

12 LC

Lesson 10

Introduction

In this lesson, students continue their analysis of *Song of Solomon*, focusing on pages 149-151 (from “Finally Pilate began to take offense. Although she was hampered by huge ignorances” to “Pilate was making deliberately long to keep Ruth’s mind off Hagar”). This passage describes Pilate’s search for identity and her relationship to the community around her. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Analyze how two central ideas interact and build on one another in pages 149-151.

For homework, students read pages 152-172 of *Song of Solomon* and annotate for structural choices and central ideas. Also, students develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on how Morrison’s structural choices contribute to the development of a central idea.

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.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.11-12.9.a	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. 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”).
L.11-12.4.a, b	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. 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. b. Identify and correctly use patterns of word changes that indicate different meanings or parts of speech (e.g., <i>conceive, conception, conceivable</i>).

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.

- Analyze how two central ideas interact and build on one another in pages 149-151.

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify two central ideas in the passage (e.g., community, identity, love).
- Analyze how the central ideas interact and build on one another in pages 149-151 (e.g., The central ideas of community and identity interact and build on each other as Pilate relates her search for identity in response to the isolation she was forced to live in. On page 149, Pilate relates how she “[f]inally ... began to take offense” (p. 149) at the way she was isolated from the community throughout her life, because of her lack of a navel and her last name. So she begins a search for her true identity. The fact that she has to “beg[i]n at zero” and that some of her realizations are the same as a “three-year-old” (p. 149) shows that she has to question everything she knows, everything the community has taught her, and explore her identity for herself.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- indulgence (n.) - a catering to someone’s mood or whim; humoring
- truculent (adj.) - fierce, cruel, savagely brutal

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

- profundity (n.) - intellectual depth

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

- conviction (n.) - a strong belief or opinion
- outrageous (adj.) - very strange or unusual; surprising or shocking
- inclination (n.) - a feeling of wanting to do something
- prosperous (adj.) - having success usually by making a lot of money

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RL.11-12.2, W.11-12.9.a, L.11-12.4.a, b • Text: <i>Song of Solomon</i> by Toni Morrison, pages 149-151 	
Learning Sequence:	
1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda	1. 5%
2. Homework Accountability	2. 15%
3. Reading and Discussion	3. 60%
4. Quick Write	4. 15%
5. Closing	5. 5%

Materials

- 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 standard for this lesson: RL.11-12.2. In this lesson, students continue reading *Song of Solomon*, focusing closely on pages 149-151 to analyze how central ideas interact and build on one another in the passage.

- 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 and annotate pages 134-151 of *Song of Solomon*. Also, develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on how central ideas develop, interact, or build on one another in the text, and prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.)

Instruct students to form pairs and talk about the discussion questions they developed for homework, specifically analyzing how central ideas develop, interact, or build on one another in this section of the text (RL.11-12.2).

- Student questions may include:

How does the conversation between Ruth, Hagar, and Pilate on pages 137-138 further develop a central idea in the text?

- Ruth, Hagar, and Pilate’s conversation develops the central idea of love by showing that love should not be about possession. In this discussion, Hagar says that Milkman is her “home in this world” (p. 137), and Ruth replies that Ruth is Milkman’s home. Pilate interrupts this conversation and criticizes Hagar and Ruth for being “two grown-up women talkin ’bout a man like he was a house or needed one. He ain’t a house, he’s a man, and whatever he need, don’t none of you got it” (pp. 137-138). Pilate chastises Ruth and Hagar for objectifying Milkman with their possessive love.

How is Pilate different from the people she encounters (pp. 140-151)? How do the reactions to Pilate’s differences develop one or more central ideas in the text?

- Student responses may include:
 - Pilate is different from other people because she has no navel. The community of “pickers” (p. 142) in New York State make Pilate leave because of their “terror of having been in the company of something God never made” (p. 144). This situation repeats itself in another community that “isolate[s]” Pilate (p. 148) because of her lack of a navel and because her last name, Dead, has “a bad effect on people” (p. 146). These reactions develop the central idea of community by demonstrating how people can exclude others out of fear or because of religious belief.
 - Pilate “finally ... began to take offense” at all the ways she was outcast, and so she “[throws] away every assumption she had and learn[s] to begin at zero” (p. 149). Pilate’s reaction develops the central ideas of community and identity by showing how she is forced in her isolation from community to develop her own sense of identity.
- 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 Reading and Discussion questions necessary to ensure students are prepared for the assessment. (Key questions in the Reading and Discussion activity are marked with an asterisk*.)

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

60%

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

- **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 is the relationship between the central ideas in this passage?

Instruct students to read page 149 (from “Finally Pilate began to take offense. Although she was hampered by huge ignorances” to “Circe had brought her cherry jam for breakfast”) for evidence to support their responses as they discuss the following questions in groups before sharing out with the class.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *conviction* and *outrageous*.
 - Students write the definitions of *conviction* and *outrageous* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Why did Pilate “thr[o]w away every assumption she had and beg[i]n at zero” (p. 149)? How does this process demonstrate the relationship between two central ideas?

- Student responses should include:
 - Pilate “threw away every assumption she had and began at zero” because she was isolated from the different communities she tried to be a part of. Pilate’s “defect” (p. 148) of not having a navel caused the community to “gossip” (p. 149) and “den[y] her” participation in the community (p. 148). “Finally Pilate [begins] to take offense” (p. 149) at the way she is treated and reexamines who she wants to be and how she wants to live.
 - Pilate’s process of reinventing herself develops the central ideas of identity and community. Pilate realizes “what her situation in the world [is]” (p. 149) and that she will never be fully accepted by a community, so she begins to change her identity. Pilate questions “how she wanted to live and what was valuable to her” (p. 149) and constructs her own identity without the community’s influence.

***How does Morrison describe Pilate’s search for an identity? What does this description suggest about the search itself?**

- Morrison describes how Pilate’s “mind traveled crooked streets and aimless goat paths, arriving sometimes at profundity, other times at the revelations of a three-year-old” (p. 149). The fact that she “began at zero” and some of her realizations are the same as a “three-year-old” shows that she has to question everything she knows,

everything the community taught her, and explore the world and her relationship to it for herself. This description suggests that the search for identity apart from community is a long and difficult one.

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

How does Pilate’s “mind travel[s]” clarify the meaning of the word *profundity* on page 149? (L.11-12.4.a) What word part also helps clarify the meaning of the word *profundity*? (L.11-12.4.b)

- Because Pilate’s mind sometimes “arrived at profundity” and “other times at the revelations of a three-year-old,” the word *profundity* must be the opposite of the “revelations of a three-year-old,” so it must mean “intellectual depth.” Also, the word part *profound*, which is an adjective that means “deep,” confirms that *profundity* as the noun form must mean “depth.”

How does Pilate’s search for identity impact her relationship with “society” (p. 149)?

- Pilate’s search for identity brings her within the outer bounds of her community. Although Pilate is an “alien” whose dress is “outrageous,” she has a special “compassion for troubled people” and she has “never made an impolite observation,” so she keeps “just barely within the boundaries of the elaborately socialized world of black people” (p. 149). Pilate’s search for her identity makes her unique, but she has traits that balance her differences enough to keep her within the bounds of society or community.

***How does Pilate’s journey further develop the interaction of two central ideas in the text?**

- Pilate’s journey further develops the central ideas of identity and community by showing how difficult it is to form a new identity apart from the community while still staying connected to the community. Although Pilate travels “crooked streets” to arrive at her new identity, her generosity and respect for others keeps her “just barely within the boundaries of the elaborately socialized world of black people” (p. 149). This journey demonstrates that even if one’s identity is formed largely outside of community, one is still influenced by and needs to interact with a community.

Lead a brief whole class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to read pages 149-151 (from “She gave up, apparently, all interest in table manners” to “Pilate was making deliberately long to keep Ruth’s mind off Hagar”) for evidence to support their responses as they discuss the following questions in groups before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *indulgence* and *truculent*.

- 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 *indulgence* and *truculent* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *inclination* and *prosperous*.
 - Students write the definitions of *inclination* and *prosperous* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

How do Pilate’s childhood experiences with her father and brother impact her identity as an adult? How do these experiences relate to a central idea in the text?

- Pilate describes her father and brother’s treatment of her as a child as a “preferable kind of behavior,” wherein she experienced genuine love rather than the behavior she experienced later from the “men who called her mermaid and the women who swept up her footprints” (p. 150). Thus, Pilate’s upbringing contributes to her identity as a loving person who cares for others, which is tested as she encounters people who reject her or treat her unfairly later in life.

***How does the arrival of Hagar change Pilate’s attitude toward community?**

- Pilate realizes that the community she and Reba have created is not enough for Hagar. Morrison describes Hagar as “prissy” (p. 150) and liking objects like “pretty clothes” (p. 151). Pilate decides that Hagar “need[s] family” and a greater connection to community, and Pilate is sure that her brother Macon will be similar to Hagar, more “conventional” (line 151). While Pilate and Reba do not need the kind of community that Hagar needs, they try to find it for Hagar because of their love for her.

How does the fact that Pilate makes her story “deliberately long to keep Ruth’s mind off Hagar”

(p. 151) further develop the motif of storytelling in the text?

- Although Pilate narrates her story to provide Ruth with the background on her identity, she also has another purpose, which is to protect her granddaughter. Pilate “mak[es] [the story] deliberately long to keep Ruth’s mind off Hagar,” demonstrating that

storytelling serves many purposes in the characters' lives, in this case to manipulate the listener to the storyteller's own ends.

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:

Analyze how two central ideas interact and build on one another in pages 149-151.

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 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 (W.11-12.9.a). Also, instruct students to develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on how Morrison's structural choices contribute to the development of a central idea (RL.11-12.2) (RL.11-12.5) and prepare possible answers to their questions for discussion.

- Students follow along.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** To support students, consider defining and discussing possible structural choices authors can make in a text, such as juxtaposition, circular or linear narration, flashback, and foreshadowing.

Homework

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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