

12 LC

Lesson 19

Introduction

In this lesson, students analyze pages 281-285 of *Song of Solomon* (from “They met dawn in King Walker’s gas station” to “He said I’ll see you tonight”), in which Milkman participates in the hunting party’s skinning of a bobcat and meets Sweet for the first time. Students complete a pre-discussion Quick Write before engaging in collaborative analysis of Morrison’s structural choices and how they contribute to Milkman’s character development in this section of the text. Student learning is assessed via the revision of the Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How do Morrison’s structural choices in pages 281-285 further develop Milkman’s character?

For homework, students read and annotate pages 286-304 of *Song of Solomon*. Also, students develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on Milkman’s interactions with Susan Byrd, Guitar, or the children singing, and prepare possible answers to their questions for discussion.

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Standards

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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.11-12.5	Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure specific parts of a text (e.g., the choice of where to begin or end a story, the choice to provide a comedic or tragic resolution) contribute to its overall structure and meaning as well as its aesthetic impact.
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, 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> <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> <p>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.</p>
L. 11-12.4.a	<p>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.</p> <p>a. 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.</p>

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Assessment

Assessment(s)

Student learning is assessed via a revision of the 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 Morrison's structural choices in pages 281-285 further develop Milkman's character?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Analyze how Morrison develops Milkman's character in this excerpt (e.g., Morrison uses juxtaposition in this excerpt to show how African-American men have their identities skinned from them by society, but through community their identity can be restored. Guitar's words connect African-American men, including Milkman, to the bobcat that is being skinned. As the bobcat is skinned and "the genitals ... cut ... off," so are black men by white society because, according to Guitar, "everybody wants the life of a black man" and everybody wants to control and define "a black man" (p. 281). However, Milkman participates in skinning the bobcat and becomes accepted into the community of Shalimar men who demonstrate their acceptance of Milkman by letting him "get the heart" (p. 282), the most important part of the animal. The juxtaposition of Guitar's words and Milkman's participation in the skinning of the bobcat demonstrates that Milkman now understands that "everybody wants" his life (p. 281), but through community he will be able to define himself.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- corrugated (adj.) - wrinkled; furrowed
- gossamer (n.) - an extremely delicate variety of gauze, used especially for veils
- paunch (n.) - a large and protruding belly
- entrails (n.) - intestines

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

- deft (adj.) - skillful; clever

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

- butt of their humor (idiom) - the reason for or aim of a joke, especially when it is a person
- incision (n.) - a cut made in something
- diaphragm (n.) - a large flat muscle that separates the lungs from the stomach area and that is used in breathing
- gullet (n.) - the tube that leads from the mouth through the throat to the stomach
- severed (v.) - cut off (something); removed or separated (something) by cutting
- menace (n.) - a dangerous or threatening quality
- query (n.) - a question or request for information about something

Lesson Agenda/Overview

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Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: RL.11-12.3, RL.11-12.5, W.11-12.9.a, SL.11-12.1.a, c, d, L. 11-12.4.a Text: <i>Song of Solomon</i> by Toni Morrison, pages 281-285 	
Learning Sequence: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction of Lesson Agenda Homework Accountability Pre-Discussion Quick Write Whole-Class Discussion Quick Write Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5% 10% 15% 50% 15% 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the 12 LC Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12 LC Lesson 15)
- Student copies of the Central Ideas and Motifs Tracking Tool (refer to 12 LC Lesson 3) (optional) —students may need additional blank copies
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12 LC 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.11-12.3 and RL.11-12.5. In this lesson, students consider the structure of the text as well as Milkman's character development in pages 281-285, and apply their analysis in an independently written response at the beginning of the lesson. This response informs student's participation in a whole-class discussion that follows.

- Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

- Students will be held accountable for the questions and responses that they generated for homework during Activity 4: Whole-Class Discussion.

Instruct students to take out their responses to the second part of the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Record any new questions that emerge during your reading, and write answers to any earlier questions that you have resolved.)

Instruct students to form pairs and talk about any additional questions that have emerged while reading.

- Students discuss questions that have emerged while reading *Song of Solomon*, and possible answers to those questions.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Pre-Discussion Quick Write

15%

Inform students that their analysis in this lesson begins with a Quick Write in response to the prompt below. Students then use their independently generated responses to inform the following discussion and have the opportunity to review or expand their Quick Write responses after the discussion.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** If necessary, consider providing time for students to reread the lesson's excerpt before they respond in writing to the following prompt.
- This activity is designed to allow students more independence in analyzing the text before the lesson assessment. For the reading and text analysis in this lesson, students first work independently to respond to a text-based prompt. Students then discuss their independent responses as a whole class. Later they re-examine their initial responses and consider how their original opinions were challenged or verified through discussion, or whether they made new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

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

How do Morrison's structural choices in pages 281-285 further develop Milkman's character?

- Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.
- Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Provide students with the definitions of *corrugated*, *gossamer*, *paunch*, and *entrails*.

- 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 *corrugated*, *gossamer*, *paunch*, and *entrails* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *butt of their humor*, *corrugated*, *incision*, *diaphragm*, *gullet*, *severed*, *menace*, *query*, and *onyx*.

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- Students write the definitions of *butt of their humor*, *corrugated*, *incision*, *diaphragm*, *gullet*, *severed*, *menace*, *query*, and *onyx* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

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.
- This initial Quick Write is intended to demonstrate students' first thoughts and observations in response to the prompt. Students will have additional time to develop their analysis in this lesson, and return to this Quick Write after a whole-class discussion.

Activity 4: Whole-Class Discussion

50%

Facilitate a whole-class discussion of student responses and observations based on their responses to the Pre-Discussion Quick Write. Encourage students to consider points of agreement or disagreement with other students, and how the evidence and reasoning presented by other students can help qualify or justify the observations they generated independently. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they discuss (W.11-12.9.a).

Display or distribute the 12 LC Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist. Explain to students that they should refer to the 12 LC Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist for standard SL.11-12.1.a, c, d during the following discussion.

- Consider reminding students of their previous work with SL.11-12.1.a, which 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, which 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, which requires that students seek to understand and respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives in order to deepen the investigation of their position and observations.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students throughout this lesson:

How does Milkman interact with others in this excerpt of the text?

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- **Differentiation Consideration:** Students may use their Central Ideas and Motifs Tracking Tools to record the development of central ideas and motifs that they identify and discuss.
- This passage includes sexual content that is important in understanding the text. Consider modeling and establishing norms and expectations for a respectful and critical approach to mature content in an academic context.
 - Students share their observations and evidence generated during the Quick Write with the whole class.

How do Morrison’s structural choices in pages 281-285 further develop Milkman’s character?

- Student responses may include:
 - Morrison juxtaposes Milkman’s skinning of the bobcat amongst his new community of Shalimar men with Guitar’s words about how “everybody wants the life of a black man” (p. 281). Guitar’s words connect African-American men to the skinned bobcat. The bobcat is skinned and its “genitals ... cut ... off” (p. 281), just as black men are skinned of their identity by white society. As Guitar says, “everybody wants a black man’s life” (p. 281). Milkman helps skin the bobcat and is accepted by the Shalimar men who show their acceptance of Milkman by letting him “get the heart” (p. 282). The juxtaposition of Guitar’s words and the skinning of the bobcat demonstrates that Milkman has learned that “everybody wants” his life (p.281), but in a community, he will be able to find his own identity.
 - Morrison includes a tender scenario with Sweet in this section of the text to contrast the violent nature of Guitar’s assassination attempt and the hunting party’s skinning of the bobcat. In the final paragraph of this excerpt, there is an exchange of pronouns “he” and “she” to describe the equality of both Milkman and Sweet in their relationship. Not only does Sweet take care of Milkman when “[s]he sprinkle[s] talcum on his feet” (p. 285), but Milkman demonstrates growth as a partner by taking care of her. Milkman “washed her hair ... he made up the bed ... he washed the dishes” (p. 285). This interaction demonstrates Milkman’s character growth because instead of taking from a relationship and using a partner, as he did with Hagar, he is contributing to the relationship and taking care of his partner.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students would benefit from a more structured analysis, consider providing the following scaffolding questions to support their discussion:

Review pages 222-223 (from “Look. It’s the condition our condition is in” to “What good is a man’s life if he can’t even choose what to die for?”). How does Guitar describe “the black man” in these pages?

How has Milkman’s life been like the life of a “black man” as Guitar describes it on pp. 222-223?

How are the bobcat’s experiences on pp. 281-283 symbolically similar to Milkman’s experiences as a “black man”?

How does the comparison of “carv[ing] out the rectal tube” to “coring an apple” (p. 282) help clarify the meaning of the word *deft*? (L.11-12.4.a)

What does Milkman’s participation in the skinning of the bobcat suggest about his relation to the men in Shalimar?

How does the skinning of the bobcat further develop the central ideas of identity and community?

How does the structure of this excerpt of the text develop Milkman’s understanding of Guitar?

Review pages 215-217 (from “What do you know about somebody not being good enough for somebody else?” to “Why not take it? He closed the door”). How do Milkman’s interactions with Sweet on page 285 relate to Lena’s accusations?

What do Milkman’s interactions with Sweet suggest about his character development?

- Consider instructing students to form small groups and having each group elect a spokesperson to share their observations, or allowing students to volunteer to discuss the observations and evidence generated during their Quick Write.

Instruct students to form pairs and briefly discuss how their opinions were challenged or verified through discussion, or whether they made new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented during the discussions.

- Student pairs discuss how their opinions were challenged or verified through discussion, and identify any new connections they made during the discussion.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student observations.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

Instruct students to return to their Pre-Discussion Quick Write. Instruct students to independently revise or expand their Quick Write response in light of the whole-class discussion, adding any new connections, and strengthening or revising any verified or challenged opinions.

How do Morrison’s structural choices in pages 281-285 further develop Milkman’s character?

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 revise or expand their Pre-Discussion Quick Write response.
- 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 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate pages 286-304 of *Song of Solomon* (from “At four o’clock he knocked on the door” to “happy as he had ever been in his life”). Also, instruct students to develop 2-3 questions focused on Milkman’s interaction with Susan Byrd, Guitar, or the children singing (RL.11-12.3) and prepare possible answers to their questions for discussion.

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read and annotate pages 286-304 of *Song of Solomon* (from “At four o’clock he knocked on the door” to “happy as he had ever been in his life”). Also, develop 2-3 questions focused on Milkman’s interaction with Susan Byrd, Guitar, or the children singing and prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.

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