

12 LC

Lesson 1

Introduction

In this first lesson of module, students begin their analysis of Toni Morrison’s *Song of Solomon*. Students read and discuss Morrison’s novel over the course of 25 lessons, focusing on the development of and relationship between central ideas, character development, story elements, and structure. In the last 5 lessons of the module, students build upon their initial analysis of *Song of Solomon* as they read and analyze Toni Morrison’s own reflections on *Song of Solomon* in her foreword to the novel and a piece of literary criticism pertaining to the novel. Students make connections between these supplementary texts and the novel as they consider how these informational texts augment their original analysis. This literary criticism module reinforces and refines many of the foundational skills, practices, and routines introduced in previous grades and modules. Additionally, it fosters students’ independence by strategically removing scaffolds in key text analysis lessons.

This first lesson begins with students reading the first six pages of *Song of Solomon* (pages 3-9, from “The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance agent” to “Mr. Smith had seen the rose petals, heard the music, and leaped on into the air”), in which Morrison tells the story of Mr. Smith’s flight off of the rooftop of Mercy Hospital. Students then analyze this passage as they consider how Morrison introduces the setting of her novel through her description of this event. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: Analyze the details Morrison uses to establish the novel’s setting.

For homework, students read pages 9-15 of *Song of Solomon* and annotate for how Morrison introduces and develops characters. Also, students develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on how Morrison introduces and develops characters and prepare possible answers to their questions for discussion. Additionally, throughout the module students will record and discuss any unanswered questions they have about the text to use in the 12 LC Second Interim Assessment and the Performance Assessment.

- Students read and analyze the “Foreword” to *Song of Solomon* after they complete their analysis of the novel.

Standards

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).
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>

Assessment

File: 12 LC Lesson 1 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

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 the details Morrison uses to establish the novel’s setting.
- Throughout this unit, Quick Writes may be assessed using the Short Response Rubric.

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify details in the text that establish when and where Morrison’s novel takes place (e.g., Morrison’s reference to Lake Superior in her description of Mr. Smith’s flight and the time and date specified in Mr. Smith’s note; Morrison’s description of the history of “Not Doctor Street” (p. 4); Morrison’s choice to leave the outcome of Mr. Smith’s flight uncertain; etc.).
- Analyze how these details establish the setting of Morrison’s novel (e.g., Morrison’s opening sentence: “The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance agent promised to fly from Mercy to the other side of Lake Superior” (p. 3) indicates that the novel takes place in Michigan. Mr. Smith’s detailed suicide note establishes the time as “3:00 p.m. on Wednesday the 18th of February, 1931” and the place as “Mercy” (p. 3), a hospital on “Not Doctor Street” (p. 4). Additionally, Morrison’s description of the back-and-forth between white city legislators and African-American Southside residents over the naming of Not Doctor Street suggests that her novel takes place in a city divided by a power struggle between white authorities and African-American residents.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- expectant (adj.) - pregnant
- wards (n.) - sections in a hospital for patients needing a particular kind of care
- cupola (n.) - a rounded roof or part of a roof
- placards (n.) - large notices or signs put up in a public place or carried by people

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

- None.

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

- Lindbergh (n.) - a famous aviator who lived from 1902-1974
- corset (n.) - a tight, stiff piece of clothing worn by women under other clothing to make their waists appear smaller
- drafted (v.) - selected from a group (as for compulsory military service)
- legislators (n.) - people who make laws
- delivery (n.) - the act or process of giving birth
- sniggered (v.) - made a short, quiet laugh in a way that shows disrespect
- transfixed (adj.) - not moving because of surprise, shock, interest, etc.
- reaper (n.) - death thought of as a man or skeleton holding a scythe and wearing a dark cloak with a hood

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p>Standards & Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RL.11-12.3, W.11-12.9.a • Text: <i>Song of Solomon</i> by Toni Morrison, pages 3-9 	
<p>Learning Sequence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Module and Lesson Agenda 2. Reading and Discussion 3. Quick Write 4. Closing 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 75% 3. 15% 4. 5%

File: 12 LC Lesson 1 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



Materials

- Copies of *Song of Solomon* for each student
- Copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist for each student (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 Module and Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the goals for the Grade 12 Literary Criticism Module. Explain that in this module, students analyze the development of and relationship between central ideas, story elements, and structure in Toni Morrison’s novel *Song of Solomon*. Students then build upon this analysis as they read and analyze Toni Morrison’s own reflections on *Song of Solomon* in her foreword to the novel and a piece of literary criticism pertaining to the novel.

Review the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.11-12.3. In this lesson, students read the first six pages of *Song of Solomon*. Students then work in pairs to read and discuss this focus excerpt as they consider how Morrison introduces the setting of her novel.

- Students look at the agenda.
- Instruct students to keep all of their notes, Quick Writes, and individual questions and responses in a notebook or journal. Students will revisit and add to their notes, questions,

and responses in this journal over the course of the module, and will use their entries to write the 12 LC Interim and Performance Assessments.

Activity 2: Reading and Discussion

75%

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

- Throughout the module, consider providing masterful readings of the text as necessary.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding questions to support students throughout this lesson:

Where and when does the story begin? What are the people like in this community?

Instruct student pairs to read pages 3-5 of *Song of Solomon* (from “The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance agent” to “the place of her delivery, it certainly contributed to its time”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *expectant* and *wards*.

- 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 *expectant* and *wards* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *Lindbergh*, *corset*, *drafted*, *legislators*, and *delivery*.
 - Students write the definitions of *Lindbergh*, *corset*, *drafted*, *legislators*, and *delivery* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Reread pages 3-5 in pairs and annotate the text for details that show when and where Morrison’s novel takes place (W.11-12.9.a). Write a brief note explaining the significance of each detail you identify.

- Student annotations and notes may include:
 - “The North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance agent promised to fly from Mercy to the other side of Lake Superior” (p. 3). This reference to Lake Superior suggests that this novel takes place in an unnamed city in Michigan on Lake Superior.

- “At 3:00 p.m on Wednesday the 18th of February, 1931” (p. 3). The details in Mr. Smith’s note reveal that the opening of Morrison’s novel takes place on an afternoon in the middle of February in the early twentieth century.
 - “Mr. Smith didn’t draw as big a crowd as Lindbergh had four years earlier” (p. 3). Morrison’s reference to Lindbergh suggests that the events of the novel take place in America in the early twentieth century, because Lindbergh was an American aviator who made a famous flight in 1927.
 - “Women were fastening their corsets” (p. 3). Morrison’s reference to corsets suggests that the novel takes place before the mid-twentieth century, when women still wore corsets.
 - “they happened to be walking at that exact moment in the shore end of Not Doctor Street” (p. 4). This detail specifies that the opening events of the novel take place on a street called Not Doctor Street.
 - References to the dates of 1896 and the 1918 draft in Morrison’s description of the history of Not Doctor Street (p. 4) suggest that the events of the novel happen sometime after 1918.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posing the following extension questions to deepen students’ understanding:

How does the tone of Mr. Smith’s note relate to its content? What does this relationship suggest about Mr. Smith?

- Student responses should include:
 - Mr. Smith’s note is written in a matter-of-fact and formal tone. He provides the very precise time of “3:00 p.m. on Wednesday the 18th of February, 1931” for his flight, and signs his note formally “Robert Smith, Ins. agent” (p. 3). Smith’s straightforward and confident tone contrasts with the extraordinary content of his note, in which he states that he “will fly away on [his] own wings” (p. 3).
 - The contrast between Mr. Smith’s matter-of-fact and confident tone and his surprising and seemingly impossible statement that he will “fly away on [his] own wings” (p. 3) suggest that Mr. Smith is either crazy, or perhaps actually able to fly.

What does Morrison’s description of the history of Not Doctor Street on page 4 indicate about the residents of Southside? What does this description suggest about their relationship to the city legislators?

- Student responses may include:

File: 12 LC Lesson 1 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

- Morrison’s description that Not Doctor Street was originally named Doctor Street, after “the only colored doctor in the city” suggests that the African-American residents of Southside did not participate in certain careers. Their choice to name the street after the only African-American doctor in the city also suggests that Southside residents feel a sense of pride in the doctor.
- Morrison’s description that the African-American patients of “the only colored doctor in the city” did not originally “live[] in or near” Doctor Street suggests that this street was once a segregated and primarily white part of the city, and that African-American residents of Southside moved to this area recently.
- Morrison’s description of the city legislators’ “official” demand that “the avenue running northerly and southerly from Shore Road ... had always been and would always be known as Mains Avenue and not Doctor Street” suggests that the residents of Southside are excluded from the types of political participation that these legislators enjoy.
- Morrison’s explains that the name Not Doctor Street “gave Southside residents a way to keep their memories alive and please the city legislators as well,” suggesting that the residents of Southside have a strong sense of their own history. However, their need to “please the city legislators” suggests that Southside residents feel pressure to at least appear to obey the demands of white authorities.
- Student responses should include:
 - Morrison’s description of the back-and-forth between city legislators and African-American Southside residents over the naming of Not Doctor Street suggests that their relationship is defined by a power struggle. The white city legislators’ insistence that Southside residents refer to the street only as Mains Avenue is an attempt to assert their authority over African-American residents by effectively erasing the strong African-American presence of the famous “colored doctor” who once lived there.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle, consider posing the following scaffolding questions:

How does Morrison’s description of the history of Not Doctor Street on page 4 establish a divide between the city legislators and Southside residents?

- Morrison’s description of how Not Doctor Street was once an area in which “the only colored doctor had lived” and a street on which “none of [his patients] had lived in or near” explicitly connects the history of this street to a history of racial segregation. In light of this connection, Morrison’s description of the city

legislators' refusal to recognize the name Doctor Street appears to be an extension of this same racial conflict, with white city legislators attempting to deprive African-American residents of their power to "official[ly]" name a street.

Why is "Not Doctor Street" a name "the post office did not recognize" (p. 4)?

- The post office did not recognize the name "Not Doctor Street" because the official name of the street was Mains Avenue. The name "Not Doctor Street" was given to the street by the African-American community because the white city legislators said that the street was "not Doctor Street" but "had always been and would always be known as Mains Avenue" (p. 4).

How do the reasons behind the names that the African-American community gives Not Doctor Street differ from the reasons behind the name that the city legislators give this street?

- Student responses should include:
 - The street comes to be known as Doctor Street by the African-American community because the only African-American doctor in the city lived and died on this street. Therefore, the name Doctor Street comes out of the experiences of African Americans and represents their pride in a member of their community.
 - Morrison explains that the reason behind the city's legislators' insistence on the name Mains Avenue is their "concern for appropriate names and the maintenance of the city's landmarks" (p. 4). Unlike Doctor Street, the name Mains Avenue does not say anything important about this street or the people who live there. Rather, Mains Avenue is an "official" (p. 4) name and therefore represents the white legislators' desire to reclaim their control over this area.
 - Morrison explains that Not Doctor Street "gave Southside residents a way to keep their memories alive and please the city legislators as well" (p. 4). Therefore, the name Not Doctor Street results from the fact that the African-American community does not have the official power to name the street. However, this name also comes from the African-American community's determination to hold onto a sense of ownership over where they live.

How does Morrison's description of Not Doctor Street on page 4 contribute to the development of the novel's setting?

- Morrison's description of the history of Not Doctor Street establishes her novel's setting as a place divided by a power struggle or racial divide between white authorities and African-American residents.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to read pages 5-9 (from “When the dead doctor’s daughter saw Mr. Smith” to “Mr. Smith had seen the rose petals, heard the music, and leaped on into the air”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the definitions of *cupola* and *placards*.

- 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 *cupola* and *placards* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the definitions of *sniggered*, *transfixed*, and *reaper*.
 - Students write the definitions of *sniggered*, *transfixed*, and *reaper* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

From whose point of view are the events of Mr. Smith’s flight being told? How does this point of view contribute to the style of the scene?

- Student responses should include:
 - The events of Mr. Smith’s flight are told from the point of view of someone outside of the story or a third-person narrator that knows everything about the characters and events in the story.
 - This point of view contributes to the style of the scene because it creates a distance between the reader and the events of the story that makes Mr. Smith’s flight seem almost theatrical in nature, as if it is a play or “silent movie” (p. 6).
- If students are unfamiliar with the term *style*, consider explaining that it means, “how an author expresses content.” Frequent stylistic choices include *figurative language*, *repetition*, *personification*, and *allusions*. An author’s choices around *style* often contribute to the aesthetic impact or beauty of the text.
- **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the phrase *third-person omniscient* to describe a narrator who is outside the story yet knows everything about the characters and events in the story.

How do the people in the community react to Mr. Smith’s flight? What might these reactions suggest about this community?

- Student responses should include:
 - The residents of Southside react to Mr. Smith’s flight with calm interest and appear to be enjoying the spectacle: “[I]t was nice and gay there for a while.” (p. 5). Although they gather round the hospital to witness Mr. Smith’s flight, they do not appear to be worried about the outcome, as “none of them cry[] out to Mr. Smith” (p. 6), which suggests that magic or suicide (or both) are everyday occurrences in this community.
 - The “hospital people” (p. 6) react quite differently. They watch Mr. Smith with “apprehension,” and because they are intent on notifying emergency services, “their shouts and bustling cause[] great confusion” (p. 6). The hospital administration’s panicked reaction suggests that they see only a disastrous outcome for Mr. Smith’s flight.
 - These two different reactions emphasize a divide between those who live in the community and those who work in the hospital.
- Some students may identify that this divide occurs along racial lines: the residents of Southside are African-American, while the hospital administrators are white.

What does Morrison’s use of imagery in this scene suggest about the nature of Mr. Smith’s flight?

- Morrison pairs the image of Mr. Smith on the roof of the hospital adorned in “wide blue wings” with the image of “two ... virgins” (p. 6) chasing “red velvet rose petals” (p. 5) blown by the wind. She also describes a “poorly dressed” (p. 5) woman who repeatedly sings, “O Sugarman done fly away” (p. 6). Cumulatively, these images create a symbolic or ritual quality to the scene, as is reflected in the hospital administrators’ mistaken impression that they are witnessing “some form of worship” (p. 6).

What does Morrison leave uncertain in this excerpt? How does this uncertainty develop the setting of the novel?

- Student responses should include:
 - Morrison leaves the outcome of Mr. Smith’s flight uncertain: she writes, “Mr. Smith had seen the rose petals, heard the music, and leaped on into the air” (p. 9). The reader does not know if Mr. Smith succeeds in “fly[ing] away on [his] own wings” (p. 3) as he promises and as the singing woman proposes when she sings, “O

Sugarman done fly / O Sugarman done gone” (p. 9), or if he falls to his death as the “hospital people” fear (p. 6).

- The uncertainty of the outcome of Mr. Smith’s flight leaves the reader unsure of whether the setting of this novel allows for magical occurrences like Mr. Smith “fly[ing] away on [his] own wings” (p. 3), or whether Morrison’s novel is grounded in realities that prevent Mr. Smith from flying.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 3: Quick Write

15%

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

Analyze the details Morrison uses to establish the novel’s setting.

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 4: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read pages 9-15 of *Song of Solomon* (from “The next day a colored baby was born” to “that did nothing to improve either one’s relationship with his father”) and annotate for how Morrison introduces and develops characters (W.11-12.9.a). Also, instruct students to develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on how Morrison introduces and develops characters (RL.11-12.3). Instruct students to prepare possible answers to their questions for discussion.

- **Differentiation Consideration:** To support students in their annotation and note taking, consider suggesting that they create a character list or several family trees to keep track of the characters in the text.

Additionally, instruct students to record any new questions that emerge during their reading. Students should be prepared to discuss the questions in later lessons. Inform students that they will record new questions and answers to earlier questions for homework throughout the module to use in the 12 LC Second Interim Assessment and the Performance Assessment.

- Students follow along.

Homework

Read pages 9-15 of *Song of Solomon* (from “The next day a colored baby was born” to “that did nothing to improve either one’s relationship with his father”) and annotate for how Morrison introduces and develops characters. Also, develop 2-3 discussion questions focused on how Morrison introduces and develops characters. Prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.

Record any new questions that emerge during your reading, and be prepared to discuss the questions in later lessons.

Short Response Rubric

Assessed Standard(s): _____

	2-Point Response	1-Point Response	0-Point Response
Inference/Claims	Includes valid inferences or claims from the text. Fully and directly responds to the prompt.	Includes inferences or claims that are loosely based on the text. Responds partially to the prompt or does not address all elements of the prompt.	Does not address any of the requirements of the prompt or is totally inaccurate.
Analysis	Includes evidence of reflection and analysis of the text.	Is a mostly literal recounting of events or details from the text(s).	Is blank.
Evidence	Includes relevant and sufficient textual evidence to develop response according to the requirements of the Quick Write.	Includes some relevant facts, definitions, concrete details, or other information from the text(s) to develop an analysis of the text according to the requirements of the Quick Write.	Includes no evidence from the text.
Conventions	Uses complete sentences where errors do not impact readability.	Includes incomplete sentences or bullets.	Is unintelligible or indecipherable.

Short Response Checklist

Assessed Standard(s): _____

Does my writing...	Did I...	✓
Include valid inferences and/or claims from the text(s)?	Closely read the prompt and address the whole prompt in my response?	
	Clearly state a text-based claim I want the reader to consider?	
	Confirm that my claim is directly supported by what I read in the text?	
Develop an analysis of the text(s)?	Consider the author’s choices, the impact of word choices, the text’s central ideas, etc.?	
Include evidence from the text(s)?	Directly quote or paraphrase evidence from the text?	
	Arrange my evidence in an order that makes sense and supports my claim?	
	Reflect on the text to ensure the evidence I used is the best evidence to support my claim?	
Use complete sentences, correct punctuation, and spelling?	Reread my writing to ensure it means exactly what I want it to mean?	
	Review my writing for correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation?	