

12.4.2 Lesson 6

Introduction

In this lesson, students begin their analysis of *The Namesake*, a novel by Jhumpa Lahiri, through which they will explore central ideas of identity, nostalgia, and home. Students read and analyze pages 1-21 (from “On a sticky August evening two weeks before” to “who had saved his life, when Patty enters the waiting room”), in which Lahiri introduces the characters of Ashima and Ashoke as they await the birth of their first child. Students analyze Lahiri’s structural choices and use their previous lesson’s homework responses to discuss the excerpt, focusing on passages that best exemplify the development of each character. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How do Lahiri’s structural choices in this excerpt develop the characters of Ashoke and Ashima?

For homework, students read pages 22-47 of *The Namesake* and annotate for character development.

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).
RL.11-12.5	Analyze how an author’s choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
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>

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 6 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

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> <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.
------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Assessment

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 Lahiri's structural choices in this excerpt develop the characters of Ashoke and Ashima?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify specific structural choices in this excerpt (e.g., juxtaposition, flashback, and reflection).
- Explain how the structural choices develop the characters of Ashoke and Ashima (e.g., The juxtaposition of Ashima and Ashoke's perspectives contrasts each characters' thoughts about the impending birth of their child. Focusing first on Ashima, Lahiri develops Ashima's discomfort about "motherhood in a foreign land" (p. 6). Ashima feels "alone, cut off" (p. 3) from others, and feels that "nothing feels normal" (p. 5) because she has recently immigrated to America and is "terrified to raise a child in this country where she is related to no one" (p. 6). In contrast to Ashima's perspective of loneliness is Ashoke's flashback to a nearly fatal train crash, after which, "[f]or the next year of his life he lay flat on his back" (p. 18). During this time, Ashoke "began to envision another sort of future" for himself, and despite his family's protests, he walks "away, as far as he could, from the place in which he was born" (p. 20). Unlike Ashima, who feels detached and alone because of her recent immigration, Ashoke feels "heavy[] with the thought of life, of his life and the life about to come from it" because "[n]one of this was supposed to happen" (p. 21), and for that he is thankful.).

Vocabulary

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 6 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- sari (n.) - a garment worn by Hindu women, consisting of a long piece of cotton or silk wrapped around the body with one end draped over the head or over one shoulder
- surname (n.) - a last name or family name
- propriety (n.) - appropriateness to the purpose or circumstances; suitability
- cavalcade (n.) - a series of related things
- fastidious (adj.) - excessively particular, critical, or demanding; hard to please
- indiscretion (n.) - lack of good judgment or care in behavior and especially in speech
- indifferent (adj.) - having no bias, prejudice, or preference; impartial; disinterested
- imperceptibly (adv.) - very slightly, gradually, or subtly
- coveted (v.) - wished for, especially eagerly
- profound (adj.) - of deep meaning; of great and broadly inclusive significance
- sartorial (adj.) - of or relating to clothing or style or manner of dress
- tryst (n.) - an appointment to meet at a certain time and place, especially one made somewhat secretly by lovers
- reveres (v.) - regards with respect tinged with awe; venerates

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

- None.

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

- bon voyage (French) - farewell
- betrothal (n.) - an agreement that two people will be married in the future
- tentative (adj.) - not definite; still able to be changed
- kohl (n.) - a type of makeup that is used to put a black or dark gray line or mark around the eyes
- Hare Krishnas (n.) - a religious sect based on Vedic scriptures, whose followers engage in joyful congregational chanting of Krishna's name; founded in the U.S. in 1966
- elusive (adj.) - hard to understand, define, or remember
- irrational (adj.) - not based on reason, good judgment, or clear thinking
- claustrophobic (adj.) - having a fear of being in closed or small spaces

Lesson Agenda/Overview

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 6 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.5, W.11-12.9.a, SL.11-12.1.a, c Text: <i>The Namesake</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri, pages 1-21 	
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. 15% 3. 60% 4. 15% 5. 5%

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.
	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%

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 6 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standards for this lesson: RL.11-12.3 and RL.11-12.5. In this lesson, students begin their analysis of *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri, through which they will explore the central ideas of identity, nostalgia, and home. Students analyze Lahiri's structural choices and use their previous lesson's homework responses to discuss the excerpt, focusing on passages that best exemplify the development of each character.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

15%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read pages 1-21 of *The Namesake* by Jhumpa Lahiri and annotate for character development.) Instruct students to form pairs and share their annotations.

- Student annotations may include:
 - “She wishes the curtains were open, so that she could talk to the American women. Perhaps one of them has given birth before, can tell her what to expect” (p. 3) - Ashima feels lonely and isolated behind the curtain, left to deal with her labor, separated from others.
 - “She used to tutor neighborhood schoolchildren in their homes, on their verandas and beds, helping them to memorize Tennyson and Wordsworth, to pronounce words like *sign* and *cough*, to understand the difference between Aristotelian and Shakespearean tragedy” (p. 7) - Ashima is well-educated in English and literature.
 - “But the lantern's light lingered, just long enough for Ashoke to raise his hand, a gesture that he believed would consume the small fragment of life left in him” (p. 18) - Ashoke is near death, and this small gesture was enough to save his life.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

- Students will share their responses to the second part of the homework in Activity 3: Reading and Discussion.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

60%

Inform students that to begin their analysis of this lesson's excerpt, they are going to participate in a discussion of their responses to the second part of the previous lesson's homework (12.4.2 Lesson 5).

- Consider posting or projecting the homework prompt from the previous lesson: Identify a passage that best exemplifies the development of each character in the excerpt, and prepare to discuss how the passage best exemplifies the character.
- Students listen.

Instruct students to form small groups. 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 (W.11-12.9.a).

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

What choices does Lahiri make in introducing and describing the characters?

Instruct student groups to refer to pages 1-10 (“On a sticky August evening two weeks before” to “about the life they now share, to keep to herself”) and their homework from the previous lesson regarding passages that best exemplify Ashima’s character development.

Provide students with the definitions of *sari*, *surname*, *propriety*, *cavalcade*, *fastidious*, and *indiscretion*.

- 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 *sari*, *surname*, *propriety*, *cavalcade*, *fastidious*, and *indiscretion* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *bon voyage*, *betrothal*, *tentative*, *kohl*, *Hare Krishnas*, *elusive*, and *irrational*.
 - Students write the definitions of *bon voyage*, *betrothal*, *tentative*, *kohl*, *Hare Krishnas*, *elusive*, and *irrational* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- *The Namesake* contains an epigraph from a different translation of *The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol*; this version of the Gogol text was not used in 12.4.2 Lessons 1-5.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider explaining to students that Bengali (p. 2) refers to the language and culture of people who live in Hindu West Bengal, a province in India, and that Calcutta (p. 1) is a city within that province.

What passage best exemplifies the development of Ashima’s character in this excerpt?

Instruct student groups to discuss the focus question, drawing on evidence from pages 1-10 and the previous lesson’s homework (12.4.2 Lesson 5) in their responses.

- Student groups discuss the focus question, drawing on evidence from the previous lesson's homework (12.4.2 Lesson 5) and the text excerpt.
- 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.
- Student responses may include:
 - The two opening paragraphs on pages 1-2 best exemplify how Ashima remains faithful to her Bengali roots while living in America. A pregnant Ashima craves “the snack sold for pennies on Calcutta sidewalks and on railway platforms throughout India” (p. 1). She tries to create a “humble approximation” of this traditional food that would comfort her but finds there is “something missing” (p. 1).
 - The description of Ashima in the hospital on pages 3-4 best exemplifies Ashima's isolation and loneliness. While Ashima experiences contractions, awaiting the birth of her child, she thinks about the differences between India and the American hospital. For example, Ashima notes that “it's strange that her child will be born in a place most people enter either to suffer or to die” and she reflects on the fact that “[i]n India ... women go home to their parents to give birth” (p. 4). She feels “cut off” or isolated from her husband, family, and “the three other women in the room,” and she feels “alone” as a result (p. 3).
 - The passages on pages 4-6 best illustrate Ashima's sense that “nothing feels normal” (p. 5) because she is lonely and homesick for her family in India and afraid of “motherhood in a foreign land” (p. 6). As she awaits the birth of her child, Ashima comforts herself by reflecting upon an imagined scene in her childhood home. In this reflection, Ashima imagines that her father is “sketching, smoking, listening to the Voice of America,” as her younger brother “studies for a physics exam” (p. 5). These reflections on the everyday activities of her Indian family provide Ashima distraction from her current loneliness and isolation in the American hospital. However, Ashima remains “terrified to raise a child in a country where she is related to no one” (p. 6).
- If necessary, remind students of the definition of *reflection*: “consideration of a subject, idea, or past event.” Students were introduced to *reflection* in 12.1.1 Lesson 17.
 - The description of Ashima in the hospital on page 6 best exemplifies Ashima's character development because it shows how she continues to seek a connection to her Bengali roots. She “cannot bring herself to throw away” the Indian magazine

that contains articles she has already read “a dozen times” (p. 6). The “printed pages of Bengali type ... are a perpetual comfort to her” and there is a “pen-and-ink drawing on page eleven by her father” (p. 6). This description illustrates that Ashima remains homesick for India despite her baby’s impending arrival.

- The interaction with Patty on page 7 best exemplifies one reason that Ashima feels out of place in America: she is an educated woman who appears less educated because of cultural differences. In India, Ashima was “working toward a college degree” and tutored children in English, “helping them to memorize Tennyson and Wordsworth” (p. 7). However, an error in English pronunciation gives Patty a false impression of Ashima that “pains [Ashima] almost as much as her last contraction” (p. 7).
- Ashima’s flashback on pages 7-10 best exemplifies Ashima before her “betrothal” (p. 9) to Ashoke. Ashoke’s shoes, a type uncommon in India, intrigue her, and when she slips her feet into them, “[l]ingering sweat ... mingle[s] with hers, causing her heart to race” (p. 8). This “indiscretion” (p. 10) “was the closest thing she had ever experienced to the touch of a man” (p. 8), suggesting that Ashima had not dated any men before marrying Ashoke. That Ashima “noticed that one of the crisscrossing laces had missed a hole, and this oversight set her at ease” (p. 8) suggests that Ashima is interested in a potential husband, like Ashoke, who is imperfect and able to make mistakes.
- If necessary, remind students of the definition of flashback: “a transition in a narrative to an earlier scene or event.” Students were introduced to flashback in 12.1.1 Lesson 17.
 - Ashima’s reflection on her current life on page 10 best exemplifies how Ashima learns to be a new wife within an arranged marriage. Ashima comes to know who Ashoke is once she is married and living in Cambridge with him. For example, she learns that he “is fastidious about his clothing” and “hang[s] up his shirt and trousers” as soon as he comes home from work (p. 10). She prepares his meals, “hoping to please” him (p. 10), while learning his habits, likes, and dislikes. Ashima also allows Ashoke to get to know her by opening up to him, “describ[ing] the events of her day,” such as “walks along Massachusetts Avenue, the shops she visits” (p. 10).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students would benefit from a more structured analysis, consider providing the following scaffolding questions to support their reading and discussion:

How do the opening paragraphs of the excerpt develop Ashima’s character?

How do Ashima’s thoughts as she awaits the birth of her baby develop her character?

What does Ashima's betrothal to Ashoke suggest about her character?

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to refer to pages 10-21 (“On another floor of the hospital, in a waiting room” to “who had saved his life, when Patty enters the waiting room”) and their homework from the previous lesson regarding passages that best exemplify Ashoke's character development.

Provide students with the definitions of *indifferent*, *imperceptibly*, *coveted*, *profound*, *sartorial*, *tryst*, and *reveres*.

- 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 *indifferent*, *imperceptibly*, *coveted*, *profound*, *sartorial*, *tryst*, and *reveres* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definition of *claustrophobic*.
 - Students write the definition of *claustrophobic* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What passage best exemplifies the development of Ashoke's character in this excerpt?

Instruct student groups to discuss the focus question, drawing on evidence from pages 10-21 and the previous lesson's homework (12.4.2 Lesson 5) in their responses.

- Student groups discuss the focus question, drawing on evidence from the previous lesson's homework (12.4.2 Lesson 5) and the text excerpt.
- Student responses may include:
 - The descriptions of Ashoke's enthusiastic reading on pages 12-13 best develop Ashoke's love of reading and his relationship to his family. Ashoke feels deeply devoted to his grandfather, who appreciates great literature. As a boy, when his siblings “played kabadi and cricket outside,” Ashoke remained “curled at his [grandfather's] side,” reading with him (p. 12).
 - Ashoke's connection to “The Overcoat” on pages 13-14 shows how much Ashoke appreciates great literature, specifically “The Overcoat.” He had “read ‘The Overcoat’ too many times to count,” and each time he was “captivated” by Akaky Akakievich's plight (p. 14). That “in some ways, the story made less sense each

time he read it” (p. 14) suggests that Ashoke is wise and thinks deeply about the world.

- The passage that best exemplifies the development of Ashoke’s character is within the flashback on pages 17-18, in which Ashoke reflects on how the story, “The Overcoat,” saved his life during a train crash. Because Ashoke had stayed awake to reread “The Overcoat,” he “had been thrust partway out the window” (p. 18). The “pages of his book ... momentarily distract[ed]” (p. 18) one of the rescuers searching for survivors. If not for “The Overcoat,” Ashoke would have died, so he owes his life to the story and its author, solidifying his deep connection to the text.
- The passage that best exemplifies the development of Ashoke’s character is the description on pages 18-20 of Ashoke’s life immediately after the crash. The aftermath of the crash, during which, “[f]or the next year of his life he lay flat on his back” (p. 18), gives Ashoke the resolve and strength to deviate from his original life plan of “living in [his] parents’ house” (p. 16). As Ashoke heals from the crash, he “envision[s] another sort of future” for himself, one in which he “walk[s] away, as far as he could, from the place he was born and in which he nearly died” (p. 20). This resolve explains why Ashoke left India and started a new life in America.
- The paragraph on page 21 in which Ashoke presses “his ribs” (p. 21) best exemplifies how lucky Ashoke feels to be alive and to be expecting a child “any minute now” (p. 11). He thinks “[n]one of this was supposed to happen” because he could so easily have died in the train crash, if not for reading on the train. He appreciates his life and “the life about to come from it,” and “he thanks his parents, and their parents, and the parents of their parents” as well as “Gogol, the Russian writer who had saved his life” (p. 21).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students would benefit from a more structured analysis, consider providing the following scaffolding questions to support their reading and discussion:

How does Ashoke’s experience in the waiting room relate to Ashima’s experience in the hospital?

How do the descriptions of Ashoke’s childhood and teenage years develop Ashoke’s character?

What do Ashoke’s feelings about “The Overcoat” suggest about Ashoke?

How does the train crash affect Ashoke’s life?

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to discuss the following question before sharing out with the class. Post or project the following question:

Identify specific structural choices in this excerpt, and explain the function of each choice.

Instruct student groups to review pages 1-21 and discuss the question, drawing on evidence from throughout the excerpt in their responses.

- Student responses may include:
 - Lahiri uses juxtaposition to contrast Ashima and Ashoke’s perspectives before the birth of their child. The first part of the excerpt (pp. 1-10) focuses solely on Ashima and develops her homesickness, isolation, and discomfort about “motherhood in a foreign land” (p. 6). The second part of the excerpt (pp. 10-21) focuses on Ashoke’s perspective and how he was “born” again after his train crash and how he feels “heavy, with the thought of life” (p. 21), suggesting his anticipation for the baby’s arrival.
- If necessary, remind students of the definition of *juxtaposition*: “an act or instance of placing close together or side by side, especially for comparison or contrast.” Students were introduced to *juxtaposition* in 12.1.1 Lesson 10 as a rhetorical device and 12.1.1 Lesson 17 as a stylistic choice.
 - Lahiri uses flashback to describe both the first meeting between Ashima and Ashoke before their arranged marriage and the story of Ashoke’s past train crash. These flashbacks develop the characters by showing Ashima’s thoughts about being a new bride in an arranged marriage, and Ashoke’s thoughts about a horrific tragedy that makes him feel as if he was “born twice in India, and then a third time in America” (p. 21).
 - Lahiri uses reflection to show Ashima’s deep connection to her family in India. To comfort herself before giving birth, Ashima imagines “[h]er mother ... untangling waist-length hair ... [h]er father ... sketching, smoking” (p. 5). Lahiri also uses reflection to develop Ashoke’s appreciation for his life, as he considers how lucky he is to be alive and to be expecting a child “any minute now” (p. 11).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students would benefit from a more structured analysis, consider providing the following scaffolding questions to support their reading and discussion:

How does Lahiri use flashback in this excerpt?

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 6 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015
© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

How does Lahiri use juxtaposition in this excerpt?

How does Lahiri use reflection in this excerpt?

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 Lahiri's structural choices in this excerpt develop the characters of Ashoke and Ashima?

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 pages 22-47 of *The Namesake* (from “The baby, a boy, is born at five past five” to “the first time in his life across the world”) and annotate for character development (W.11-12.9.a).

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read pages 22-47 of *The Namesake* (from “The baby, a boy, is born at five past five” to “the first time in his life across the world”) and annotate for character development.