

## 12 LC

## Lesson 28

## Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze pages 71-73 of “Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*” (from “The opening pages gives us the mandrel” to “the gold his Aunt Pilate and father stumbled across in a Pennsylvania cave”), in which A. Leslie Harris discusses the mythic structural elements of Part 1 of *Song of Solomon*. Students participate in a gallery walk to analyze how key ideas from the literary criticism apply to the novel. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Choose a sentence from pages 71-73 of “Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*” and analyze how the sentence relates to the novel’s characters, central ideas, or structures.

For homework, students read pages 74-76 of “Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*” (from “His quest leads Milkman to Pennsylvania and then to Virginia” to “his past transforms his leap toward Guitar into a triumphant flight”) and annotate for how the article relates to their 12 LC Second Interim Assessment responses. Students also conduct a brief search into the character of Sibyl in Greek mythology to identify who she is and what she does.

File: 12 LC Lesson 28 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

## Standards

File: 12 LC Lesson 28 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015  
© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a  
Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/>



Assessed Standard(s)	
CCRA.R.9	Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics in order to build knowledge or to compare the approaches the authors take.
RI.11-12.1	Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.11-12.9. a, b	<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> <p>b. Apply <i>grades 11-12 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the reasoning in seminal U.S. texts, including the application of constitutional principles and use of legal reasoning [e.g., in U.S. Supreme Court Case majority opinions and dissents] and the premises, purposes, and arguments in works of public advocacy [e.g., <i>The Federalist</i>, presidential addresses]”).</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>
-------------	--

## 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.

- Choose a sentence from pages 71-73 of “Myth of Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*” and analyze how the sentence relates to the novel’s characters, central ideas, or structure.

### High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify a sentence from pages 71-73 of “Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*” (e.g., “Rather than acting from any belief or commitment to another, Milkman only reacts.” (p. 73)).
- Analyze how this sentence relates to the novel’s characters, central ideas, or structure (e.g., This sentence relates to Milkman’s character development because it highlights Milkman’s lack of understanding in relationships. Milkman responds to Hagar’s attempts to kill him at one point by telling himself, “If I am to live in [this world], then I want her dead” (Morrison p. 129), but instead of acting, he waits for her to try to kill him again. Milkman has already admitted that “he himself did nothing” (Morrison p. 120) and was “looking forward to” another assassination attempt (Morrison p. 119). Milkman does not even feel enough for Hagar or himself to try to stop her from killing him, illustrating that he only “reacts” instead of “act[s]” (Harris p. 73).).

## Vocabulary

File: 12 LC Lesson 28 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

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

- mandrel (n.) - a spindle on which a workpiece is supported during machining operations
- allusive (adj.) - in a way that refers to something without mentioning it directly
- disaffection (n.) - the absence or alienation of affection or goodwill; estrangement; disloyalty
- vacillation (n.) - the act of repeatedly changing your opinions or desires
- accedes (v.) - gives consent, approval, or adherence; agrees; assents
- incongruous (adj.) - out of keeping or place; inappropriate; unbecoming

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

- prosaic (adj.) - commonplace or dull; matter-of-fact or unimaginative

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

- subterfuge (n.) - the use of tricks especially to hide, avoid, or get something
- conception (n.) - the process that occurs within a woman's body when she becomes pregnant
- intervention (n.) - the act of becoming involved in something (such as a conflict) in order to have an influence on what happens
- humbler (adj.) - not special, fancy, or expensive
- orders (n.) - social classes
- inextricably (adv.) - impossible to separate; closely joined or related; in a way that is closely joined or related
- ritualized (adj.) - done as part of a ceremony
- circumscribed (v.) - limited the size or amount of (something)
- defunct (adj.) - no longer existing or being used

## Lesson Agenda/Overview

File: 12 LC Lesson 28 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p><b>Standards &amp; Text:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards: CCRA.9, RI.11-12.1, SL.11-12.1.a, c, d, W.11-12.9.a, b, L. 11-12.4.a</li> <li>Text: “Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison’s <i>Song of Solomon</i>” by A. Leslie Harris, pp. 71-73</li> </ul> <p><b>Learning Sequence:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction of Lesson Agenda</li> <li>Homework Accountability</li> <li>Reading and Discussion</li> <li>Gallery Walk</li> <li>Quick Write</li> <li>Closing</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5%</li> <li>0%</li> <li>40%</li> <li>35%</li> <li>15%</li> <li>5%</li> </ol>

## Materials

- Student copies of the 12 LC Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12 LC Lesson 15)
- 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: CCRA.R.9 and RI.11-12.1. In this lesson, students read pages 71-73 of “Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*” (“The opening pages gives us the mandrel” to “the gold his Aunt Pilate and father stumbled across in a Pennsylvania cave”) and engage in a gallery walk to analyze how the literary criticism applies to the novel.

- Students look at the agenda.

### Activity 2: Homework Accountability

0%

- Students will be held accountable for the questions and responses that they generated for homework and for their research on Icarus and Daedalus during Activity 3: Reading and Discussion.

### Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

40%

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Remind students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss (W.11-12.9.a, b).

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

**How do pages 71-73 of “Myth of Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*” help explain choices that Morrison makes in the novel?**

Instruct students to read pages 71-72 (from “The opening pages gives us the mandrel” to “learn to fly again, figuratively, if not literally”) and discuss the following questions in groups before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *mandrel*, *allusive*, and *disaffection*.

- 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 *mandrel*, *allusive*, and *disaffection* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *subterfuge*, *conception*, *intervention*, *humbler*, *orders*, *inextricably*, and *ritualized*.
  - Students write the definitions of *subterfuge*, *conception*, *intervention*, *humbler*, *orders*, *inextricably*, and *ritualized* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

**How does Harris align Milkman’s birth with traditional myth?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Harris claims that in traditional myth “the young hero is traditionally born after a long period of barrenness” (p. 73). Milkman’s birth aligns to this notion of barrenness because his mother gets pregnant even though his parents have had no intimacy for thirteen years.
  - Harris states that in traditional myth, like that of Icarus and Daedalus, the hero’s “conception and his delivery” (p. 71) are accompanied by trickery and deceit. The “subterfuge” (p. 71), or trickery, in *Song of Solomon* involves Pilate’s use of potions to help Ruth to conceive, and then “Pilate’s intervention” (p. 71), or protection, of the unborn baby, resulting in Milkman’s successful birth.
  - Harris argues that in traditional myth, assistance from “a member of the humbler orders” (p. 71) is another significant part of “the hero’s birth” (p. 71). Because

File: 12 LC Lesson 28 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License



Pilate is not seen as socially acceptable and assists with Milkman's conception and protection, she represents the "member of the humbler orders" (p. 71) that is often present in myths.

**How does Harris connect the mythical structure of life and death to the beginning of the novel?**

- Student responses may include:
  - Life and death are linked in the novel because at the same time that Mr. Smith "falls, Icarus-like, to his death" (p. 72), Milkman's birth starts a celebration with "his Aunt Pilate singing in the street, and virgins (Milkman's older sisters) strewing rose petals" (p. 72).
  - The beginning of the novel also includes the introduction of Guitar, who, like Mr. Smith, later becomes a member of the Seven Days, an assassination organization consumed by issues of life and death. Guitar is instrumental in Milkman's early years as his "boyhood friend" and later in trying to "ambush[]" (p. 72) and kill Milkman, an additional link between life and death established throughout the novel.

**How is "the Icarus motif" (p. 72) woven through the novel?**

- "[T]he Icarus motif" makes appearances throughout the novel in the motif of flying. Harris explains that the motif of flying arises as a conflict in Milkman. Just as "Icarus' doomed escape must always be balanced by ... Daedalus' success" (p. 72), Milkman was interested in flying until Mr. Smith's suicide, and the rest of "the novel follows [Milkman's] attempt to overcome this disaffection and learn to fly again, figuratively, if not literally" (p. 72). In other words, "fly[ing]" comes to represent Milkman feeling connected to others, rather than feeling estranged or separated from others since childhood.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider reminding them of their brief searches into the flight of Daedalus and Icarus from the previous lesson's homework.

**How does Milkman's struggle in "the second stage of [his] growth" (p. 72) affect his actions?**

- Milkman does not fully understand his place or path in society of "greed, anger, and frustration," a world of "apparent chaos" (p. 72). This chaos leads to Milkman's "isolat[ion]" (p. 72), and any interactions he does have are unhealthy, as evidenced by "strik[ing] his father" (p. 72) and sabotaging his relationships with Hagar and Pilate.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

File: 12 LC Lesson 28 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

Instruct students to read pages 72-73 (from “Milkman’s decisions during this period are indeed haphazard” to “the gold his Aunt Pilate and father stumbled across in a Pennsylvania cave”) and discuss the following questions in groups before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *vacillation*, *accedes*, and *incongruous*.

- 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 *vacillation*, *accedes*, and *incongruous* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *circumscribed* and *defunct*.
  - Students write the definitions of *circumscribed* and *defunct* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

How does Milkman’s role as a character who “only reacts” (p. 73) inform his actions in the novel?

- Milkman does not “act[] from any belief or commitment to another” (p. 73), which leads him to reject those around him, becoming “disaffected ... and detached” (p. 73). Milkman is unwilling to invest in relationships with other people, so as a result, people who want a relationship with Milkman have to put in all the effort. He believes “there was nothing he wanted bad enough to risk anything for, inconveniencing himself for” (p. 73).

How does the “white peacock” (p. 73) reinforce Milkman’s conflict in the text?

- Student responses may include:
  - The exotic beauty of the white peacock is, for Milkman, a sign of “escape into adventure” (p. 73), but just as the peacock cannot fly, Milkman’s focus on escape prevents him from flying or being free, his central conflict in the text. Rather than focusing on the seemingly “prosaic” details of his life, such as his relationship with family members, Milkman wants to “escape into adventure” (p. 73).
  - Unlike Milkman, Guitar views the peacock as a symbol of vanity: it cannot fly because it has “too much tail” and “jewelry weigh[ing] it down” (p. 73). Guitar understands what Milkman does not until much later in the text: too much “jewelry,” or material possessions, such as the gold for which he quests, will not make him free.

File: 12 LC Lesson 28 Date: 6/30/15 Classroom Use: Starting 9/2015

© 2015 Public Consulting Group. This work is licensed under a

Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported License

- Differentiation Consideration: If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding question:

On page 73, how does the phrase “juxtaposition of the peacock and used cars suggests how the exotic appears unexpectedly out of the prosaic” help clarify the meaning of the word *prosaic*? (L.11-12.4.a)

- The word “juxtaposition” indicates that *prosaic* has an opposite meaning of “exotic,” so *prosaic* must mean dull or ordinary. The inclusion of “Southside and his family” (p. 73) further supports this interpretation, because Southside is familiar and therefore not an exciting place for Milkman.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

## Activity 4: Gallery Walk

35%

Instruct students to remain in their groups from the previous activity. Instruct student groups to select a sentence from pages 71-73 of “Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*,” and discuss how the sentence best relates to character development, central ideas, or structure in *Song of Solomon*.

Distribute chart paper to all students. Instruct student groups to write out the sentence and text evidence from the novel that best supports how the sentence relates to the novel’s character development, central ideas, or structure.

- Student groups create charts that include a sentence from pages 71-73 of “Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*” and discuss how the sentence relates to character development, central ideas, or structure in *Song of Solomon*.

Instruct student groups to post their chart paper and then rotate through the room to examine the work of other groups. Instruct students to discuss how to further clarify or develop ideas presented by their peers, keeping in mind that the sentence from the literary criticism should relate to the novel’s character development, central ideas, or structure. Students may add their new ideas to their own or their peers’ charts.

- Students circulate the room, reading text evidence in relation to the literary criticism, and developing and clarifying ideas presented by peers.

---

Instruct students to return to their small groups and discuss how the gallery walk reinforced or challenged their ideas about the literary criticism and novel.

- 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.

Instruct students to use the 12 LC Speaking and Listening Rubric and Checklist to guide their discussion.

- Student groups discuss how the sentence from the literary criticism relates to the novel's character development, central ideas, or structure.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

## Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

**Choose a sentence from pages 71-73 of “Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*” and analyze how the sentence relates to the novel’s characters, central ideas, or structure.**

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 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read pages 74-76 of “Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*” (from “His quest leads Milkman to Pennsylvania and then to Virginia” to “his past transforms his leap toward Guitar into a triumphant flight”) and annotate for how the article relates to their 12 LC Second Interim Assessment responses (W.11-12.9.b).

Also, instruct students to conduct a brief search into the character of Sibyl in Greek mythology to identify who she is and what she does.

- Students follow along.

## Homework

Read pages 74-76 of “Myth as Structure in Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*” (from “His quest leads Milkman to Pennsylvania and then to Virginia” to “his past transforms his leap toward Guitar into a triumphant flight”) and annotate for how the article relates to your 12 LC Second Interim Assessment response.

Also, conduct a brief search into the character of Sibyl in Greek mythology to identify who she is and what she does.