

12.4.2 Lesson 7

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze pages 22-47 of *The Namesake* (from “The baby, a boy, is born at five past five” to “for the first time in his life across the world”), in which Ashima and Ashoke name their child Gogol, and Ashima begins to develop her identity as a mother. Students work in small groups to answer guiding discussion questions focused on how the central ideas of identity and home develop within the excerpt. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Select a phrase from the excerpt and analyze how it relates to a central idea.

For homework, students read pages 48-71 of *The Namesake* and annotate for the development of central ideas.

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.11-12.4	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	<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> <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.
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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.

- Select a phrase from the excerpt and analyze how it relates to a central idea.

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify a specific phrase from the excerpt (e.g., “She has never known of a person entering the world so alone, so deprived” (p. 25)).
- Identify a central idea (e.g., home, identity).
- Analyze how the phrase relates to a central idea (e.g., This phrase relates to the central idea of home. Ashima sees her baby as “so alone, so deprived” because he is born “in America” as opposed to her homeland of India (p. 25). She feels that “[w]ithout a single grandparent or parent or uncle or aunt at her side, the baby’s birth ... feels somehow haphazard, only half true” (pp. 24-25) because he is born so far from Ashima’s family and in a place that is still foreign to her. Thus, she tapes “drawings of animals done by [her] father” (p. 36) above his crib and “sings him the Bengali songs her mother had sung to her” (p. 35) in an effort to connect both her son and herself to her “true” home in India (p. 25).).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- sahib (n.) - sir; master; a term of respect
- nomenclature (n.) - a set or system of names or terms, as those used in a particular science or art, by an individual or community, etc.
- unwittingly (adv.) - unintentionally; accidentally
- lineage (n.) - the line of descendants of a particular ancestor; family
- red tape (n.) - a series of actions or complicated tasks that seem unnecessary but that a government or organization requires you to do in order to get or do something
- inviolable (adj.) - too important to be ignored or treated with disrespect
- consternation (n.) - a sudden, alarming amazement or dread that results in utter confusion; dismay
- amenities (n.) - features that provide comfort, convenience, or pleasure
- morose (adj.) - very serious, unhappy, and quiet
- dissertation (n.) - a written essay, treatise, or thesis, especially one written by a candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
- admonished (v.) - spoke to (someone) in a way that expresses disapproval or criticism
- ululate (v.) - to lament loudly and shrilly
- sabbatical (n.) - any extended period of leave from one's customary work, especially for rest, to acquire new skills or training, etc.

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

- None.

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

- haphazard (adj.) - having no plan, order, or direction
- onomatopoeic (adj.) - relating to the formation of a word, as *cuckoo*, *meow*, *honk*, or *boom*, by imitation of a sound made by or associated with its referent
- aloof (adj.) - not involved with or friendly toward other people
- irks (v.) - bothers or annoys (someone)
- taken a toll (idiom) - had a serious, bad effect on someone or something; caused harm or damage
- deprivation (n.) - the state of not having something that people need
- jet lag (n.) - a tired and unpleasant feeling caused by airplane travel to a place that is far away
- vermilion (n.) - a bright-red pigment

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.11-12.2, RL.11-12.4, W.11-12.9.a, SL.11-12.1.a, c Text: <i>The Namesake</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri, pages 22-47 	
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 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 12.4.2 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%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standards for this lesson: RL.11-12.2 and RL.11-12.4. In this lesson, students read and analyze pages 22-47 of *The Namesake* and work in small groups to analyze how the central ideas of identity and home develop within the excerpt.

- 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 22-47 of *The Namesake* and annotate for character development.) Instruct students to form pairs and share their annotations.

- Student annotations may include:
 - “What a difference, he thinks, from the childhood he has known” (p. 24) - Ashoke compares himself to his son as the “owner of books,” and considers his son “[l]ucky” because the baby has more than Ashoke did as a child (p. 24).

- “Pet names ... are a reminder, too, that one is not all things to all people” (p. 26) - Ashima and Ashoke each have pet names, and Ashima’s mother’s letters say “‘Ashima’ on the outside, ‘Monu’ on the inside” (p. 26). The use of pet names develops Ashima’s and Ashoke’s characters by showing how their Bengali culture uses pet names to create a special bond between family members.
- “At times, staring at the baby, she sees pieces of her family in his face—her mother’s glossy eyes, her father’s slim lips, her brother’s lopsided smile” (p. 35) - Ashima still looks for connections to her Indian family in her baby’s face, suggesting that she still yearns for her family in India.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

60%

Instruct students to form small groups. Explain to students that this discussion focuses on pages 22-47 of *The Namesake* and is structured with five main discussion prompts. In small groups, students discuss each question in depth, presenting a variety of textual 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 intended to increase student independence in text analysis by scaffolding learning through collaborative discussion.
- Consider reminding students of their previous work with SL.11-12.1.a, as this discussion requires that students come to class having read the material and asks them to explicitly draw on evidence from the text to support their discussion.
- Consider reminding students of their previous work with SL.11-12.1.c, as this discussion requires that students pose and respond to questions, and qualify or justify their own points of agreement and disagreement with other students.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students throughout this lesson:

What phrases contribute to a central idea in this excerpt?

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 22-47 (from “The baby, a boy, is born at five past five” to “for the first time in his life across the world”), and discuss the following questions in their groups before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *sahib*, *nomenclature*, *unwittingly*, *lineage*, *red tape*, *inviolable*, *consternation*, *amenities*, *morose*, *dissertation*, *admonished*, *ululate*, and *sabbatical*.

- 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 *sahib*, *nomenclature*, *unwittingly*, *lineage*, *red tape*, *inviolable*, *consternation*, *amenities*, *morose*, *dissertation*, *admonished*, *ululate*, and *sabbatical* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *haphazard*, *onomatopoeic*, *aloof*, *irks*, *taken a toll*, *deprivation*, *jet lag*, and *vermilion*.
 - Students write the definitions of *haphazard*, *onomatopoeic*, *aloof*, *irks*, *taken a toll*, *deprivation*, *jet lag*, and *vermilion* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What words and phrases develop Ashima’s and Ashoke’s respective views of their son’s life?

- Student responses may include:
 - When Ashoke first sees his baby’s eyes, “[he] has never seen a more perfect thing” (p. 24). At first Ashoke is “more perplexed than moved” (p. 23) by his newborn’s appearance, but when the child’s eyes open, the baby’s “face is transformed” (p. 24), and he sees himself as a father. He considers “the first miracle of his life” to be his rescue from the “shattered train,” but his baby, “weighing next to nothing but changing everything” is the second miracle of his life (p. 24).
 - Ashoke wonders at his newborn child’s luck because he is “already the owner of books” (p. 24). The baby appears very “[l]ucky” to Ashoke because he compares his child’s circumstances to “the childhood he has known” in India (p. 24).
 - Ashima “has never known of a person entering the world so alone, so deprived” of family (p. 25). She feels that the people who surround her in the hospital are “only substitutes for the people who really ought to be surrounding them” (p. 24), which is her family in India.

Ashima feels that “the baby’s birth ... feels somehow haphazard, only half true” (pp. 24-25) because in America the baby lacks her Indian family and community.

- After they arrive home from the hospital, Ashima tells Ashoke, “I don’t want to raise Gogol alone in this country. It’s not right” (p. 33), demonstrating Ashima’s fears about raising Gogol alone in America without her family. She refuses to admit that she will “get the hang of it” (p. 32). She counters, “Not here. Not like this” (p. 33), indicating that she wants to return to the people she loves, where her family cares for her.

How does the situation of naming the baby develop a central idea in the text?

- Student responses may include:
 - The conflict between American and Bengali cultures that surrounds the baby’s naming develops the central idea of identity. Ashima and Ashoke cannot name their child after their “ancestors” as people “in America and Europe” do (p. 28), because this type of naming would break tradition with their Bengali roots. They also cannot provide a common American name because in “Bengali families, individual names are sacred, inviolable” (p. 28). Thus, Ashima and Ashoke are forced by American culture to break tradition and give their son a unique name, disconnecting the baby from his Indian family and setting him apart from American culture.
 - Ashima and Ashoke await a “good name” sent by Ashima’s grandmother (p. 26), and the lack of the “good name” develops the central idea of identity. A good name is an “outside world” name that appears “in all ... public places” (p. 26). Ashima agrees that the “pet name” (p. 29) Gogol is meaningful enough to Ashoke’s history to be temporarily acceptable. However, when Gogol develops an ear infection, Gogol’s name “doesn’t look right” on the antibiotics bottle because “pet names aren’t meant to be made public in this way” (p. 36). This illustrates a rift or disturbance in Gogol’s developing identity because his name separates him from his Bengali roots.
 - The loss of Ashima’s grandmother’s letter develops the central idea of home because the missing name connects the baby to Ashima’s family and home back in India. When Mr. Wilcox, the hospital administrator, suggests that they “name him after yourself, or one of your ancestors,” Ashoke and Ashima are perplexed because “[t]his tradition doesn’t exist for Bengalis” (p. 28). The letter was a connection to Ashima’s home and family and their traditions, and without it, they are unable to name the baby something else and “disregard an elder’s wishes in such a way” (p. 28).

How does caring for Gogol further develop Ashima's character?

- Student responses may include:
 - Caring for Gogol further develops Ashima's fear about being a mother so far from her family. In India, Ashima was raised with servants, and is used to being cared for. When she returns home from the hospital, the difficulty of caring for a baby and taking care of the house while caring for herself is "suddenly unbearable" (p. 32). Ashima "misses the hustle-bustle of the hospital," where "Jell-O and ice cream [were] brought at regular intervals to her side" and resents that "there are dirty dishes stacked in the kitchen, that the bed has not been made" (p. 32). Before the baby, she "accepted that there is no one to [complete chores] on the days she is tired or homesick or cross" (p. 32), as there was in her home in India. She is overwhelmed by the challenges she faces in the days that will follow "with a baby crying in her arms" and her body feeling "so sore" (p. 32).
 - Ashima's ability to care for Gogol contributes to Ashima's developing identity as a mother. Although Ashima feels uncomfortable living so far from her family, and insists that she does not "want to raise Gogol alone in this country" (p. 33), after a time, she "begins to pride herself on doing it alone" (p. 34). Before the baby, her "days had followed no visible pattern," but now she is "occup[ied] ... fully" with her new identity as a mother caring for Gogol (pp. 34-35).
 - Even though Ashima has grown comfortable in her new identity as a mother, she still misses India and hopes to connect her son to that home. She cherishes letters that arrive from her family, carrying blessings and reminders of the people she loves: "her mother's hasty penmanship followed by her father's flourishing, elegant hand" and "decorated with drawings of animals done by Ashima's father" (p. 36). She tapes these drawings above Gogol's crib and "sings him the Bengali songs her mother had sung to her" (p. 35) in order to connect him to her Indian homeland and family.

How does the description of Gogol's *annuprasan* on pages 38-40 develop a central idea?

- Student responses may include:
 - The description of Gogol's *annuprasan* further develops the central idea of identity because during the ceremony, visitors look for signs of Gogol's emerging identity through several rituals. The final ceremony, meant to "predict his future path in life" (p. 40) illustrates others' expectations of Gogol's future identity; his father urges him, "'Gogol, take the pen!'" and others encourage him to take money because "'[a]n American boy must be rich!'" (p. 40). Gogol rejects each identity,

and instead, “forced at six months to confront his destiny,” he begins to cry (p. 40).

- The *annuprasan* establishes Gogol’s identity within Bengali culture. Through his *annuprasan*, Gogol is connected to Bengali traditions, such as eating “rice, the Bengali staff of life, for the very first time” and eating “payesh, a warm rice pudding Ashima will prepare for him to eat on each of his birthdays as a child, as an adult even” (p. 39).
- The *annuprasan* is an occasion that gathers together Ashima’s and Ashoke’s growing circle of Bengali friends, developing the central idea of home. Ashima and Ashoke have formed a new home in America, but they develop friendships with others who share their immigration experience and a sense of India as their true home. These friends all come from Calcutta, and “for this reason alone they are friends” (p. 38). The “young Bengali bachelors” return from Calcutta with new wives as “homesick and bewildered” as Ashima was, and she gives the wives “advice” about Cambridge and living in America (p. 38).

How do the textual details in the description of Ashima’s father’s death contribute to a central idea?

- Ashima’s reluctance to return home after her father has died develops the central idea of home. She “calculates the Indian time on her fingers” as she did in the hospital, but now “no image of her family comes to mind” (p. 47). After the news that her father has passed away, “[s]he refuses to picture what she shall see soon enough: her mother’s vermilion erased from her part, her brother’s thick hair shaved ... in mourning” (p. 47). Ashima refuses to picture her mother because it is painful to think of her father’s death, and she does not want to alter her current mental image of her family or Indian home. However, Ashima realizes her Indian family and home are now forever changed, as she confesses to Ashoke, “I don’t want to go. I can’t” (p. 47).

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:

Select a phrase from the excerpt and analyze how it relates to a central idea.

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.

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- 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 48-71 of *The Namesake* (from “The Gangulis have moved to a university town” to “ignored but protected, gathering dust for years to come”) and annotate for the development of central ideas (W.11-12.9.a).

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read pages 48-71 of *The Namesake* (from “The Gangulis have moved to a university town” to “ignored but protected, gathering dust for years to come”) and annotate for the development of central ideas.