

12.4.2

Lesson 13

Introduction

In this lesson, students analyze their reading of *The Namesake* thus far by engaging in a fishbowl discussion about Gogol's struggles with identity. Before engaging in discussion, students consider the discussion prompt individually while reviewing their notes, annotations, and previous Quick Writes in order to independently draft written responses. Students then engage in a fishbowl discussion about the text in response to the following prompt: Analyze Gogol's relationship with his pet name in relation to the following epigraph and quote from *The Namesake*:

Epigraph: "The reader should realize himself that it could not have happened otherwise, and that to give him any other name was quite out of the question." —Nikolai Gogol "The Overcoat"

Quote: "'We all came out of Gogol's overcoat.'" (p. 78)

For homework, students read and annotate pages 125-158 of *The Namesake*.

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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).
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.
Addressed Standard(s)	
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").

Assessment

Assessment(s)

Student learning is assessed via a fishbowl discussion at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- Analyze Gogol's relationship with his pet name in relation to the following epigraph and quote from *The Namesake*:
Epigraph: "The reader should realize himself that it could not have happened otherwise, and that to give him any other name was quite out of the question." — Nikolai Gogol, "The Overcoat"
Quote: "'We all came out of Gogol's overcoat.'" (p. 78)
- Student learning will be assessed using the relevant portions of the 12.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric.

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Analyze Gogol's relationship with his pet name in relation to the epigraph and quote from *The Namesake* (e.g., Gogol's relationship with his pet name, and therefore his identity, is extremely conflicted. The epigraph of the book, which is taken from Nikolai Gogol's "The Overcoat," suggests that Gogol's struggles with his identity are inevitable. For example, when Ashoke tells Mrs. Lapidus that Gogol's "good name, his school name is Nikhil" (p. 59). At that moment, both Gogol and Mrs. Lapidus push back, and Mrs. Lapidus points out that "he doesn't respond" to the name Nikhil (p. 59). This early decision by Gogol and the elementary school to resist his parents' desire to change his pet name affirms the epigraph's claim that "any other name was out of the question" (epigraph). On the other hand, when Gogol learns of his father's train accident, "suddenly the sound of his pet name, uttered by his father as he has been accustomed to hearing it all his life, means something completely new, bound up with a catastrophe he has unwittingly embodied for years" (p. 124), which highlights a connection between fate and his name that he had not seen before. Thus, the quote that "'We all came out of Gogol's overcoat'" (p. 78) takes on a more literal meaning, as his father's life is intertwined with "The Overcoat," and therefore so is Gogol's.).

Vocabulary

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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, W.11-12.9.a Text: <i>The Namesake</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri, pages 1-124 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Pre-Discussion Text Review 4. Fishbowl Discussion 5. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 0% 3. 25% 4. 65% 5. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the 12.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.4.1 Lesson 3)

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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, RL.11-12.3, and SL.11-12.1.a, c, d. Inform students that in this lesson, they will not encounter any new text. Instead, they will analyze the text they have read thus far in relation to two quotes from *The Namesake* and then engage in a fishbowl discussion about Gogol's developing relationship with his pet name.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

0%

- Students will be held accountable for homework during Activity 3: Pre-Discussion Text Review and Activity 4: Fishbowl Discussion.

Activity 3: Pre-Discussion Text Review

25%

Instruct students to take out the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Review your notes, annotations, and previous Quick Writes from *The Namesake* in preparation for the next lesson's discussion.)

- Students take out their notes, annotations, and previous Quick Writes in preparation for the fishbowl discussion.

In this activity, students will independently prepare for the following activity's fishbowl discussion. Post or project the following discussion prompt:

Analyze Gogol's relationship with his pet name in relation to the following epigraph and quote from *The Namesake*:

Epigraph: "The reader should realize himself that it could not have happened otherwise, and that to give him any other name was quite out of the question." — Nikolai Gogol, "The Overcoat"

Quote: "'We all came out of Gogol's overcoat.'" (p. 78)

Instruct students to independently review pages 1-124 of *The Namesake*, as well as their notes, annotations, and previous Quick Writes, in preparation for the discussion. Instruct students to begin drafting preliminary written responses to the prompt in preparation for the following activity's discussion.

- Students independently review their texts, notes, annotations, and Quick Writes and draft preliminary written responses to the prompt in preparation for the following activity's discussion.

Activity 4: Fishbowl Discussion

65%

Provide students with the discussion assessment prompt:

Analyze Gogol's relationship with his pet name in relation to the following epigraph and quote from *The Namesake*:

Epigraph: "The reader should realize himself that it could not have happened otherwise, and that to give him any other name was quite out of the question." — Nikolai Gogol, "The Overcoat"

Quote: "'We all came out of Gogol's overcoat.'" (p. 78)

Transition the class into two equal groups by forming two circles: one inner circle and one outer circle. Explain to students how the fishbowl discussion works: the inner circle is the discussion group while the outer circle listens and takes notes on the inner group's discussion. Following the first round of discussion, the groups switch places and the process repeats. Inform students that this fishbowl discussion is the lesson assessment.

- Students in the inner circle begin the discussion, posing questions, making responses, and using evidence to support their answers. Students in the outer circle take notes to share in the second half of the discussion.

Instruct students in the outer circle to share at least one question or response to a question from a student in the inner circle, and share something new they learned as a result of the discussion. Ask students to note the strong points of the discussion and where the discussion could have been stronger.

- Students in the outer circle share one question or response as well as one idea they learned as a result of the discussion. Students in the inner circle listen.

Repeat this activity, moving students from the outer circle to the inner circle.

- 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.
- Consider reminding students of their previous work with SL.11-12.1.d, as this discussion requires that students seek to understand and respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives in order to deepen the investigation of their position and observations.

Instruct students to use the relevant portions of the 12.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist to guide the discussion. Remind students they will self-assess their participation after the fishbowl discussion.

- Student groups switch places and repeat the fishbowl discussion process.
- Student responses may include:
 - The epigraph of the novel, which comes from a translation of Nikolai Gogol’s “The Overcoat,” suggests that although the Gangulis seem to make a spur-of-the-moment or somewhat arbitrary decision to name their son Gogol, it had been fated all along. When the doctor informs them that they must choose a name for the birth certificate, Ashoke realizes “with a slight quiver of recognition ... [that] he’d known [] all along” what “the perfect pet name” was (p. 28). Ashoke reflects back to the moment of the train wreck, and “for the first time, he thinks of that moment not with terror, but with gratitude” (p. 28). Thus, the train wreck had planted the pet name in his mind long before his son was born. This passage, paired with the epigraph, suggests that “any other name was quite out of the question” (epigraph) and that naming the baby Gogol was fated.

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- Ashoke's recitation of Dostoyevsky's quote, "'We all came out of Gogol's overcoat'" (p. 78), suggests that Gogol's entire life is dependent on Nikolai Gogol's "The Overcoat." Because Ashoke was clutching the story when his life was saved, he named his son Gogol. If Ashoke's life had not been saved that night, he would not have lived to have a son, so this association suggests an inevitability that is confirmed by the epigraph's note that "any other name was quite out of the question" (epigraph). Both Gogol's name and his birth are directly linked to Gogol's story "The Overcoat" because the story saved his father and allowed him to be "born" again and create "his life" (p. 21).
- Throughout *The Namesake*, Gogol Ganguli wrestles with his pet name, and as a young adult in college, he claims that "Nikhil is [his] first name" (p. 103). Although his new friends accept this, his parents insist on calling him Gogol at home. Furthermore, although Gogol wants to redefine himself as Nikhil, "everyone he knows in the world still calls him Gogol" (p. 103). Even as Nikhil, Gogol cannot escape his identity as Gogol, and the added name just compounds his struggles with multiple identities. Thus, the epigraph's claim that "it could not have happened otherwise, and that ... any other name was quite out of the question" suggests that Gogol will never be able to fully leave behind his pet name or his identity as Gogol.
- The epigraph of the novel is confirmed when Ashoke tries to explain to Mrs. Lapidus that Gogol's "good name, his school name is Nikhil" (p. 58). However, both Gogol and Mrs. Lapidus push back, and Mrs. Lapidus points out that "he doesn't respond" to the name Nikhil (p. 59). While also highlighting the cultural conflict that the Gangulis experience as they educate their Bengali child in an American system, this scene affirms the epigraph's claim that "any other name was quite out of the question."
- Gogol's struggles with his identity "could not have happened otherwise" (epigraph). Gogol wrestles with his pet name and he struggles with his identity throughout the first half of the novel. Gogol's parents force Gogol to return to their home in Calcutta, where "they always go" (p. 80), and although Calcutta and Bengali culture are both inextricable parts of Gogol's identity, he resists these aspects of his identity because they are foreign and unlike his American life. Like his name, Calcutta represents his parents' choice and a connection to his family's cultural identity that he finds frustrating and unfamiliar.
- Gogol's struggles with identity were fated and "could not have happened otherwise" (epigraph) because his name is the product of many circumstances in which cultures intersected and contradicted one another. Gogol's grandmother's letter "was sent a month ago, in July, [and] it has yet to arrive" (p. 25). In India,

this would not have been a problem, but the American hospital insists that the “baby cannot be released from the hospital without a birth certificate” and a name (p. 27). Finally, Ashoke names his son after a Russian writer. Because so many cultures come together in Gogol’s name, his struggles with identity “could not have happened otherwise” (epigraph).

Instruct students to use the 12.4 Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist to self-assess their application of SL.11-12.1.a, c, d in the fishbowl discussion. Also, 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 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate 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”) (W.11-12.9.a).

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

Homework

For homework, read and annotate 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”).