

# 12.4.2 Lesson 11

## Introduction

In this lesson, students analyze pages 97-108 of *The Namesake* (from “Plenty of people changed their names: actors, writers” to “adding to them in his spare time”), in which Gogol legally changes his name to Nikhil and goes away to college at Yale. Students explore through five guiding questions how Lahiri develops the central ideas of identity and home in this excerpt. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How do two central ideas interact and build on one another in this excerpt?

For homework, students read and annotate pages 108-124 of *The Namesake*. Additionally, students respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: What attracts Gogol to Ruth?

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 11 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

## 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.
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

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 11 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

**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 two central ideas interact and build on one another in this excerpt?

**High Performance Response(s)**

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify two central ideas (e.g., identity, home, nostalgia).
- Analyze how these two central ideas interact and build on one another in this excerpt (e.g., The central ideas of identity and home interact and build on one another through Gogol's transition to a new life as Nikhil at Yale. Gogol creates a new identity for himself at Yale, so that by the start of the school year "he's paved the way for a whole university to call him Nikhil" (p 104). However, Gogol's name change results in a crisis of identity, leaving him feeling "as if he's cast himself in a play, acting the part of twins" (p. 105). Gogol's continued struggles with his identity increase his longing for a home. Gogol's love for the architecture of the Yale campus, which "roots [Gogol] to his environs in a way he had never felt growing up on Pemberton Road" (p. 108), suggests this longing. Gogol finds comfort in his room's "oldness, its persistent grace" and the fact that "so many students have occupied it before him" (p. 108), connecting him to a sense of home and identity which he feels he lacks.).

## Vocabulary

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 11 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)**

- emancipated (adj.) - freed
- chronically (adv.) - constantly; habitually
- resignation (n.) - accepting, unresisting attitude
- sanction (n.) - official permission or approval
- convoluted (adj.) - complicated
- unmomentous (adj.) - not of great importance
- stealth (n.) - secret, quiet, and clever way of moving or behaving
- scant (adj.) - barely sufficient; almost inadequate
- inconsequential (adj.) - of little or no importance

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

- None.

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

- petition (n.) - formal written request made to an official person or organization
- commemorate (v.) - do something special in order to remember and honor
- frivolous (adj.) - not important; silly and not serious
- sever (v.) - cut off

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<b>Standards &amp; Text:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards: RL.11-12.2, W.11-12.9.a, SL.11-12.1.a, c</li> <li>• Text: <i>The Namesake</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri, pages 97-108</li> </ul>	
<b>Learning Sequence:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>2. Homework Accountability</li> <li>3. Reading and Discussion</li> <li>4. Quick Write</li> <li>5. Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5%</li> <li>2. 20%</li> <li>3. 55%</li> <li>4. 15%</li> <li>5. 5%</li> </ol>

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 11 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

## 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)

## 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.
	<b>Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</b>
	<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.11-12.2. In this lesson, students analyze pages 97-108 of *The Namesake* through a discussion of five guiding questions about how Lahiri develops central ideas in this excerpt.

- Students look at the agenda.

### Activity 2: Homework Accountability

20%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the first part of the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Read pages 97-108 of *The Namesake* and annotate for the development of central ideas.) Instruct students to form pairs and share their annotations.

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 11 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 annotations may include:
  - “Plenty of people changed their names: actors, writers, revolutionaries, transvestites. In history class, Gogol has learned that European immigrants had their names changed at Ellis Island, that slaves renamed themselves once they were emancipated.” (p. 97) - This evidence develops the central idea of identity as Gogol becomes aware that it is possible to change his name and potentially his identity.
  - “He is aware that his parents, and their friends, and the children of their friends, and all his own friends from high school, will never call him anything but Gogol.” (p. 103) - This evidence develops the central idea of identity by suggesting that Gogol understands the difficulty of changing his name and identity in the eyes of those who already know him.
  - “Since everything else is suddenly so new, going by a new name doesn’t feel so terribly strange to Gogol.” (p. 104) - This evidence further develops the central idea of identity as Gogol adapts easily to his new name, because his identity is changing anyway as he starts college.
  - “But after eighteen years of Gogol, two months of Nikhil feel scant, inconsequential. At times he feels as if he’s cast himself in a play, acting the part of twins, indistinguishable to the naked eye yet fundamentally different.” (p. 105) - Gogol’s struggles with his new name develop the central idea of identity as Gogol finds that he is unable to put aside his old identity entirely.
  - “Somewhere along the two-and-a-half-hour journey, Nikhil evaporates and Gogol claims him again.” (p. 106) - This evidence develops the central idea of identity as Gogol’s old identity reasserts itself as soon as he goes home to see his family who only know him as Gogol, showing how his two identities exist side-by-side.
  - “But now it is his room at Yale where Gogol feels most comfortable.” (p. 108) - This evidence develops the central idea of home by showing how Yale replaces Pemberton Road as home for Gogol.

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. (Additionally, respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: How does Gogol’s decision to change his name impact his relationship with his parents?) Instruct student pairs to discuss their responses.

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 11 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 responses may include:
  - Although Ashima and Ashoke believe that for Gogol to change his name will be “a hassle” and “too complicated” (p. 99), they nevertheless accept his decision, telling him to “[d]o as [he] wish[es]” (p. 100). Once Gogol has changed his name, his parents support his decision, and when they call him in his room at college, “they ask if Nikhil is there” (p. 106) just as Gogol asks them to do.
  - Despite his parents’ acceptance of the change to his name, Gogol feels some guilt over his decision. In court, he feels as though he has crossed a boundary and is going against his parents, “that he is overstepping [Ashoke and Ashima], correcting a mistake they’ve made” (p. 101).
  - Gogol’s name change creates some awkwardness between Gogol and his parents as all three struggle to adapt to the name Nikhil. Although Ashima and Ashoke refer to Gogol as Nikhil in front of his friends, hearing them do so “troubles” Gogol, “making him feel in that instant that he is not related to them, not their child” (p. 106). Moreover, his parents occasionally forget to use Gogol’s new name, for example when Ashima “slips” during dinner with Jonathan leaving Gogol feeling “helpless, annoyed yet unable to blame his mother” (p. 106).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

### Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

55%

Instruct students to form small groups. Explain to students that this discussion focuses on pages 97-108 of *The Namesake*, and is structured with five main 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.

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 11 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

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

**How does Lahiri develop two central ideas in this excerpt? How do these central ideas relate to one another?**

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 97-108 (from “Plenty of people changed their names: actors, writers” to “adding to them in his spare time”) and discuss the following questions in their groups before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *emancipated*, *chronically*, *resignation*, *sanction*, *convoluted*, *unmomentous*, *stealth*, *scant*, and *inconsequential*.

- 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 *emancipated*, *chronically*, *resignation*, *sanction*, *convoluted*, *unmomentous*, *stealth*, *scant*, and *inconsequential* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *petition*, *commemorate*, *frivolous*, and *sever*.
  - Students write the definitions of *petition*, *commemorate*, *frivolous*, and *sever* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- Consider providing students with the following translation: “*Me llamo Nikhil*” (p. 105) means “My name is Nikhil” in Spanish.

**Compare how Gogol’s name change impacts him to how his name change impacts those around him. How does this comparison develop a central idea in the text?**

- Student responses should include:
  - For Gogol, changing his name represents a life-changing event. Once he succeeds in changing his name, Gogol feels liberated and “wonders if this is how it feels for an obese person to become thin” (p. 102). For Gogol, the change in name represents an exciting transformation, as he imagines presenting himself to others as a different person, thinking “of how many more women he can now approach” with the “unobjectionable, uninteresting fact” (p. 103) of his new name.
  - Gogol’s name change has little or no impact on those around him. Little changes in the way that others treat him, suggesting that his name change is not as important

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 11 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

to them as it is to him. Strangers such as the “attractive, nose-ringed cashier” who “hands him his change and looks past him to the next customer” (p. 102) in the comic shop are unaware of anything unusual about him. Those who already know him continue to call him Gogol “even though his new driver’s license says ‘Nikhil,’ even though he’s sliced up the old one with his mother’s sewing scissors” (p. 103).

- Student responses may include:
  - The difference between Gogol’s sense of the importance of his name change and its impact on those around him demonstrates the limits of Gogol’s attempt to remake his identity. Gogol will never be able to leave his old identity completely behind. As Gogol realizes, “his parents, and their friends ... and all his own friends from high school, will never call him anything but Gogol” (p. 103), suggesting that although he may seek to remake himself as Nikhil, he will always also be Gogol in certain situations.
  - The indifferent reaction to Gogol’s name change develops the central idea of identity by suggesting that Gogol’s struggles with his identity are his alone and are not shared by those around him. Although Gogol wants to redefine himself as Nikhil, “everyone he knows in the world still calls him Gogol” (p. 103), suggesting that the question of his name and the change in identity that it represents is far more important to Gogol than it is to his family and friends.
  - The contrast between Gogol’s sense of his name change and the lack of interest shown by those around him develops the central idea of identity by suggesting that while for Gogol’s friends and family little has changed in their perception of Gogol, Gogol himself experiences the moment as one of transformation. As he hears his name for the last time officially in court, Gogol feels “a twinge of sadness” (p. 101), suggesting that he feels the loss of his old identity even as he gains a new one. For his friends and family, on the other hand, nothing has changed, and Gogol “will remain Gogol” (p. 103).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

### What are Gogol’s reasons for changing his name?

- Student responses may include:
  - A magazine article inspires Gogol to change his name, because a new name represents to him the possibility of a new identity. The magazine article gives “a list of names ... and, at the bottom of the page ... the famous personalities they corresponded to” (p. 99). The magazine suggests to Gogol the possibility of transforming himself into a new “personalit[y]” by changing his name,

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 11 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

suggesting that to do so is “a right belonging to every American citizen” (p. 99).

- Gogol tells his parents that he is changing his name because he feels that the name Nikhil is more suitable to represent him in adult life. He claims that it is “one thing for Gogol to be the name penned in calligraphy on his high school diploma,” but that as an adult, he would prefer to use “the name his parents picked out for him ... the good name they’d chosen for him when he was five” (p. 99). He complains that “[n]o one takes [him] seriously” (p. 100), implying that he would command more respect as Nikhil.
- Gogol’s real reason for changing his name is his own embarrassment and discomfort with his identity as Gogol. As Gogol admits to himself, “the only person chronically aware of and afflicted by the embarrassment of [Gogol’s] name ... was Gogol” (p. 100). Gogol is more honest with the judge than with his parents, when he states that he wishes to change his name because he “hate[s] the name Gogol” and has “always hated it” (p. 102).
- Gogol himself is unclear as to his reasons for changing his name. The application takes him “longer to fill out than his applications for college” (p. 101) due to a question asking him for the reasons behind his desire to change his name. The question confuses Gogol, leaving him “wondering what to write” for nearly an hour, and he eventually leaves it “blank” (p. 101). When the judge asks him the same question, he is initially caught “off-guard” (p. 101) and is unable to answer, suggesting that he is not entirely sure of his reasons for wanting to change his name.

### Analyze the relationship between Gogol’s name change and his transition to college.

- Student responses may include:
  - Gogol’s name change enables him to make the transition to college as a new person, and to establish a new identity away from home. Gogol’s transformation from Gogol to Nikhil makes him feel bolder, enabling him to assert his independence from his parents, since “now that he’s Nikhil it’s easier to ignore his parents” (p. 105). “It is as Nikhil” that Gogol is able to transform himself during his first semester and experience the different milestones of college life as he “opens up a checking account, [and] writes his new name into course books” (p. 105).
  - Gogol’s transition to college enables him to adapt to his new name more easily. His transformation from Gogol to Nikhil is made easier by the fact that “[s]ince everything else is suddenly so new, going by a new name doesn’t feel so terribly strange to Gogol” (p. 104). Gogol uses orientation week to ensure that his

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 11 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

transformation is complete, so that “[b]y the time the upperclassmen arrive and classes begin, [Gogol has] paved the way for a whole university to call him Nikhil” (p. 104). Away from home, Gogol has more freedom to present himself as Nikhil, and to develop a new identity, so that his suitemates Brian and Jonathan, for example, merely “nod[] in acceptance” (p. 103) when he introduces himself as Nikhil.

**How does Gogol’s struggle with his new name develop a central idea?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Gogol’s struggle with his new name develops the central idea of identity by demonstrating the difficulty of establishing a new name and identity. Even though Gogol is widely accepted as Nikhil, he himself “doesn’t feel like Nikhil. Not yet” (p. 105). Gogol’s transformation into Nikhil is so recent that his identity does not feel real or solid, since “after eighteen years of Gogol, two months of Nikhil feel scant, inconsequential” (p. 105). Gogol does not always recognize himself as Nikhil: at one point he “signs his old name by mistake on a credit card slip” and at times he “has to hear Nikhil three times before he answers” (p. 106).
  - Gogol’s struggles develop the central idea of identity by highlighting Gogol’s shifting identity. Gogol’s identity as Nikhil does not replace his identity as Gogol. Instead, the two identities coexist uncomfortably, leading Gogol to feel “as if he’s cast himself in a play, acting the part of twins” (p. 105). Gogol feels disturbed when his parents refer to him or address him as Nikhil, even though he has asked them to do so, because it “make[s] him feel in that instant that he is not related to them, not their child” (p. 106). Gogol’s identities also create the potential for confusion and embarrassment, for example when his mother “slips” (p. 106) and uses his old name in front of Jonathan, leaving Gogol feeling “helpless, annoyed yet unable to blame his mother, caught in the mess he’s made” (p. 106).

**What do Gogol’s weekend visits to Pemberton Road suggest about his relationship with home and family?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Gogol’s visits suggest that Pemberton Road and his family increasingly represent a life and identity that he wishes to leave behind. He visits home “obediently but unwillingly,” feeling the loss of his independent life as Nikhil and slipping back into his old identity as Gogol, as “[s]omewhere along the two-and-a-half-hour journey, Nikhil evaporates and Gogol claims him again” (p. 106). In spite of his protests, his parents force him to attend their friends’ parties, where he once again falls back

into the life of a child, as “he always ends up watching television with Sonia and the other children, just as he has done all his life” (p. 107).

- The tensions that arise during Gogol’s visits home suggest that Yale is becoming more of a home to him than Pemberton Road. At home, Gogol wishes he were at Yale, and “misses Sterling Library, where he studies every night after dinner, and the nocturnal schedule of which he is now a part” (p. 107). Gogol accidentally makes his preference for Yale clear to his parents, when he “makes the mistake of referring to New Haven as home” (p. 108), much to Ashima’s distress.

### How does Gogol’s appreciation of architecture develop a central idea on page 108?

- Gogol’s love for the Yale campus develops the central idea of home, because by identifying with the campus, he expresses his desire for a sense of belonging that “he had never felt growing up on Pemberton Road.” “[I]t is his room at Yale where Gogol feels most comfortable,” because “its oldness, its persistent grace” remind him of the “many students [who] have occupied it before him.” Gogol comes to regard Yale, rather than Pemberton Road, as “home.” He feels attached to Yale because the architecture allows him to identify himself with a place and its history for the first time.

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 two central ideas interact and build on one another in this excerpt?

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.

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 11 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

## Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate pages 108-124 of *The Namesake* (from “In the autumn of his sophomore year” to “You remind me of everything that followed”) (W.11-12.9.a).

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

Additionally, instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

**What attracts Gogol to Ruth?**

- Students follow along.

## Homework

Read and annotate pages 108-124 of *The Namesake* (from “In the autumn of his sophomore year” to “You remind me of everything that followed”).

Additionally, respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

**What attracts Gogol to Ruth?**