

## 12 LC

## Lesson 11

## Introduction

In this lesson, students continue analyzing *Song of Solomon* through a jigsaw discussion of how structural choices contribute to the development of central ideas in three key excerpts: pages 157-161 (from “Wait a minute, Guitar. If they are as bad” to “That’s funny. I’m scared for you too”); pages 162-164 (from “Truly landlocked people know they are. Know the occasional Bitter Creek” to “Go on now. Do what I say. Go on, Macon”); and pages 168-172 (from “On the third day they woke to find a man” to “Please get it, son. Get the gold”). Over the course of these excerpts, Guitar and Milkman discuss the Seven Days, and Milkman hears the story of the gold from Macon. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How do Morrison’s structural choices in the three excerpts contribute to the development of one or more central ideas?

For homework, students read pages 173-186 of *Song of Solomon* and annotate for the development of central ideas and the use of figurative language. Also, students develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on character development and prepare possible responses to their questions for discussion.

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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.11-12.5	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>

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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.

- How do Morrison's structural choices in the three excerpts contribute to the development of one or more central ideas?

### High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify how Morrison structures this part of the text (e.g., Morrison juxtaposes the excerpt in which Milkman and Guitar discuss the Seven Days with the excerpt of Macon's story about the gold.).
- Analyze how this structural choice contributes to the development of one or more central idea (e.g., The juxtaposition of the two conversations, between Guitar and Milkman and Macon and Milkman, develops the central idea of freedom. Guitar believes that fighting back against the murders of innocent African Americans is a way to escape a "slave status" (p. 160) and achieve freedom. Milkman disagrees and tells Guitar that he is "confused" (p. 159). In his conversation with his father, Milkman agrees that "money is freedom" (p. 163), because Milkman wants money to escape his family. By placing these conversations side by side, Morrison contrasts two ways of escaping to freedom: through money or violent revenge.).

## Vocabulary

**Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)**

- static (adj.) - showing little or no change
- maw (n.) - the symbolic or theoretical center of a voracious hunger or appetite of any kind
- placidly (adv.) - calmly, peacefully

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

- None.

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

- status (n.) - the position or rank of someone or something when compared to others in a society, organization, group, etc.
- lynch (v.) - to kill someone illegally as punishment for a crime
- tarpaulin (n.) - a large piece of waterproof material (such as plastic or canvas) that is used to cover things and keep them dry

## 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, RL.11-12.5, W.11-12.9.a, SL.11-12.1.a, c, d</li> <li>• Text: <i>Song of Solomon</i> by Toni Morrison, pages 157-161, 162-164, 168-172</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. Jigsaw Discussion</li> <li>4. Quick Write</li> <li>5. Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. 5%</li> <li>2. 15%</li> <li>3. 60%</li> <li>4. 15%</li> <li>5. 5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

- Student copies of the Central Ideas and Motifs Tracking Tool (refer to 12 LC Lesson 3) (optional)—students may need additional blank copies

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- 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.
	<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 standards for this lesson: RL.11-12.2 and RL.11-12.5. In this lesson, students engage in a jigsaw discussion about the development of central ideas in three excerpts from *Song of Solomon*. Students analyze how central ideas are developed through the author's structural choices.

- 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 152-172 of *Song of Solomon* (from "I took her home. She was standing in the middle of the room" to "Please get it, son. Get the gold") and annotate for structural choices and central ideas. Also, develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on how Morrison's structural choices contribute to the development of a central idea and prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.)

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Instruct students to form pairs and talk about the discussion questions they developed for homework, specifically focusing on how Morrison's structural choices contribute to the development of a central idea (RL.11-12.2 and RL.11-12.5).

- Student questions may include:

**On page 165, how do Milkman's reflections on the "talks" he has had with his mother and father develop a central idea?**

- Milkman's reflections on these "talks" develop the central idea of identity by illustrating the effects that each story has on his identity. Milkman describes how he feels "used" after his talk with his father, and how he "ended up ... being driven further from his mother." From his mother, he learned that "he was the subject of great controversy and strife" before he was even born. Thus, Milkman sees how his parents' selfish and competing versions of his life turn him into an object to be used or fought over, further developing the central idea of identity.

**How does Guitar's reference to Porter's and Smith's involvement in the Seven Days demonstrate a structural choice? What does this structural choice demonstrate about the work of the Seven Days?**

- By telling Milkman that Smith and Porter are in the Seven Days, Guitar provides an explanation for why they behaved the way they did, which forces the readers to revise their notions of the causes of the men's desperate behavior. This example of circular narration, in which Morrison returns to a previous event in the text, sheds new light on why the men were suicidal. Guitar explains, "if it ever gets to be too much, like it was for Robert Smith, we do *that* rather than crack and tell somebody" (p. 158). He is referring to Robert Smith's jump from the hospital, which opened the novel. Porter was the man with a shotgun, who was drunk and "pee[ing] over the heads of the women" standing below him (p. 25). Both Smith's and Porter's actions demonstrate that the work of the Seven Days is destructive for the men who carry it out.
- If student discussion is rich, text-dependent, and building toward the assessment prompt, consider extending the discussions beyond the allotted time. Then lead a brief whole-class discussion using any additional questions from below as necessary to ensure students are prepared for the assessment. (Key questions in the Jigsaw Discussion activity are marked with an asterisk\*.)

### Activity 3: Jigsaw Discussion

60%

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Transition students to the jigsaw discussion by creating groups of three. Inform students that these are their “home” groups. Instruct student groups to decide among themselves which group member is responsible for the following sections of text:

- Pages 157-161 (from “Wait a minute, Guitar. If they are as bad” to “That’s funny. I’m scared for you too”)
- Pages 162-164 (from “Truly landlocked people know they are. Know the occasional Bitter Creek” to “Go on now. Do what I say. Go on, Macon”)
- Pages 168-172 (from “On the third day they woke to find a man” to “Please get it, son. Get the gold”)

Direct students to leave their home groups to form small “expert” groups, so that groups are now based on the section of text for which each student is responsible (e.g., students responsible for pages 157-161 come together to form groups). To keep expert groups small, students may form more than one expert group for each section of text. Inform students that expert groups are those that read, analyze, and become class experts on their section of the text so that they can share their understanding with their home groups.

Explain to students that members of each group are responsible for tracing the development of one or more central ideas in the text as well as the structural choices Morrison makes. Inform students that there will be questions posted as optional supports for their discussions. The questions marked with an asterisk (\*) are particularly relevant to the development of central ideas, structural choices, and the lesson assessment.

Instruct students to annotate and take notes. Explain to students that annotating and taking notes helps them in their roles as experts when they return to their home groups for further discussion (W.11-12.9.a). Inform students that as experts, they are expected to synthesize their expert group discussions in order to report back to their home groups, stimulating and propelling the discussion of the development of central ideas in their sections.

- 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:** Students may use their Central Ideas and Motifs Tracking Tools to record the development of central ideas and motifs that they identify and discuss.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students throughout this lesson:

**What structural choices does Morrison make? How do these choices develop a central idea?**

Post or project the following questions for students reading pages 157-161 (from “Wait a minute, Guitar. If they are as bad” to “That’s funny. I’m scared for you too”) to use as optional support for their discussion of the development of central ideas and structural choices in their expert groups.

Provide students with the definition of *static*.

- Students may be familiar with this word. Consider asking students to volunteer a definition before providing one to the group.
  - Students write the definition of *static* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *status* and *lynch*.
  - Students write the definitions of *status* and *lynch* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

**\*How does Morrison’s choice to explain the Seven Days through dialogue impact the meaning of the text?**

- Morrison’s choice to explain information about the Seven Days through dialogue presents opposing viewpoints on the organization and its actions. Milkman tells Guitar that “you’re doing what the worst of them do,” (p. 157), suggesting that by killing he is just as immoral as his enemies. Guitar responds that he is “reasonable” (p. 157) because he believes the actions of the Seven Days are just. Morrison’s choice to present these opposing views as a dialogue allows the reader to consider both viewpoints.
- Consider informing students that although real events are referenced in the text, the Seven Days is a fictional group.

**\*How does Morrison develop the central idea of love through the dialogue on page 159?**



- Through this dialogue between Milkman and Guitar, Morrison develops the central idea of love as a commitment to one's family or to one's race. Milkman describes the kinds of love that Guitar will not be able to experience because of his commitment to the Seven Days, including not being able to "marry" or "[h]ave children." Milkman believes there is "no love in" a life without a wife or children. Guitar responds that his participation in the Seven Days is not about "hating white people," but in fact about "loving" African Americans. Their dialogue presents two different interpretations of love.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing the following extension question to deepen students' understanding:

**What does Milkman's discussion of love demonstrate about his character?**

- Milkman demonstrates that he has a traditional view of love that consists of being "marr[ied]" and "having children" (p. 159). Milkman identifies love with family even though his own relationship with his family and his own parents' relationship are not loving.

**\*How do two central ideas interact on pages 160-161?**

- The two central ideas of identity and freedom interact in Milkman and Guitar's discussion about names. Milkman asks Guitar why he does not call himself "Guitar X," meaning why does he not change his name from the "slave master's name" of Bains to X (p. 160). Guitar responds that he "accept[s]" his history. "I'm all of that," he says, "Slave names don't bother me; but slave status does" (p. 160). Thus, Guitar believes that his participation in the Seven Days is a way for him to escape his slave status identity, by becoming an avenger for the African-American community, through which he can achieve freedom for himself and justice for his fellow African Americans.

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Post or project the following questions for students reading pages 162-164 (from "Truly landlocked people know they are" to "Go on now. Do what I say. Go on, Macon") to use as optional support for their discussion of the development of central ideas and structural choices in their expert groups.

**\*How does Morrison structure the opening of this excerpt to develop the central idea of freedom?**

- Morrison begins the excerpt by explaining that "[t]ruly landlocked people know they are" unable to fly away, as opposed to those who live on a coast (p. 162). But the people near the Great Lakes, where the story is taking place, are confused by the

presence of those large bodies of water: “They seem to be able to live a long time believing, as coastal people do, that ... final exit and escape are the only journeys left” (p. 162), but in fact they are also landlocked. Morrison uses this excerpt to emphasize the idea of freedom through people’s yearnings to escape from being landlocked.

**\*How does Morrison develop Milkman’s view of freedom in his conversation with his father on page 163?**

- Milkman views freedom as the ability to escape from the confines of his house. Milkman wants to “feel the heavy white door” of his house close and know it is the last time he hears it. Like his father, Milkman believes that “money is freedom ... the only real freedom there is.” Milkman asks Macon for money, but Macon refuses, so Milkman is unable to escape. This dialogue demonstrates that Milkman views freedom as a form of escape that can be purchased with money.

**\*How does the structural choice of juxtaposing Milkman and his father’s conversation with Milkman and Guitar’s conversation about “slave status” (p. 160) develop a central idea in the text?**

- Placing this excerpt after Milkman and Guitar’s conversation about escaping “slave status” highlights how the conversation between Milkman and his father is also about how to achieve freedom, with different conclusions. In the previous excerpt, Guitar argues that his participation in the Seven Days is a way for him to escape his “slave status” as well as help others of his race to escape it. In his conversation with his father, Milkman reveals that he shares his father’s belief that “money is freedom” (p. 163), because Milkman believes he can use money to gain freedom from his family. Through the juxtaposition of these two conversations, Morrison shows two different paths to freedom: one through revenge and one through money.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing the definition of *juxtaposition* as “an act or instance of placing close together or side by side, especially for comparison or contrast.”
- Students write the definition of *juxtaposition* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

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Post or project the following questions for students reading pages 168-172 (from “On the third day they woke to find a man” to “Please get it, son. Get the gold”) to use as optional support for their discussion of the development of central ideas and structural choices in their expert groups.

Provide students with the definitions of *maw* and *placidly*.

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

**\*How does Macon’s account of seeing his father (p. 168) differ from Pilate’s account (p. 141)?**

- Macon describes how he and Pilate saw “a man that looked just like their father” (p. 168), demonstrating that he is more doubtful than Pilate, who describes seeing and talking with her father “since he was shot” (p. 141). Macon also describes his father as having “frightened” them (p. 168), so they avoided him, whereas Pilate remembers approaching him throughout the day. Macon doubts and fears his father, but Pilate welcomes him.

**How do Pilate’s and Mason’s reactions to discovering gold (p. 170) further develop each of their characters?**

- Macon’s and Pilate’s reactions to discovering the gold demonstrate their differing values. For Macon “[l]ife, safety, and luxury fanned out before him like the tailspread of a peacock” (p. 170), showing that the gold represents a good life for him and his sister. In contrast, Pilate sees their father and exclaims, “It is Papa!” (p. 170), then she tries to find his ghost in the darkness of the cave. These different reactions demonstrate that Macon is focused on material comfort, while Pilate is more interested in relationships and spiritual matters.

**\*How does the structural choice of placing the conversation between Milkman and Guitar between the two stories from Pilate and Macon further develop a central idea?**

- By placing Milkman and Guitar’s conversation between the two stories about Pilate and Macon, Morrison develops the central idea of freedom. Pilate’s story to Ruth describes how she “began at zero” (p. 149) when she found she would not be accepted in the community, and although she remains at the edge of the community, she is a healer and mediator who has found freedom in her true identity. In the conversation between Milkman and Guitar, Guitar explains how his participation in the Seven Days is a way to

find freedom from his and his people's "slave status" (p. 160), whereas Macon tells his son that money is "the only real freedom" (p. 163). Thus, Morrison presents three different ideas of freedom: Pilate's inner journey, Guitar's violent vengeance, and Macon's money. The juxtaposition of these stories demonstrates the different paths Milkman can follow to achieve freedom.

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When expert groups complete their analysis of their section of text, instruct students to return to their home groups, in which members have explored one of the three assigned excerpts. Each student should present the analysis from the expert group to his or her home group members for discussion, focusing on the development of central ideas and structural choices in each excerpt. If time remains, encourage students to discuss the remaining questions.

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 Morrison's structural choices in the three excerpts contribute to the development of one or more central ideas?**

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%**

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Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, students read pages 173-186 of *Song of Solomon* (from “Every night now Guitar was seeing little scraps of Sunday dresses” to “she had a splinter of wood and put it in her mouth”) and annotate for the development of central ideas and the use of figurative language (W.11-12.9.a). Also, instruct students to develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on character development (RL.11-12.3) and prepare possible answers to the questions for discussion.

- Students follow along.

## Homework

Read pages 173-186 of *Song of Solomon* (from “Every night now Guitar was seeing little scraps of Sunday dresses” to “she had a splinter of wood and put it in her mouth”) and annotate for the development of central ideas and the use of figurative language. Also, develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on character development and prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.