

12.4.2

Lesson 14

Introduction

In this lesson, students analyze pages 125-158 of *The Namesake* (from “He lives in New York now. In May he graduated” to “at Maxine’s side, in this cloistered wilderness, he is free”), in which Gogol meets Maxine and spends time with her family in New York and New Hampshire. Students work in small groups to answer five guiding discussion questions about the excerpt. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: What does Gogol’s relationship with Maxine and her family illustrate about his relationship with his own parents?

For homework, students read pages 159-187 of *The Namesake* and annotate for structural choices. Students also respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: How does Gogol’s career choice and his choice to move in with Maxine further develop a central idea in the text?

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Standards

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	<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	<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>

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 does Gogol's relationship with Maxine and her family illustrate about his relationship with his own parents?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Analyze what Gogol's relationship with Maxine and her family illustrates about his relationship with his own parents (e.g., Gogol's relationship with Maxine and her family illustrates how much tension exists between Gogol and his parents and how Gogol desires to be different than and free from them. Gogol's relationship with Maxine and her family is immediately "effortless[]" as they "incorporate" (p. 136) him into their lives with ease. In contrast, Gogol warns Maxine that "they will not be able to touch or kiss each other in front of his parents" (p. 145). He also tells her that his parents "don't own a corkscrew" (p. 145), suggesting that Maxine will not experience the same "effortless[] incorporat[ion]" (p. 136) into his family that Gogol experiences with hers. Additionally, on vacation with Maxine's family, Gogol sees the difference between "the call of pleasure that summons Gerald and Lydia to New Hampshire" (p. 142) and "an obligation" (p. 141) that summons the Gangulis back to Calcutta. By becoming a part of Maxine's family, Gogol is able to escape his own family and be "free" (p. 158). This highlights Gogol's negative feelings toward his own parents and his desire to break away from them and their "expectation[s]" (p. 142).).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- arbitrary (adj.) - unreasonable; unsupported
- vociferous (adj.) - expressed in a very loud or forceful way
- indulgent (adj.) - done or enjoyed as a special pleasure
- fundamentalism (n.) - a movement or attitude stressing strict and literal adherence to a set of basic principles
- minimalist (adj.) - of, relating to, or following a style in art, literature, or music that is very simple and uses a small number of colors, parts, materials, etc.
- mortified (adj.) - humiliated or shamed, as by injury to one's pride or self-respect
- emulates (v.) - tries to equal or excel; imitates with effort to equal or surpass
- exasperation (n.) - irritation; extreme annoyance
- affluence (n.) - having a large amount of money and owning many expensive things
- anomaly (n.) - an odd, peculiar, or strange condition, situation, quality, etc.
- diffident (adj.) - restrained or reserved in manner, conduct, etc.
- scantily (adv.) - meagerly; not adequately
- stringency (n.) - strictness; closeness; rigor

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

- None.

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

- alma mater (n.) - the school, college, or university that someone attended
- deliberation (n.) - careful thought or discussion done in order to make a decision
- unkempt (adj.) - not neat or orderly; messy or untidy
- unflustered (adj.) - not upset or nervous
- caterers (n.) - people who provide food and drinks at a party, meeting, etc., especially as a job
- steeling (v.) - making (yourself) ready for something difficult or unpleasant
- reciprocating (v.) - giving or feeling something in return
- musty (adj.) - having a bad smell because of wetness, old age, or lack of fresh air

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.11-12.3, W.11-12.9.a, SL.11-12.1.a, c Text: <i>The Namesake</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri, pages 125-158 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Reading and Discussion 4. Quick Write 5. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 10% 3. 65% 4. 15% 5. 5%

Materials

- 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 standard for this lesson: RL.11-12.3. In this lesson, students analyze pages 125-158 of *The Namesake*, focusing on what Gogol's relationship with Maxine and her family illustrates about his relationship with his parents.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read and annotate pages 125-158 of *The Namesake*.) Instruct students to form pairs and share their annotations.

- Student annotations will vary.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

65%

Instruct students to form small groups. Explain to students that this discussion focuses on pages 125-158 of *The Namesake* (from "He lives in New York now. In May he graduated" to "at Maxine's side, in this cloistered wilderness, he is free") and is structured with five main

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discussion prompts. In small groups, students discuss each question in-depth, presenting a variety of text evidence and analysis. Remind students to listen to diverse perspectives, respond to their peers' observations, and consider the possibility of multiple responses. Instruct students to use the relevant portions of the 12.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist to guide their discussion.

- The structure of this lesson is meant to increase student independence in text analysis by scaffolding their understanding through collaborative discussion.
- 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.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students throughout this lesson:

What does Gogol's relationship with Maxine and her family suggest about his relationship with his own parents?

Post or project the questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss (W.11-12.9.a).

Instruct student groups to refer to pages 125--158 (from "He lives in New York now. In May he graduated" to "at Maxine's side, in this cloistered wilderness, he is free") and discuss the following questions in their groups before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *arbitrary*, *vociferous*, *indulgent*, *fundamentalism*, *minimalist*, *mortified*, *emulates*, *exasperation*, *affluence*, *anomaly*, *diffident*, *scantily*, and *stringency*.

- 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 *arbitrary*, *vociferous*, *indulgent*, *fundamentalism*, *minimalist*, *mortified*, *emulates*, *exasperation*, *affluence*, *anomaly*, *diffident*, *scantily*, and *stringency* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *alma mater*, *deliberation*, *unkempt*, *unflustered*, *caterers*, *steeling*, *reciprocating*, and *musty*.
 - Students write the definitions of *alma mater*, *deliberation*, *unkempt*, *unflustered*, *caterers*, *steeling*, *reciprocating*, and *musty* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

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How do pages 125-127 highlight how Gogol avoids “remain[ing] unquestionably” (p. 126) in his parents’ world?

- Student responses may include:
 - Gogol’s educational and career choices highlight an avoidance of his parents’ world. Gogol decides to study at “the architecture program at Columbia” (p. 125) as opposed to MIT, “his father’s alma mater” (p. 126). Gogol’s parents “had been disappointed that he’d gone to Columbia,” but Gogol loves living in New York City because it has a “beauty they are blind to” (p. 126). These choices to move away from home indicate that Gogol tries to escape his parents’ world.
 - Gogol’s choice to study “architecture ... at Columbia” (p. 125) and become an architect indicates his desire to build new homes. Gogol wants to “design[] and renovat[e] private residences” (p. 125), but he is unable to find a job in this field, just as he is unable to build a satisfying home for himself, although he tries desperately to create one outside of his parents’ world in New York City, “a place which his parents do not know well” (p. 126).

What is foreign to Gogol about being “effortlessly incorporated into [the Ratliffs’] lives” (p. 136)? How does this effortlessness affect him?

- Student responses may include:
 - Being “effortlessly incorporated” into Maxine’s life is unfamiliar; it is “a different brand of hospitality from what he is used to” (p. 136). Gogol is more used to the hospitality of his parents and their Bengali friends, in which people “go out of their way to accommodate others” (p. 136). When Gogol first spends the night with the Ratliffs, he is “mortified to face [her parents]” (p. 137) the following morning, because he has spent the night with their daughter and is not properly dressed. However, instead of being offended like his parents would be, “they’d merely smiled, still in their bathrobes” (p. 137).
 - Because Gogol is so “effortlessly incorporated” into Maxine’s life, he “[q]uickly, simultaneously ... falls in love with Maxine” (p. 137).
 - Gogol’s “effortless[] incorporat[ion]” into Maxine’s family gives Gogol insight into his own family. Gogol has never seen his parents be affectionate to each other, but by watching Maxine’s parents be affectionate, Gogol realizes that “[w]hatever love exists between [his parents] is an utterly private, uncelebrated thing” (p. 138).
 - While dating Maxine, Gogol “is conscious of the fact that his immersion in Maxine’s family is a betrayal of his own” (p. 141). Although Maxine and her family do not mind that his background is different from theirs, Gogol is aware that his family would prefer “him to marry an Indian girl” (p. 139). Furthermore, he spends so

much more time with Maxine's parents than with his own and comes to idolize their lifestyle that it seems a betrayal of his own family. For example, Gogol enjoys the "understated, unflustered way" that Lydia entertains (p. 140), which demonstrates Gogol's admiration of the Ratliffs and highlights his negative view of his parents who behave like "caterers in their own home" (p. 141).

How does the trip to New Hampshire illustrate the differences between Gogol's parents and upbringing and Maxine's?

- Student responses may include:
 - When Maxine's parents leave for New Hampshire, Gogol recognizes that their "unquestioned ritual" (p. 141) of vacationing is "summon[ed]" by "the call of pleasure" (p. 142). In contrast, his parents' vacations to Calcutta always seemed like "an obligation being fulfilled" (p. 141). This contrast highlights the differences in how Gogol's family and Maxine's family spend their free time, as the Gangulis fulfill cultural obligations and the Ratliffs pursue pleasure.
 - The difference between "the call of pleasure" (p. 142) and "an obligation" (p. 141) highlights the different relationships Maxine and Gogol have with their respective parents. Gogol's relationship to his parents is very much like his family's relationship to vacations: it is "an obligation" and they feel "anxious" (p. 141). Maxine, in contrast, has a pleasant relationship with her parents: she "respects their tastes and their ways," and she would not want to be "raised in any other place" (p. 138).
 - On their way to New Hampshire, Gogol and Maxine "stop off at Pemberton Road for lunch" (p. 145). Their stop highlights the cultural differences between their families. Before arriving, for instance, Gogol warns Maxine that "they will not be able to touch or kiss each other in front of his parents" and he tells her that his parents "don't own a corkscrew" (p. 145). These details highlight the differences between the families' cultural values. Maxine is "amuse[d]" by the "restrictions" and she "sees them as a single afternoon's challenge" (p. 146) as opposed to a lifelong challenge, as they are for Gogol. To Maxine, the "challenge" of Gogol's Indian culture is "an anomaly never to be repeated" (p. 146), whereas for Gogol, this "challenge" defines his life.
 - Maxine's parents vacation within driving distance, in New Hampshire and "[t]hey leave without fanfare, in the middle of the day, when Gogol and Maxine are both at work" (p. 142). The Ratliffs' vacations are familiar and easy, unlike Gogol's family's vacations, which are foreign and not relaxed. When arriving in Calcutta, the Gangulis are "apprehensive ... steeling themselves to find fewer faces at the airport in Calcutta" (p. 141), which highlights how their tie to Calcutta is often

uncomfortable and “anxious” (p. 141) in a way that New Hampshire is not for the Ratliffs.

- The Ratliffs vacation in a place Maxine loves, where she grew up, and “[w]here Maxine will be buried one day” (p. 153), a place that she considers home. Gogol “realizes that this is a place that will always be here for her,” even when she has “streaks of gray in her hair” (p. 156). Gogol has no such place, because his parents do not treat his home on Pemberton Road in the same way that they treat Calcutta as their true home. To Gogol, neither Pemberton Road nor Calcutta is home. Maxine, on the other hand, has two reliable homes: one in New York and one in New Hampshire.
- Gogol realizes on his trip to New Hampshire with Maxine that “the vacations he’s spent with his family ... were never really true vacations at all,” but rather “disorienting expeditions” or trips with “one or two Bengali families” (p. 155). Unlike Gogol, Maxine experiences vacation as a break from New York to spend time at another home, one that is “disconnected from the world” (p. 154) and “free” (p. 158).

What differences does Gogol observe between Gerald and Lydia’s relationship and that of his own parents?

- Student responses may include:
 - Contrary to Maxine’s parents’ relationship, which is defined by “love” (p. 138) and “pleasure” (p. 142), Gogol’s parents’ relationship is defined by the “unthinkable and unremarkable” (p. 138) cultural obligation of arranged marriage. Gogol realizes, while watching Gerald and Lydia “curled up on the sofa in the evenings,” that “he has never witnessed a single moment of physical affection between his parents” (p. 138). Gogol knows that “[w]hatever love exists between them is an utterly private, uncelebrated thing” (p. 138). Gerald and Lydia make it clear that there is love between them, while Gogol is unsure if his parents are ever physically affectionate.
 - Gogol’s parents’ relationship is tied to Calcutta, whereas Maxine’s parents’ is tied to New York City. Gogol’s parents dislike spending time in New York together while Maxine’s parents adore New York and its culture. When Gogol’s family visited New York City, “whose beauty they are blind to” (p. 126), they “had had no interest” (p. 127) in seeing the Museum of Natural History or exploring the city. In contrast, Maxine’s parents are cosmopolitan and “opinionated about things his own parents are indifferent to: movies, exhibits at museums, good restaurants” and “neighborhoods and buildings they either despise or love” (p. 133).

- Through Gerald and Lydia's dinner parties, Gogol realizes how insecure his parents are compared to the Ratliffs. Gogol "[o]ften ... helps to shop and prepare for Gerald and Lydia's dinner parties," which are very "different ... from his own parents' parties" (p. 140). While Lydia is easygoing and allows Gogol to help, Ashima spends "over a day to prepare" lunch for Maxine's visit, and "the amount of effort embarrasses [Gogol]" (p. 148).

What does Maxine and Gogol's relationship highlight about their individual characters?

- Student responses may include:
 - Gogol appreciates and falls in love with what is different about Maxine's personality: "Her unkempt ways, a challenge to his increasingly minimalist taste, charm him" (p. 137). Gogol, in contrast, is neat and orderly. This example highlights a difference in personality: Gogol is careful, while Maxine is carefree.
 - Gogol prefers to live somewhere "which his parents do not know well" (p. 126), whereas Maxine prefers to be with her parents: "There's really nowhere else I'd rather live" (p. 132). These examples highlight a completely different relationship to home. Gogol constantly seeks to escape his home and family, but Maxine is always looking for ways to spend time with her family, even to the extent of having Gogol "move[] in with her" family (p. 139).
 - On vacation in New Hampshire, Gogol "realizes that this is a place that will always be here for [Maxine]" even when she has "streaks of gray in her hair" (p. 156). Compared to Maxine, Gogol has no sense of belonging. Even at his apartment in New York, "[h]e continues to receive his mail ... in a nameless metal box" (p. 139), which highlights that even his apartment is not truly his home.
 - Unlike Gogol, Maxine "has never wished she were anyone other than herself, raised in any other place, in any other way," and Gogol is "continually amazed by how much Maxine emulates her parents, how much she respects their tastes and their ways" (p. 138). These examples highlight a fundamental difference between Maxine and Gogol: Gogol focuses his entire life on a desire to be someone other than himself, and Maxine has absolutely no desire to have a different identity, family, or upbringing.

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:

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What does Gogol’s relationship with Maxine and her family illustrate about his relationship with his own parents?

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Instruct 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 pages 159-187 of *The Namesake* (from “Ashima sits at the kitchen table on Pemberton Road” to “a place where there was nowhere left to go”) and annotate for structural choices (W. 11-12.9.a).

Also for homework, instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How does Gogol’s career choice and his choice to move in with Maxine further develop a central idea in the text?

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read pages 159-187 of *The Namesake* (from “Ashima sits at the kitchen table on Pemberton Road” to “a place where there was nowhere left to go”) and annotate for structural choices.

Also for homework, respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How does Gogol’s career choice and his choice to move in with Maxine further develop a central idea in the text?