

12.4.2 Lesson 10

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze pages 88-96 of *The Namesake* (from “In September, Gogol returns to high school” to “That Gogol had had nothing to do with it”), in which Gogol returns to high school and attends a college party where he introduces himself as Nikhil for the first time. Students participate in a jigsaw discussion of how the settings of high school and the college party further develop Gogol’s relationship with his name. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Gogol’s relationship with his name further develop a central idea in the text?

For homework, students read pages 97-108 of *The Namesake* and annotate for the development of central ideas. Additionally, students respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: How does Gogol’s decision to change his name impact his relationship with his parents?

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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).
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

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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's relationship with his name further develop a central idea in the text?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify a central idea in the text (e.g., identity, nostalgia, home).
- Analyze how Gogol's relationship with his name further develops a central idea (e.g., Gogol's relationship with his name further develops the central idea of identity because his increasing discomfort with the name Gogol reflects his awkwardness and discomfort with himself. Gogol is "viscerally" disturbed by the sight of his name in print because he feels that it at once represents him and makes him ridiculous, "as though the name were a particularly unflattering snapshot of himself that makes him want to say in his defense, 'That's not really me'" (p. 89). Gogol wants to reject the image of himself that his name represents, refusing to read "The Overcoat" because to do so "would mean paying tribute to his namesake, accepting it somehow" (p. 92). At the same time, though, he remains trapped by his name, feeling "perversely responsible" (p. 92) when his classmates complain about the story. However, the setting of the college party gives him greater freedom. By introducing himself to Kim as "Nikhil," Gogol frees himself to form a new identity, as someone who is "brave" enough to kiss Kim (p. 96).).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- benign (adj.) - showing or expressive of gentleness or kindness
- viscerally (adv.) - as if in the internal organs of the body; deeply
- deterioration (n.) - gradual decline
- perversely (adv.) - counter to what is expected; contrarily
- hypochondriac (n.) - a person who is often or always worried about being ill
- melancholic (adj.) - gloomy
- surreptitious (adj.) - secret or unauthorized

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

- None.

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

- elation (n.) - a feeling or state of happiness and excitement

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, W.11-12.9.a, SL.11-12.1.a, c • Text: <i>The Namesake</i> by Jhumpa Lahiri, pages 88-96 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Jigsaw Discussion 4. Quick Write 5. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 20% 3. 55% 4. 15% 5. 5%

Materials

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- 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.
ℹ️	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.11-12.3. In this lesson, students explore how Lahiri's use of the setting illustrates Gogol's evolving relationship with his name and develops a central idea in pages 88-96. Students engage in a jigsaw discussion and then complete a brief writing assignment to close the lesson.

- 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. (Review pages 72-88 of *The Namesake* and respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: Analyze the relationship between Gogol and Sonia in this excerpt.) Instruct students to form pairs and discuss their responses.

- Student pairs discuss their responses to the prompt.

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- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider distributing or asking students to reference the previous lesson's Quick Write (Analyze the relationship between Gogol and his parents in this excerpt) and leading a brief, whole-class discussion about the responses before transitioning into a discussion of the homework prompt (Analyze the relationship between Gogol and Sonia in this excerpt).

Analyze the relationship between Gogol and Sonia in this excerpt.

- The visit to Calcutta alters Gogol's relationship with Sonia in this excerpt. When living in America, Gogol sees himself as "too old to be playing hide-and-seek with eight-year-old Sonia and her ponytailed, gap-toothed friends" (p. 73). However, in Calcutta, Sonia shares Gogol's discomfort and homesickness for America. On arrival, she whispers to Gogol that she is "'scared'" (p. 82), and during the visit she becomes Gogol's "only ally, the only person to speak and sit and see as he does" (p. 84). Like Gogol, Sonia becomes ill in Calcutta, and their sickness is, according to their relatives, due to their shared American upbringing, since "they were not made to survive in a poor country" (p. 86). Sonia and Gogol identify with one another in Calcutta as Americans who feel out of place in their parents' culture. Upon returning to the United States, they are relieved to fall back into their usual relationship as brother and sister, "free to quarrel, to tease each other, to shout and holler and say shut up" (pp. 87-88).

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. (Read pages 88-96 of *The Namesake* and annotate for the development of central ideas.) Instruct student pairs to share their annotations.

- Student annotations may include:
 - "The sight of [his name] printed in capital letters on the crinkly page upsets him viscerally" (p. 89) - This evidence further develops the central idea of identity as Gogol's discomfort with his name suggests that he is uncomfortable with the identity he feels it gives him.
 - "To read the story, [Gogol] believes, would mean paying tribute to his namesake, accepting it somehow. Still, listening to his classmates complain, he feels perversely responsible, as if his own work were being attacked" (p. 92) - Gogol wants to reject his name and distance himself from the identity it imposes on him by refusing to read the story, but nevertheless feels tied to it and so "responsible" (p. 92) for the story, further developing the central idea of identity.

- “Assured by his grades and his apparent indifference to girls, his parents don’t suspect Gogol of being, in his own fumbling way, an American teenager” (p. 93) - Gogol’s identity is growing more complex, as he develops into an American teenager without his parents’ awareness.
- “But [Gogol] doesn’t want to tell Kim his name. He doesn’t want to endure her reaction, to watch her lovely blue eyes grow wide” (p. 95) - Gogol continues to be self-conscious about his name, and he fears that it makes him seem ridiculous, further developing the central idea of identity.
- “But he doesn’t tell them that it hadn’t been Gogol who kissed Kim. That Gogol had had nothing to do with it” (p. 96) - This evidence further develops the central idea of identity, as Gogol creates a new identity as Nikhil, an alternative to his identity as Gogol.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Jigsaw Discussion

55%

Inform students that in this activity they participate in a jigsaw discussion about how Lahiri uses setting to develop Gogol’s relationship with his name in pages 88-96 of *The Namesake*.

- Students listen.

Instruct students to form pairs. Instruct half of the student pairs to read pages 88-93 (from “In September, Gogol returns to high school” to “He was not yet forty-three years old”) and the other half to read pages 93-96 (from “Gogol does not date anyone in high school” to “That Gogol had had nothing to do with it”). Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss (W.11-12.9.a).

Provide students with the definitions of *benign*, *viscerally*, *deterioration*, *perversely*, *hypochondriac*, *melancholic*, and *surreptitious*.

- 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 *benign*, *viscerally*, *deterioration*, *perversely*, *hypochondriac*, *melancholic*, and *surreptitious* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definition of *elation*.
 - Students write the definition of *elation* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

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

How do Gogol's feelings about his name develop a central idea?

Post or project the following focus questions:

Focus Question 1: How does the setting of high school impact Gogol's relationship with his name on pages 88-93?

Focus Question 2: How does the setting of the college party impact Gogol's relationship with his name on pages 93-96?

Assign student pairs who read pages 88-93 to respond to Focus Question 1, and student pairs who read pages 93-96 to respond to Focus Question 2. Instruct student pairs to review their assigned focus excerpt and respond to their focus question, drawing on evidence from throughout the excerpt in their responses.

- Students work in pairs to answer their assigned focus question.

Once student pairs have answered their focus question, instruct each pair to split up and form a new pair with another student who answered a different focus question. Instruct students to share and discuss their responses in their new pairs.

- Student pairs engage in a discussion about Focus Questions 1 and 2.
- The new pairs should be composed of one student who answered Focus Question 1 and a second student who answered Focus Question 2.
- 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.
- See below for possible student responses.

Focus Question 1: How does the setting of high school impact Gogol's relationship with his name on pages 88-93?

- Student responses may include:

- In the high school setting, Gogol cannot escape his name. When he is confronted by his name in print during his English class, his instinct is to deny the connection: he refuses to read “The Overcoat” because to do so “would mean paying tribute to his namesake, accepting it somehow” (p. 92). However, in spite of this refusal, he nevertheless feels “perversely responsible” (p. 92) when he hears his classmates complaining about how difficult the story is. Gogol is even physically trapped: he wants to excuse himself, “to raise his hand and take a trip to the lavatory” (p. 89) but cannot do so without calling attention to himself and his name.
- Seeing his name in print, Gogol is “viscerally” upset because he at once recognizes himself in his name and hates the image of himself that it presents, “as though the name were a particularly unflattering snapshot of himself that makes him want to say in his defense ‘That’s not really me’”(p. 89). Mr. Lawson’s lecture makes him feel “angry” and “betrayed” (p. 91) because it presents an image of Gogol’s namesake with which Gogol does not want to identify.
- The setting of an American high school highlights the contrast between Gogol’s name and his surroundings. Gogol’s name sets him apart in a school full of students named “Brian and Erica and Tom” (p. 89). Mr. Lawson is unusual because he “is the first of Gogol’s teachers to know and to care about Gogol the author” (p. 88): most of Gogol’s teachers ask questions such as, “Was that really his name, was that the last name, was it short for something else?” (p. 89). The setting of the high school then highlights Gogol’s awareness of how unusual his name is.
- The atmosphere of the high school, in which Mr. Lawson is “the subject of schoolwide speculation, and slight scandal” (p. 88) and students gossip about teachers and fellow students such as “Emily Gardner, rumored to have anorexia” (p. 91), increases Gogol’s anxiety about his name, making him feel as though he is being observed and judged for his unusual name. As Mr. Lawson lectures on the author Gogol, Gogol is extremely self-conscious and “convinced that the entire school is listening to Mr. Lawson’s lecture. That it’s on the PA” (p. 92).
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students would benefit from a more structured analysis, consider providing the following scaffolding questions to support their reading and discussion:

What does Gogol’s response to the book distributed by Mr. Lawson suggest about his relationship with his name?

How does Mr. Lawson’s lesson on Gogol affect Gogol?

How does the high school setting contribute to the development of a central idea?

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Focus Question 2: How does the setting of the college party impact Gogol's relationship with his name on pages 93-96?

- Student responses may include:
 - The new setting of the party makes Gogol even more uncomfortable than usual with his name. Gogol already has a sense of being young and out of place, as he “feels too wholesome in this ripped jeans and T-shirt crowd” (p. 94). Gogol's name represents this awkwardness, making him reluctant to introduce himself to Kim, whom he wants to impress, because “he doesn't want to endure her reaction, to watch her lovely eyes grow wide” (p. 95).
 - The party represents a crowded and anonymous setting, in which Gogol can break away from his hated name. Apart from his friends and Colin's brother, Gogol knows nobody at the party, and so “[n]o one notices as Gogol and his three friends make their way across the room” (p. 94), and once he has split up from his friends, nobody knows him as Gogol. Thus, Gogol can take on a “surreptitious identity” as “a freshman at Amherst” when talking to Kim (p. 95). From here, he realizes that it is a short step to introducing himself under a different name, that “[h]e could introduce himself as Colin or Jason or Marc, as anybody at all, and their conversation could continue, and [Kim] would never know or care” (p. 96).
 - As Nikhil, Gogol is “brave” and feels “protected as if by an invisible shield” (p. 96), which enables him to kiss Kim. At the party, Gogol is no longer Gogol. He reflects in the car afterwards “that it hadn't been Gogol who'd kissed Kim. That Gogol had had nothing to do with it” (p. 96). The party shows Gogol that by changing his name, he can free himself of the awkwardness that he associates with the name Gogol and take on a new identity.
- **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 develop Gogol's relationship with his parents on pages 93-94?

How does Gogol's decision to introduce himself as Nikhil further develop his character?

How does the setting of the party contribute to the development of a central idea?

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 does Gogol's relationship with his name further develop a central idea in the text?

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 97-108 of *The Namesake* (from “Plenty of people changed their names: actors, writers” to “adding to them in his spare time”) 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:

How does Gogol's decision to change his name impact his relationship with his parents?

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read pages 97-108 of *The Namesake* (from “Plenty of people changed their names: actors, writers” to “adding to them in his spare time”) and annotate for the development of central ideas.

Additionally, respond briefly in writing to the following prompt:

How does Gogol's decision to change his name impact his relationship with his parents?