, students conduct a brief search into the polka “Varsouviana” and the song “It’s Only a Paper Moon” and write 3-4 sentences summarizing their findings. Students also write a brief response to the following prompt: How does Williams’s use of the polka “Varsouviana” (p. 115) contribute to the development of Blanche’s character at the end of Scene Six?

Standards

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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. 11-12.3.a, b, d	<p>Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events. b. Use narrative techniques such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines to develop experiences, events, and/or characters. d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
W. 11-12.9.a	<p>Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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”).

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>
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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 roles do power dynamics and identity play in Blanche’s interactions with Mitch in this scene?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Analyze the roles power dynamics and identity play in Blanche’s interactions with Mitch in this scene (e.g., Blanche uses her identity to secure power in her relationship with Mitch through her presentation of herself as a flirtatious, elegant, and a cultured woman of high society. Blanche asks Mitch to imagine them in “a little artists’ cafe [sic] on the Left Bank in Paris” (p. 104) while they have a “night-cap” (p. 103), and then flirts with Mitch in French. Blanche also creates an image of herself as a wounded woman in need of care and protection. She achieves this fragile image by telling the story of how her husband “stuck the revolver into his mouth, and fired,” making herself vulnerable to Mitch (p. 115). Blanche’s presentation of her various identities gives her power in the relationship, because in response Mitch “like[s] [her] to be exactly the way that [she is]” (p. 103), which shows that he believes she is a cultured, elegant woman. Mitch falls for Blanche’s idealized image, realizing he “need[s] somebody, too” (p. 116).).

Vocabulary

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Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- neurasthenic (adj.) - pertaining to or suffering from nervous exhaustion
- stolid (adj.) - not easily stirred or moved mentally; unemotional; passive
- night-cap (n.) - an alcoholic drink taken at bedtime or at the end of a festive evening
- Bohemian (adj.) - living a wandering or vagabond life
- reproving (v.) - disapproving
- effeminate (adj.) - having traits, tastes, habits, etc. traditionally considered feminine, such as softness or delicacy
- unendurably (adv.) - not bearably; not tolerably

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

- None.

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

- obliged (v.) - forced or required to do something because of a law or rule or because it is necessary
- physique (n.) - the size and shape of a person's body
- demureness (n.) - the state of being quiet and polite
- insufferably (adv.) - very badly or unpleasantly

Lesson Agenda/Overview

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Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.11-12.2, RL.11-12.3, W.11-12.3.a, b, d, W.11-12.9.a, SL.11-12.1.a, c Text: <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> by Tennessee Williams, Scene Six Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Dramatic Reading and Evidence Collection Small Group Discussion Quick Write Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 15% 30% 30% 15% 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the 12.4 Narrative Writing Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.4.1 Lesson 4)
- Copies of the 12.4.1 Lesson 5 Evidence Collection Tool for each student (optional)
- Student copies of the 12.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.4.1 Lesson 3)
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.4.1 Lesson 1) (optional)

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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 standards for this lesson: RL.11-12.2 and RL.11-12.3. In this lesson, students analyze Scene Six of *A Streetcar Named Desire*, noting three instances in the scene that demonstrate the central ideas of power dynamics and identity. Students then use their notes and annotations to guide small group discussions.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the first part of the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read Scene Six of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and annotate for the development of central ideas.) Instruct students to form pairs and share their annotations.

- Student annotations may include:
 - “I guess you are used to girls that like to be lost. The kind that get lost immediately, on the first date!” (p. 103)—This evidence develops the central idea of identity, because Blanche’s explicitly presents herself as a woman who is moral and reserved and will not engage in intimate relations on the first date.

- “I like you to be exactly the way you are, because in all my—experience—I have never known anyone like you.” (p. 103)—This evidence develops the central idea of power dynamics, because Mitch’s statement demonstrates Blanche’s power over him. He likes Blanche despite how difficult she has been.
- “Naw. Naw, I—” (p. 104)—This evidence develops the central idea of power dynamics because when Blanche asks him if he understands French, Mitch’s response shows that Blanche’s cultural knowledge intimidates Mitch, giving Blanche more power in their relationship.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to take out their responses to the second part of the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Write a text-based narrative in response to the following prompt: Choose either Blanche or Stanley. Write a monologue from your chosen character’s perspective describing Blanche’s life before she came to New Orleans.) Instruct student pairs to share their narrative writing pieces, specifically discussing how their narrative writing aligns to W.11-12.3.a, b, and d.

- Student responses will vary. Students should use the language of W.11-12.3.a, b, and d from the 12.4 Narrative Writing Rubric and Checklist in discussion.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Dramatic Reading and Evidence Collection

30%

Instruct students to form pairs to read aloud Scene Six (from “*It is about two A.M. on the same evening*” to “Sometimes—there’s God—so quickly!”). Instruct students to independently select a part, either Mitch or Blanche, and perform a dramatic reading of the scene.

- Students form pairs, select a part, and perform a dramatic reading of Scene Six.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students throughout the lesson:

How does Blanche interact with Mitch? How are Blanche’s interactions with Mitch different from her interactions with Stanley?

Provide students with the definitions of *neurasthenic*, *stolid*, *night-cap*, *Bohemian*, *reproving*, *effeminate*, and *unendurably*.

- Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.
 - Students write the definitions of *neurasthenic*, *stolid*, *night-cap*, *Bohemian*, *reproving*, *effeminate*, and *unendurably* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *obliged*, *physique*, *demureness*, and *insufferably*.
 - Students write the definitions of *obliged*, *physique*, *demureness*, and *insufferably* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- Provide students with the following translations: “*joie de vivre!*” (p. 104) means “joy of life” and “*Voulez-vous couchez avec moi ce soir? Vous ne comprenez pas? Ah, quelle dommage!*”(p. 104) means “Do you want to sleep with me tonight? You don’t understand? Ah, what a pity!” However, students who have previously studied French will recognize “*quelle dommage*” is grammatically incorrect; the correct French for “what a pity” is *quel dommage*. Consider discussing with students what Blanche’s incorrect French suggests about her character.
- As this section of text contains negative references to homosexuality, consider establishing and modeling classroom norms and expectations for a respectful and critical academic discussion.

Instruct students to independently review Scene Six (from “*It is about two A.M. on the same evening*” to “Sometimes—there’s God—so quickly!”) and identify and annotate three instances in the scene that demonstrate the central ideas of power dynamics and identity (W.11-12.9.a). Explain to students that during the following activity they will use their evidence to guide a small group discussion.

- Students independently review Scene Six and identify and annotate three instances in the scene that demonstrate the central ideas of power dynamics and identity.
- See the Model 12.4.1 Lesson 5 Evidence Collection Tool at the end of this lesson for sample student responses.
- Reading and discussion activities in this lesson differ from previous lessons to allow students greater independence in analyzing the text.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** For additional support, consider providing students with copies of the 12.4.1 Lesson 5 Evidence Collection Tool.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider facilitating a discussion about the text’s central ideas if students need more support.

Activity 4: Small Group Discussion

30%

Instruct students to form small groups to discuss their analysis from the previous activity. Encourage students to continue to return to the text to find new evidence to support their analysis.

- Students form small groups and discuss their analysis from the previous activity.
- See the Model 12.4.1 Lesson 5 Evidence Collection Tool at the end of this lesson for sample student responses.
- Instruct students to refer to the relevant portions of the 12.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist to guide their discussions.
- Consider reminding students of their previous work with SL.11-12.1.a, as this discussion requires that students come to class having read the material and asks them to explicitly draw on evidence from the text to support their discussion.
- Consider reminding students of their previous work with SL.11-12.1.c, as this discussion requires that students pose and respond to questions and qualify or justify their own points of agreement and disagreement with other students.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

What roles do power dynamics and identity play in Blanche's interactions with Mitch 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 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to conduct a brief search into the polka “Varsouviana” and the song “It’s Only a Paper Moon” and write 3-4 sentences summarizing their findings. Also, instruct students to briefly respond in writing to the following prompt:

How does Williams’s use of the polka “Varsouviana” (p. 115) contribute to the development of Blanche’s character at the end of Scene Six?

- Students follow along.

Homework

Conduct a brief search into the polka “Varsouviana” and the song “It’s Only a Paper Moon” and write 3-4 sentences summarizing your findings. Additionally, write a brief response to the following prompt:

How does Williams’s use of the polka “Varsouviana” (p. 115) contribute to the development of Blanche’s character at the end of Scene Six?

12.4.1 Lesson 5 Evidence Collection Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Use this tool to collect evidence in preparation for the small group discussion and Quick Write. Read Scene Six of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and identify evidence of the roles power dynamics and identity play in Blanche's interactions with Mitch.

Evidence from Blanche and Mitch's Interactions	What roles do power dynamics and identity play in Blanche's interactions with Mitch in this scene?

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Model 12.4.1 Lesson 5 Evidence Collection Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Use this tool to collect evidence in preparation for the small group discussion and Quick Write. Read Scene Six of *A Streetcar Named Desire* and identify evidence of the roles power dynamics and identity play in Blanche's interactions with Mitch.

Evidence from Blanche and Mitch's interactions	What roles do power dynamics and identity play in Blanche's interactions with Mitch in this scene?
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“MITCH: That night when we parked by the lake and I kissed you—

BLANCHE: Honey, it wasn’t the kiss I objected to. I liked the kiss very much. It was the other little—familiarity—that I—felt obliged to—discourage ... I didn’t resent it! Not a bit in the world! In fact, I was somewhat flattered that you—desired me! But, honey, you know as well as I do that a single girl, a girl alone in the world, has got to keep a firm hold on her emotions or she’ll be lost!

MITCH [*solemnly*]: Lost?

BLANCHE: I guess you are used to girls that like to be lost. The kind that get lost immediately, on the first date!” (pp. 102-103)

“MITCH: Just give me a slap whenever I step out of bounds.

BLANCHE: That won’t be necessary. You’re a natural gentleman, one of the very few that are left in the world. I don’t want you to think that I am severe and old maid school-teacherish or anything like that. It’s just—well—

MITCH: Huh?

BLANCHE: I guess it is just that I have—old-fashioned ideals! [*She rolls her eyes, knowing he cannot see her face. Mitch goes to the front door. There is a considerable silence between them. Blanche sighs and Mitch coughs self-consciously.*]” (p. 108)

Blanche exercises power in her interactions with Mitch through her portrayal of herself as not “[t]he kind [of girl that] get[s] lost immediately, on the first date!” (p. 103), or not the kind of girl who has intimate relations on the first date. By creating the identity of a chaste woman with “old-fashioned ideals” (p. 108), Blanche dictates the terms of their physical intimacy, and thus controls the relationship.

<p>“BLANCHE: The Grey boy! He’d stuck the revolver into his mouth, and fired—so that the back of his head had been—blown away! [<i>She sways and covers her face.</i>] It was because—on the dance-floor—unable to stop myself—I’d suddenly said—‘I saw! I know! You disgust me...’ And then the searchlight which had been turned on the world was turned off again and never for one moment since has there been any light that’s stronger than this—kitchen—candle...” (p. 115)</p> <p>“MITCH: [<i>drawing her slowly into his arms</i>]: You need somebody. And I need somebody, too. Could it be—you and me, Blanche?” (p. 116)</p>	<p>Blanche uses identity and power to make Mitch feel in control through her portrayal of herself as a wounded woman in need of care and protection. Blanche makes herself vulnerable to Mitch by telling the story of her previous marriage, including how her husband killed himself and that the “searchlight” that made her world seem so bright “was turned off again” (p. 115). Blanche’s story of her dead husband makes Mitch sympathetic toward her, as he “<i>draw[s] her slowly into his arms</i>” when she finishes speaking (p. 116). Blanche’s performance of vulnerability empowers Mitch to believe he can be the “somebody” she “need[s]” (p. 116).</p>
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<p>“MITCH: I like you to be exactly the way that you are, because in all my—experience—I have never known anyone like you” (p. 103).</p> <p>“MITCH: I talked to my mother about you and she said, ‘How old is Blanche?’ And I wasn’t able to tell her. [<i>There is another pause.</i>]</p> <p>BLANCHE: You talked to your mother about me?</p> <p>MITCH: Yes.</p> <p>BLANCHE: Why?</p> <p>MITCH: I told my mother how nice you were, and I liked you.</p> <p>...</p> <p>MITCH: She won’t live long. Maybe just a few months.</p> <p>BLANCHE: Oh.</p> <p>MITCH: She worries because I’m not settled.</p> <p>BLANCHE: Oh.</p> <p>MITCH: She wants me to be settled down before she— [<i>His voice is hoarse and he clears his throat twice, shuffling nervously around with his hands in and out of his pockets.</i>]” (pp. 112-113)</p>	<p>When Mitch discloses how much he likes Blanche, he makes himself vulnerable to her, thus showing that Mitch accepts Blanche’s portrayal of her idealized identity, which gives her more power in their interactions. When Mitch says he “like[s] [her] to be exactly the way that [she is]” (p. 103) despite how difficult she acts, his warmth for her shows how much power Blanche has over him. Mitch makes himself vulnerable to Blanche when he reveals that he has spoken to his mother about “how nice” he thinks Blanche is and how he “like[s]” her (p. 112), and shares with Blanche how sick his mother is. Mitch’s moment of vulnerability, in which he reveals his tenderness, gives Blanche power in the relationship. Blanche gains power because she learns that Mitch both wants to get “settled” (p. 113) to please his mother and that Mitch likes Blanche very much, which are two pieces of information Blanche can use to her advantage to move forward in a new life with Mitch.</p>
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“BLANCHE: We are going to be very Bohemian. We are going to pretend we are sitting in a little artists’ cafe [sic] on the Left Bank in Paris! [*She lights a candle stub and puts it in a bottle.*] *Je suis la Dame aux Camellias! Vous êtes—Armand! Understand French?*

MITCH [*heavily*]: Naw. Naw, I—

BLANCHE: *Voulez-vous couchez avec moi ce soir? Vous ne comprenez pas? Ah, quelle dommage!*—I mean it’s a damned good thing ... I’ve found some liquor! Just enough for two shots without any dividends, honey...” (p. 104)

“BLANCHE [*gaily*]: I said unhand me, sir. [*He fumblingly embraces her. Her voice sounds gently reproving.*] Now, Mitch. Just because Stanley and Stella aren’t at home is no reason why you shouldn’t behave like a gentleman.

...

BLANCHE: I guess it is just that I have —old-fashioned ideals! [*She rolls her eyes, knowing he cannot see her face. Mitch goes to the front door. There is a considerable silence between them. Blanche sighs and Mitch coughs self-consciously.*]” (p. 108)

Through her presentation of herself as a flirtatious, upper-class woman, Blanche secures power in her interactions with Mitch by charming and intimidating him. Blanche creates the image of herself as a cultured, upper-class woman by flirting with Mitch in French. Blanche asks him, “*Voulez-vous couchez avec moi ce soir?*” (p. 104), or “Will you sleep with me tonight?” even though Mitch does not understand French and she does not have any intention of sleeping with him that night, since she “*rolls her eyes, knowing he cannot see her face*” (p. 108). Blanche’s flirtatious, cultured identity charms and intimidates Mitch, as he self-consciously stutters, “Naw. Naw, I—” (p. 104) when she asks him if he understands French. Blanche’s exerts power by presenting her cultured identity to move herself closer to fulfilling her desire of a new beginning with Mitch.