

12.4.1 Lesson 10

Introduction

In this lesson, students review and analyze *A Streetcar Named Desire* in its entirety. Students discuss the characters and forces that contribute to Blanche's desperate predicament in Scene Eleven and engage in a Round Robin discussion of the following prompt: What characters or forces contribute to Blanche's predicament in Scene Eleven? Student learning is assessed via the Round Robin Discussion. Students also self-assess their own contributions to the discussion, and complete the 12.4.1 Lesson 10 Exit Slip in which they explain how the analyses and evidence presented during discussion changed or confirmed their own thinking.

For homework, students reread the epigraph by Hart Crane at the beginning of the play and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: Select one character from *A Streetcar Named Desire* and analyze that character in relation to the play's epigraph.

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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)	
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> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 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. 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.

Assessment

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Assessment(s)

Student learning is assessed via an Exit Slip following a Round Robin discussion at the end of the lesson. Students explain how the discussion confirmed or changed their responses to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- What characters or forces contribute to Blanche's predicament in Scene Eleven?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify the characters or forces that contribute to Blanche's predicament in Scene Eleven.
- Discuss the ways in which these characters or forces contribute to Blanche's predicament.
- See Activity 3: Round Robin Discussion and Self-Assessment for sample student responses.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- None*

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

- None*

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

- None*

* Because this is not a close reading lesson, there is no specified vocabulary. However, in the process of returning to the text, students may uncover unfamiliar words. Teachers can guide students to make meaning of these words using the strategies outlined in L.11-12.4.a-d.

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.11-12.2, RL.11-12.3, SL.11-12.1.a, c, d Text: <i>A Streetcar Named Desire</i> by Tennessee Williams 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Round Robin Discussion and Self-Assessment 4. 12.4.1 Lesson 10 Exit Slip and Assessment 5. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 0% 3. 80% 4. 10% 5. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the 12.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.4.1 Lesson 3)
- Copies of the 12.4.1 Lesson 10 Exit Slip for each student.

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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 examine *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams in its entirety. Students engage in a Round Robin discussion about what characters or forces contribute to Blanche's predicament in Scene Eleven.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

0%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment (Review *A Streetcar Named Desire*, your notes, annotations, and previous Quick Writes in preparation for the following lesson's discussion about the following prompt: What characters or forces contribute to Blanche's predicament in Scene Eleven?)

- Students take out their notes, annotations, and previous Quick Writes in preparation for the Round Robin discussion.
- Students are held accountable for their homework during Activity 3: Round Robin Discussion and Self-Assessment.

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Activity 3: Round Robin Discussion and Self-Assessment

80%

Explain to students that they will conclude their reading of *A Streetcar Named Desire* with a Round Robin Discussion on the following prompt:

What characters or forces contribute to Blanche's predicament in Scene Eleven?

Instruct students to take out their copies of the 12.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist for SL.11-12.1.a, c, d. Explain that at the end of the Round Robin Discussion, students self-assess their application of these skills.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students throughout this lesson:

Who or what is responsible for what happens to Blanche in Scene Eleven?

- Consider reminding students of their previous work with SL.11-12.1.a, which 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, which requires that students pose and respond to questions and qualify or justify their own points of agreement and disagreement with other students.
- Consider reminding students of their previous work with SL.11-12.1.d, which requires that students respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives and synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue.

Instruct students to arrange themselves in two concentric circles. Inform students that each circle should contain the same number of students, creating pairs between the two circles, and that student pairs should face each other.

Explain to students that the Round Robin Discussion begins with students in the inner circle discussing their answers to the prompt for one minute. Students in the outer circle first listen and then respond with their own answers to the prompt for one minute.

After two minutes, instruct students in the outer circle to rotate one place to the right and repeat the established protocol with a new peer.

- This Round Robin Discussion includes two rotations so that each student presents his or her ideas to three peers.
 - Student responses may include:
 - Stanley is responsible for Blanche's predicament, as he seeks to exercise power over her through emotional cruelty and physical aggression. Stanley sets out to

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- destroy Blanche's hopes and her identity, using the information that he obtains from Shaw to destroy her image as a "refined and particular type of girl" (p. 122) and present her as a "town character" (p. 121) because of her sexual activities. Having ruined Blanche's relationship with Mitch through his accusations and presented her with a bus ticket back to Laurel, Stanley follows up his emotional abuse with violence in Scene Ten when he "*picks up [Blanche's] inert figure and carries her to the bed*" (p. 162) to sexually assault her. Stanley's attack on both her identity and her body cause Blanche to construct an idealized version of herself and the world around her, in which men like Shep Huntleigh admire her and she can rely on "the kindness of strangers" (p. 178) such as the doctor.
- Mitch's rejection of Blanche plays a major role in her predicament in Scene Eleven as, like Stanley, he attempts to tear apart her identity, dismissing her "old-fashioned" ideals as "malarkey" (p. 145). Following Stanley's accusations, Mitch treats Blanche as unworthy of respect, telling her that she is "not clean enough" (p. 150) to marry or introduce to his mother and "*fumbling to embrace her*" (p. 149) as he attempts to force himself on her physically. Mitch's behavior in Scene Nine leaves Blanche devastated and on the edge of "*hysteria*" (p. 150) even before Stanley assaults her.
 - Stella bears some responsibility for Blanche's predicament in Scene Eleven. As Blanche points out in Scene One, Stella "abandoned" Belle Reve for New Orleans while Blanche "stayed and struggled," so that as the family home went bankrupt, "*all the burden descended on [Blanche's] shoulders*" (p. 20). When Blanche arrives in New Orleans, Stella sees the hostility between Blanche and Stanley but does not stand up to her husband. Instead, Stella goes back to Stanley after he hits her in Scene Three and tells Blanche that "[her] superior attitude is a bit out of place" (p. 81). Even as Stanley becomes more aggressive toward Blanche, Stella fails to defend her. When Stanley tells Stella what he has learned about Blanche, Stella insists that his accusations are "contemptible—lies" (p. 120) but does not warn her sister, claiming that "nothing has happened" (p. 128) at the end of Scene Seven. Stella does not attempt to help Blanche when Stanley presents her with the bus ticket, but instead she "*rises abruptly and turns her back*" (p. 136), refusing to take responsibility. Finally, Stella chooses to believe Stanley's version of events when Blanche tells her about the rape, explaining to Eunice that "[she] couldn't believe [Blanche's] story and go on living with Stanley" (p. 165). This remark suggests that Stella at least has doubts about Stanley but refuses to act on them, preferring instead to send Blanche away to a psychiatric institution. As the Matron and the Doctor enter the flat, Stella cries "What have I done to my sister?" (p. 176). Stella's reaction suggests that she is aware of her own responsibility for Blanche's predicament and feels guilty for the part that she has played.

- Blanche’s predicament reflects the injustices of a society in which women are held to different standards of behavior than men. When Stanley first meets Blanche, the stage directions describe him as a man who “*sizes women up at a glance, with sexual classifications, crude images flashing into his mind and determining the way he smiles at them*” (p. 25). Yet it is Stanley who, along with Keifaber and Shaw, condemns Blanche, comparing marriage to her to “jump[ing] in a tank with a school of sharks” (p. 126), implying that Blanche is unsuitable for marriage, as well as dangerous. Mitch adopts the same attitude, telling Blanche that he no longer wishes to marry a woman who is “not clean enough to bring in the house with [his] mother” (p. 150). Both men abuse Blanche emotionally, treating her as an object who does not deserve their respect because of her past. Blanche is therefore the victim of a society in which it is common for men to treat a woman without respect based on her sexual behavior.
- The unequal social structures that make it difficult for women to protect themselves or support one another are responsible for Blanche’s predicament. Stella’s failure to help her sister is at least partly the result of her own powerlessness. When Stella tries to persuade her husband not to send Blanche away in Scene Seven, Stanley tells her “*She’ll go! Period. P.S. She’ll go Tuesday*” (p. 127), and Stanley makes it clear with his violent outburst in Scene Eight that he intends to be “the king around here” (p. 131). Faced with the choice between believing her sister’s story and losing everything, Stella finds herself in an impossible predicament, as she is caught between believing that Stanley raped Blanche and sending her sister away to a psychiatric institution, prompting Eunice to tell Stella that she did “the only thing [she] could do” (p. 176).
- Blanche’s idealized identity partially contributes to her predicament in Scene Eleven. Blanche constructs her own view of the world because the predicament in which she finds herself is incompatible or contrasts with her identity as a refined lady. In Elysian Fields, within Stella and Stanley’s community, Blanche’s education and upbringing have no importance. Her elegant clothing becomes, in Stanley’s words, a “worn-out Mardi Gras outfit, rented for fifty cents from some rag-picker” (p. 158). According to Stanley, Blanche’s idealized version of herself and her life “isn’t a goddam thing but imagination” (p. 158). As Blanche puts it, she is “casting [her] pearls before swine” (p. 156). Even before Stanley sexually assaults her, Blanche struggles with the contrast between her view of herself and her surroundings, causing her to create the fantasy of a “gentleman” (p. 156) like Shep Huntleigh coming to rescue her.
- Blanche’s husband’s infidelity and his suicide represent a trauma from which she never recovers, the consequences of which drive Blanche to her predicament in Scene Eleven. In Scene Six, Blanche compares falling in love with Allan, her former

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husband, to “suddenly turn[ing] a blinding light on something that had always been half in shadow” (p. 114). Following Allan’s death, “the searchlight which had been turned on the world was turned off again” (p. 115), and Blanche’s life was never the same. The “Varsouviana,” the music playing as Blanche danced with her husband for the last time, plays several times throughout Scene Eleven, linking the earlier trauma to Blanche’s current predicament, and highlighting its lasting and devastating impact on her life.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to use the 12.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist to self-assess their own application of SL.11-12.1.a, c, d during the Round Robin Discussion. Instruct students to provide a 1-2 sentence explanation of the self-assessment.

- Students self-assess their speaking and listening skills for SL.11-12.1.a, c, d.

Activity 4: 12.4.1 Lesson 10 Exit Slip and Assessment

10%

Distribute the 12.4.1 Lesson 10 Exit Slip. Instruct students to complete the Exit Slip independently.

- See the Model 12.4.1 Lesson 10 Exit Slip at the end of this lesson.

Collect student Exit Slips.

Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to reread the epigraph by Hart Crane at the beginning of the play and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: Select one character from *A Streetcar Named Desire* and analyze that character in relation to the play’s epigraph.

- Students follow along.

Homework

Reread the epigraph by Hart Crane at the beginning of the play and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: Select one character from *A Streetcar Named Desire* and analyze that character in relation to the play's epigraph.

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12.4.1 Lesson 10 Exit Slip

Name :		Class :		Date :	
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Directions: Explain how the discussion confirmed or changed your initial response to the prompt.

Text: *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams

Prompt: What characters or forces contribute to Blanche's predicament in Scene Eleven?

Provide evidence of how the discussion changed or confirmed your initial response to the prompt.

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Model 12.4.1 Lesson 10 Exit Slip

Name :		Class :		Date :	
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Directions: Explain how the discussion confirmed or changed your initial response to the prompt.

Text: *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams

Prompt: What characters or forces contribute to Blanche's predicament in Scene Eleven?

Provide evidence of how the discussion changed or confirmed your initial response to the prompt.

The Round Robin Discussion supported my analysis that Stanley is primarily responsible for Blanche's predicament, because it provided me with more evidence of his aggression, both emotional and physical, toward Blanche. Even before Stanley sexually assaults Blanche, he works to tear apart her identity, using the information that he obtains from Shaw to suggest that she is not "a refined and particular type of girl" (p. 122) but rather a predator whom Stanley compares to "a school of sharks" (p. 126). Stanley's rape of Blanche represents more than a physical attack: it is a deliberate attempt to exercise power and destroy Blanche's identity. At the same time, the discussion made me consider other factors that contribute to Blanche's predicament in Scene Eleven, such as the social pressures that make it difficult for women to support one another. Stella fails to support Blanche in part because she feels powerless to do so. When she tries to persuade Stanley not to send Blanche away, he tells her "*She'll go! Period. P.S. She'll go Tuesday*" (p. 127), and Stanley makes it clear with his violent outburst in Scene Eight that he intends to be "the king around here" (p. 131), which confirms Stella's powerlessness.

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