

12.4.2

Lesson 2

Introduction

In this lesson, students analyze pages 399-410 of “The Overcoat” from *The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol* (from “There exists in Petersburg a powerful enemy of all” to “without tarrying, he got dressed, put on his overcoat, and left”), in which Akaky Akakievich learns that his old overcoat cannot be repaired and he must commission the tailor, Petrovich, to sew a new one. Student analysis focuses on Akaky Akakievich’s interactions with his co-workers, with Petrovich the tailor, and with his new overcoat. Students consider how Gogol continues to develop Akaky Akakievich’s character through specific details. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Gogol use specific details to develop Akaky Akakievich’s character in this excerpt?

For homework, students read pages 410-420 of “The Overcoat” and annotate for the development of central ideas. Additionally, students respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: Consider the excerpts of “The Overcoat” you have read thus far (pp. 394-410) and discuss the emergence of a central idea.

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.11-12.4	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
Addressed Standard(s)	
W. 11-12.9.a	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. <i>a.</i> 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”).
L. 11-12.4.a	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 11-12 reading and content</i> , choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. <i>a.</i> Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word's position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

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 does Gogol use specific details to develop Akaky Akakievich's character in this excerpt?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Analyze how Gogol uses specific details to develop Akaky Akakievich's character (e.g., Gogol uses specific details to describe how Akaky Akakievich's old overcoat and new overcoat impact his character development. Akaky Akakievich's co-workers "mock[]" the old overcoat as a "housecoat," and "deprive[]" it of its "noble name" (p. 400). The way the co-workers treat the overcoat mirrors how they abuse and "poke[] fun" at Akaky Akakievich (p. 396), emphasizing Akaky Akakievich's isolation. When Akaky Akakievich determines that he will have a new overcoat made, his fantasies about the new coat become so fulfilling that he feels "as if he were married, as if some other person were there with him" (p. 406). This detail reinforces Akaky Akakievich's separation from the world by demonstrating his current lack of relationships. With the new overcoat as his "companion" (p. 406), Akaky Akakievich allows "hesitant and uncertain features" of his personality to "disappear[]" (p. 407). The mere thought of the new overcoat begins to transform Akaky Akakievich into someone else who is "livelier," "firmer of character," and who allows "[f]ire ... in his eyes" (p. 407).).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- rouble (n.) - silver or copper-alloy coin and monetary unit of Russia, equal to 100 kopecks
- indiscriminately (adv.) - done with a lack of judgment or selectivity
- threadbare (adj.) - very thin and in bad condition from too much use
- housecoat (n.) - a woman's robe or dresslike garment in various lengths for casual wear about the house
- constituted (v.) - composed; formed
- swill (n.) - any liquid mess, waste, or refuse; slop
- redolent (adj.) - odorous or smelling
- booty (n.) - any prize or gain
- confound (v.) - to throw into confusion or disorder
- halberd (n.) - a weapon especially of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries consisting typically of a battle-ax and pike mounted on a handle about 6 feet long
- cockeyed (adj.) - drunk
- accosted (v.) - approached, especially with a greeting, question, or remark
- Sybarite (n.) - a person devoted to luxury and pleasure

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

- intractable (adj.) - stubborn; obstinate

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

- broadcloth (n.) - any fabric woven on a wide loom
- under the influence (idiom) - affected by alcohol; drunk
- marten (n.) - a small animal that is related to the weasel and has soft gray or brown fur
- annihilated (v.) - completely defeated
- hair of the dog (idiom) - a small measure of alcohol, intended to cure a hangover
- valiant (adj.) - having or showing courage; very brave or courageous

Lesson Agenda/Overview

File: 12.4.2 Lesson 2 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015

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Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.4, W.11-12.9.a, L.11-12.4.a Text: “The Overcoat” from <i>The Collected Tales of Nikolai Gogol</i> by Nikolai Gogol, pages 399-410 	
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. 20% 3. 55% 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</i> indicates a vocabulary word.
▶	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%

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Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standards for this lesson: RL.11-12.3 and RL.11-12.4. In this lesson, students continue their analysis of “The Overcoat” by considering Gogol’s use of details to further develop Akaky Akakievich’s character.

- 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 399-410 of “The Overcoat” and annotate for the development of Akaky Akakievich’s character.) Instruct students to form pairs and share their annotations.

- Student annotations may include:
 - “Now, however, Petrovich seemed to be in a sober state, and therefore tough, intractable, and liable to demand devil knows what price. Akaky Akakievich grasped that fact and was, as they say, about to backtrack, but the thing was already under way” (p. 401) - Akaky Akakievich’s desire to “backtrack” when he finds Petrovich “sober” shows that Akaky Akakievich may have a difficult time asserting himself with Petrovich.
 - “If the matter was very difficult, he even had the habit of not finishing the phrase at all” (p. 402) - Akaky Akakievich’s trouble in expressing himself in “difficult” situations highlights his lack of self-confidence and his problems with communication.
 - “Akaky Akakievich thought and thought and decided that he would have to cut down his usual expenses, at least for a year; to abolish the drinking of tea in the evening, to burn no candles in the evening, and ... to make the lightest and most careful steps possible when walking in the street ... to send his linen to the laundry as seldom as possible” (p. 406) - Akaky Akakievich’s willingness to cut down even his small, “usual expenses” shows him to be a character of discipline and sacrifice.

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. (Select 3-4 phrases from the excerpt that are particularly fresh or

engaging, and explain why you selected these phrases.) Instruct student pairs to discuss their responses.

- Student responses may include:
 - The phrases “There exists in Petersburg a powerful enemy of all who earn a salary of four hundred roubles or thereabouts. This enemy is none other than our northern frost” (p. 399) is a particularly fresh way to refer to cold weather. Referencing weather as a “powerful enemy” personifies it and makes it seem violent, like an actual force a person could battle.
 - The narrator’s reference to Petrovich’s “big toe,” with its “disfigured nail, thick and strong as tortoise shell” (p. 401) is an engaging way to describe the physical appearance of the tailor, as the phrase creates a repulsive or gross visual of the tailor.
 - The phrase “his spirits wilted completely” (p. 405) is a fresh way to say that Akaky Akakievich felt completely let down and without any hope.
 - The text is particularly engaging when Akaky Akakievich is described as having “[f]ire” “occasionally show[] in his eyes” (p. 407) because this is a unique way to describe Akaky Akakievich’s changing character.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

55%

Instruct students to remain in pairs from the previous activity. 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:

How does Akaky Akakievich’s character further develop in this excerpt?

Instruct student pairs to refer to pages 399-405 (from “There exists in Petersburg a powerful enemy of all” to “the collar fastened by little silver clasps with appliqué”) and discuss the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *roubles*, *indiscriminately*, *threadbare*, *housecoat*, *constituted*, *swill*, *redolent*, *booty*, *confound*, *halberd*, and *cockeyed*.

- 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 *roubles*, *indiscriminately*, *threadbare*, *housecoat*, *constituted*, *swill*, *redolent*, *booty*, *confound*, *halberd*, and *cockeyed* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *broadcloth*, *under the influence*, *marten*, *annihilated*, and *hair of the dog*.
 - Students write the definitions of *broadcloth*, *under the influence*, *marten*, *annihilated*, and *hair of the dog* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What does the description of the “powerful enemy” (p. 399) suggest about Akaky Akakievich?”

- Student responses should include:
 - The description of the “powerful enemy” personifies the weather and suggests that it is especially harsh for those “who earn a salary of four hundred roubles or thereabouts” (p. 399). By specifically referencing “four hundred roubles,” the exact salary earned by Akaky Akakievich, the statement indicates Akaky Akakievich is not paid enough money to even stay warm against the “northern frost” (p. 399).
 - The description suggests that Akaky Akakievich is “defenseless” (p. 399) against the cold because his overcoat is worn out, “threadbare,” and “fallen to pieces” (p. 400). Akaky Akakievich’s inability to defend himself against the cold reinforces his vulnerability in life; he is not protected from the mockery or teasing of his co-workers, and he is not protected from the “powerful enemy” that is the “northern frost” (p. 399) because of his “sin[ful]” (p. 400) overcoat.

How does the description of the old overcoat on page 400 relate to Akaky Akakievich?

- The narrator describes the overcoat as “strangely constituted,” stating the other clerks “deprived it of the noble name of overcoat” and called it a “housecoat” (p. 400), or woman’s robe, instead. Saying the overcoat is “deprived” (p. 400) and referring to it as a woman’s robe establishes it as inferior to other overcoats. Not only is Akaky Akakievich “poked fun at” (p. 396), but his overcoat, as an “object of mockery” (p. 400), is an extension of the abuse and inferior treatment Akaky Akakievich endures. Like Akaky Akakievich, the coat is unappealing, and does not fit in with the rest of society.

Why does Petrovich’s “sober state” make Akaky Akakievich want to “backtrack” (p. 401)?

- In his “sober state” (p. 401), Petrovich wants more money for his work, and is less willing to negotiate. Akaky Akakievich prefers “dealing with Petrovich” when Petrovich is “under the influence” of alcohol because he is more likely to “g[i]ve in and agree[] very willingly” (p. 401), and express gratitude for the work Akaky Akakievich brings him. When sober, Petrovich is “tough, intractable, and liable to demand devil knows what price” (p. 401).

Based on your analysis of Petrovich’s “sober state” (p. 401), what might the word *intractable* on page 401 mean? (L.11-12.4.a)

- Gogol describes Petrovich’s “sober state” as one in which he “usually gave in and agreed very willingly,” whereas when he is “under the influence” he is “tough” and “intractable” (p. 401). Because Gogol contrasts drunkenness and sobriety in this way, *intractable* seems to be opposite of giving in or agreeing, so *intractable* must mean “behavior that is difficult or stubborn.”

How does Akaky Akakievich’s manner of speaking on pages 402-403 further develop his character?

- Student responses may include:
 - Akaky Akakievich speaks in a manner that conveys insecurity and awkwardness. He seems uncomfortable speaking, and “express[es] himself ... with prepositions, adverbs, and ... particles [that] have decidedly no meaning” (p. 402). His communication style further develops him as a person who does not easily interact with the world, and it offers additional clues as to why he has no meaningful human relationships.
 - Akaky Akakievich is “always distinguished by the softness of his voice” (p. 403), exemplifying his shyness and lack of confidence in communicating with others. Thus, when Akaky Akakievich “crie[s] out” about the price Petrovich presents for the new overcoat, the narrator claims it may be “the first time” Akaky Akakievich has ever had such an outburst “in all his born days” (p. 403).

What do Akaky Akakievich’s reactions to needing a new overcoat suggest about his character?

- When Akaky Akakievich hears he needs a new overcoat, his “heart misse[s] a beat” (p. 402) and he responds to Petrovich in a “pleading voice” (p. 403). Additionally, upon hearing “the word ‘new’ all went dim in Akaky Akakievich’s eyes” (p. 403). These reactions suggest that Akaky Akakievich is upset about getting a new overcoat because he has “no money for” (p. 403) it.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

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Instruct student pairs to refer to pages 405-410 (from “Here Akaky Akakievich saw that he could not get around” to “without tarrying, he got dressed, put on his overcoat, and left”) and discuss the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *accosted* and *Sybarite*.

- 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 *accosted* and *Sybarite* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definition of *valiant*.
 - Students write the definition of *valiant* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

How do Akaky Akakievich’s “limitations” relate to his “spiritual[]” nourishment (p. 406)?

- To save money for the new overcoat, Akaky Akakievich “limit[s]” his expenses and does not “drink[] ... tea” or burn “candles in the evening,” walks carefully to “avoid[] the rapid wearing out of soles,” and “send[s] his linen to the laundry as seldom as possible” (p. 406). These “limitations” cause him to focus entirely on “the eternal idea of the future overcoat” (p. 406). Akaky Akakievich’s thoughts of the new overcoat are so fulfilling and hopeful they begin to “nourish[]” him “spiritually” creating a “fuller ... existence” (p. 406) for him.

Why does Akaky Akakievich become “firmer of character” (p. 407)?

- Akaky Akakievich’s focus on the “future overcoat” becomes so satisfying that he feels “as if he were married, as if some other person were there with him” (p. 406). With the “companion[ship]” of this “other person,” Akaky Akakievich does not feel “alone” (p. 406) and lets “hesitant and uncertain features” of his personality “disappear[]” (p. 407). The mere thought of the overcoat emboldens him and gives him new freedom to become someone else who is “livelier” and allows “[f]ire ... in his eyes” (p. 407).

What impact does Akaky Akakievich’s preparation for the new overcoat have on his character development?

- Akaky Akakievich begins to interact with the world differently as he and Petrovich prepare for the new overcoat. The distractions of his “preoccup[ation]” with the new

overcoat cause him to “nearly” make “a mistake” when he is copying (p. 407), which is something he never does. He also develops a new routine of meeting with Petrovich “to talk about the overcoat” (p. 407) and plan its design. All of this preparation grounds Akaky Akakievich in the physical world he typically isolates himself from and is a “diversion” (p. 399) from his copying work that he does not usually allow.

To what extent does Akaky Akakievich’s new overcoat impact his life?

- Student responses may include:
 - The new overcoat causes Akaky Akakievich to “walk ... in the most festive disposition” (p. 409), whereas before no “object,” or “diversion” (p. 399) held meaning or brought pleasure to Akaky Akakievich beyond the papers he copied.
 - The new overcoat causes him to reject his old, “strangely constituted” (p. 400) overcoat when he mocks it like his co-workers did, calling it a “housecoat” (p. 410) and laughs at it.
 - Akaky Akakievich’s nightly routine changes the day he wears his new overcoat when he writes “nothing after dinner” (p. 410).
 - Akaky Akakievich’s new overcoat changes the manner in which his co-workers treat him. They “congratulate” and “cheer” him (p. 409) for his new overcoat. They also urge him to “throw a party” (p. 409), indicating their acceptance of him for the first time.
 - In some ways, Akaky Akakievich does not change when he receives his new overcoat. He still remains uncomfortable interacting with his co-workers. Even though their attention becomes positive with “congratulat[ions]” and “cheer[s]” (p. 409), it “embarrasse[s]” him so much that he begins “assuring them ... it [is] not a new overcoat at all” (p. 409).
 - Akaky Akakievich’s fondness for and excitement about the new overcoat remain unchanged after he has the coat in his possession. He looks forward to attending his co-worker’s party because it will give him an “occasion to take a stroll ... in his new overcoat” (p. 409). Additionally, he looks forward to spending time with his overcoat, not necessarily his co-workers who tell him it is “quite impossible for him not to accept” (p. 409) the invitation.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Quick Write

15%

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Instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How does Gogol use specific details to develop Akaky Akakievich's character 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.

Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read pages 410-420 of "The Overcoat" (from "Precisely where the clerk who had invited him lived" to "not in a straight hand but much more obliquely and slantwise") and annotate for the development of central ideas (W.11-12.9.a). Additionally, instruct students to respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

Consider the excerpts of "The Overcoat" you have read thus far (pp. 394-410) and discuss the emergence of a central idea.

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read pages 410-420 of "The Overcoat" (from "Precisely where the clerk who had invited him lived" to "not in a straight hand but much more obliquely and slantwise") and annotate for the development of central ideas. Additionally, respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

Consider the excerpts of "The Overcoat" you have read thus far (pp. 394-410) and discuss the emergence of a central idea.

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