



EXPEDITIONARY
LEARNING

Grade 7: Module 2B: Unit 1: Lesson 10

Independent Reading Celebration and Read-aloud of the Myth of Pygmalion



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Long-Term Target Addressed (Based on NYSP12 ELA CCLS)	
I can self-select text based on personal preferences. (RL.7.11a)	
Supporting Learning Target	Ongoing Assessment
<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can celebrate my accomplishments in independent reading for this unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Independent Reading sharing



Agenda	Teaching Notes
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Opening<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Identity Journal Entry Task (5 minutes)2. Work Time<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Independent Reading Celebration (25 minutes)B. Unit 2 Teaser: Pygmalion Myth Read-aloud (10 minutes)3. Closing and Assessment<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Goal-Setting for Unit 2 (5 minutes)4. Homework<ol style="list-style-type: none">A. Continue reading in your independent book.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This lesson primarily is left open for teachers to determine how you would like to celebrate the independent reading students have been doing throughout Unit 1 and will continue to do through the rest of the module. Suggestions include, but are not limited to:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– A book swap– Reading stories aloud– A guest author– Writing a class letter to a beloved author– Students signing up to give informal book talks about books they love– Inviting adults to come in and give book talks– Themed book talks (spooky/horror, zombies, animals)– Creating and participating in an artistic project that symbolizes the amount of reading done (a paper clip chain, a quote quilt, drawings)– Technological options, according to your resources and previously developed activities (writing book reviews online, exploring teen book sites, leaving comments on class blog posts)– Library visits– Simple, relaxed reading time• Be sure, regardless of how you choose to use Work Time A, that you allow time for Work Time B, which involves a read-aloud of the myth of Pygmalion. The text version used here is written in an engaging, narrative form of the myth. However, due to its age (written in the 1960s), students may pick up some references to era-specific notions of proper male and female behavior. Feel free to address these if they come up, and even connect them to the gender-based identity reading in Lesson 2, if possible. Note: It is important to not answer any direct questions about the connection of the myth to the play just yet. Simply encourage connections between the myth and the identity reading just conducted in this unit. (The myth will be revisited in Lesson 12 of Unit 2, when students will be asked explicitly about connections between the myth and the play).• In advance: Rehearse reading the myth of Pygmalion with expression and enthusiasm, or arrange for a guest reader.• Post: Learning targets.



Lesson Vocabulary	Materials
N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identity journals (begun in Lesson 1; one per student)• Students' independent reading books (various)• "The Myth of Pygmalion" (one per student and one for teacher read-aloud)• Document camera• Index cards (one per student)

Opening	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Identity Journal Entry Task (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have students open their identity journals to the Entry Task, Lesson 10:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* "Take a look at your Identity anchor chart and remember the texts we have read in this unit. What have you learned about yourself, and your identity, through this work? How can you connect to the information and stories that we have read and studied?"• Invite students to write quietly for 5 minutes. If anyone wishes to share their work afterward, they may do so, but it is optional.	

Work Time	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Independent Reading Celebration (25 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Point out the learning target for this lesson.• Dive in and have fun!	



Work Time(continued)	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>B. Unit 2 Teaser: Pygmalion Myth Read-aloud (10 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Note: It is important to not answer any direct questions about the connection of the myth to the play just yet. Simply encourage connections between the myth and the identity reading just conducted in this unit. For example, you might ask:<ul style="list-style-type: none">* “Whose identity is being shaped in this myth?”• Explain that in the next lesson, you will begin reading the play <i>Pygmalion</i>, which also deals with identity in a very interesting way. Note that the title of the play is taken from the Greek myth that you are about to read aloud.• Distribute “The Myth of Pygmalion” and display it using a document camera. Ask students to read along as you read aloud.• Read aloud, with energy and expression (or have a guest reader do so).• Conduct a very informal “Notice and Wonder” class conversation about the myth. Have students hold onto their copies of the myth, since they will revisit it during Unit 2.	
Closing and Assessment	Meeting Students' Needs
<p>A. Goal-Setting for Unit 2 (5 minutes)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distribute the index cards. Have students consider and write down an achievable, measurable, and specific goal for their independent reading for Unit 2. Model goals that are not achievable (I’ll read every book in the library) or not specific (I’ll get better at reading), and model one or two well-written goals (I’ll move on to the next book in the Harry Potter series.)• Have students store the index cards in a place where they can keep them in mind during Unit 2.• Give them specific positive praise for their hard work in this unit.	
Homework	Meeting Students' Needs
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue reading in your independent book.	



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Supporting Materials



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The Myth of Pygmalion

The women of Cyprus were displeased with Pygmalion. He was one of the few unmarried young men on the island, and it seemed that he meant to stay that way. He was a sculptor who lived alone in a house he had knocked together out of an old stable, one enormous room on a hill overlooking the sea, far away from any neighbor. Here he spent the days very happily. Great unhewn blocks of marble stood about, and tubes of clay, and a crowd of figures, men and women, nymphs, satyrs, wolves, lions, bulls, and dolphins. Some of them were half-carved, some of them clay daubs, almost shapeless; and others were finished statues, marvelous gleaming shapes of white marble.

Sometimes people came and bought Pygmalion's figures. He sold only those he was tired of looking at, but would never set a price. He took anything offered. Often, he would give his work away, if he thought that someone enjoyed looking at it and had not money to pay. He ate when he was hungry, slept when he was tired, worked when he felt like it, swam in the sea when hot, and spent days without seeing anyone.

"Oh, I have plenty of company," he'd say. "Plenty of statues around, you know. Not very good conversationalists, but they listen beautifully."

Now, all this irritated the mothers and daughters of Cyprus exceedingly. A bachelor is bad enough, a happy bachelor is intolerable. And so they were resolved that he should marry.

"He's earning enough to keep a wife ... or he would be if he charged properly. That's another reason he needs one. My Althea is a very shrewd girl. She'd see he got the right prices for his work ..."

"My Laurel is an excellent housekeeper. She'd clean out that pig-sty of his, and make it fit to live in ..."

"My daughter has very strict ideas. She'll make him toe the mark. Where does he get the models for those nymph statues? Tell me that? Who knows what goes on in that stable of his?..."

"My daughter ..."

And so it went. They talked like this all the time, and Pygmalion was very much aware of their plans for him. More than ever he resolved to keep to himself.



The Myth of Pygmalion

Now Cyprus was an island sacred to Aphrodite, for it was the first land she touched when she arose from the sea. The mothers of the island decided to use her favor for their own purposes. They crowded into the temple of Aphrodite and recited this prayer:

“Oh , great goddess of Love, you who rose naked and dripping from the sea and walked upon this shore, making it blossom with trees and flowers, you, Aphrodite, hear our plea: touch the heart of young Pygmalion, who has become as hard as his own marble. Weave your amorous spell, plaiting it into the tresses of one of our maidens, making it a snare for his wild loneliness. Bid your son, the Archer of Love, plant one of his arrows in that indifferent young man so that he becomes infected with a sweet sickness for which there is only one cure. Please, goddess, forbid him all solitary joy. Bind him to one of our maidens. Make him love her and take her as his wife.”

That night Pygmalion, dreaming, was visited by the goddess, who said, “Pygmalion, I have been asked to marry you off. Do you have any preferences?”

Pygmalion, being an artist, was acquainted with the terrible reality of dreams and knew that the matter was serious, that he was being threatened. He said, “There is one lady I fancy. But she is already married.”

“Who?”

“You.”

“Me?”

“You, Aphrodite, queen of beauty, lady of delight. How can you think that I who in my daily work will accept nothing less than the forms of ideal beauty, how can you think that I could pin my highest aspiration on any but the most perfect face and form? Yours, Aphrodite. Yours, yours. I love you, and you alone. And until I can find a mortal maid of the same perfection, I will not love.”

Now, Aphrodite, although a goddess, was also a woman. In fact, her divinity was precisely in this, womanliness raised to its highest power. She was much pleased by this ardent praise. She knelt beside Pygmalion and, stroking his face, said, “Truly, you are a fair-spoken young man. I find your arguments very persuasive. But what am I to do? I have promised the mothers of Cyprus that you shall wed, and I must not break my promise.”

“Did you tell them *when*?”

“No, I set no time.”

“Then grant me this: permit me to remain unwed until I do one more statue. It will be my masterwork, the thing I have been training myself for. Let me do it now, and allow me to remain unmarried until I complete it for the vision is upon me goddess. The time has come. I must do this last figure.”

The Myth of Pygmalion

“Of whom?”

“Of you, of course! Of you, of you! I told you that I have loved you all my life without ever having seen you. And now that you have appeared to me, now that I do see you, why then I must carve you in marble. It is simple. This is what my life is for; it is my way of loving you in a way that you cannot deny me.”

“I see.... And how long will this work take?”

“Until it is finished. What else can I say? If you will be good enough to visit me like this whenever you can spare the time, I will fill my eyes with you and work on your image alone, putting all else aside. Once and for all I shall be able to cast in hard cold marble the flimsy, burning dream of man, his dream of beauty, his dream of you ...”

“Very well,” said Aphrodite, “you may postpone your marriage until my statue is completed.” She smiled at him. “And every now and again I shall come to pose.”

Pygmalion worked first in clay. He took it between his hands and thought of Aphrodite—of her round arms, of the strong column of her neck, of her long, full thighs, of the smooth swimming of her back muscles when she turned from the waist—and his hands followed his thinking, pressing the clay to the shape of her body. She came to him at night, sliding in and out of his dreams, telling him stories about herself. He used a whole tub-full of clay making a hundred little Aphrodites, each in a different pose. He caught her at the moment when she emerged from the sea, shaking back her wet hair, lifting her face to the sky which she saw for the first time. He molded her in the Hall of the Gods receiving marriage offers, listening to Poseidon, and Hermes, and Apollo press their claims, head tilted, shoulders straight, smiling to herself, pleasing everyone, but refusing to give answer. He molded her in full magnificent fury, punishing Narcissus, kneeling on the grass, teasing the shy Adonis, then mourning him, slain.

He caught her in a hundred poses, then stood the little clay figures about, studying them, trying to mold them in his mind to a total image that he could carve in marble. He had planned to work slowly. After all, the whole thing was a trick of his to postpone marriage; but as he made the lovely little dolls and posed them among her adventures, his hands took on a schedule of their own. The dream invaded daylight, and he found himself working with wild fury.

The Myth of Pygmalion

When the clay figures were done, he was ready for marble. He set the heavy mass of polished stone in the center of the room and arranged his clay studies about it. Then he took mallet and chisel, and began to work—it was as if the cold tools became living parts of himself. The chisel was like his own finger, with a sharp fingernail edge; the mallet was his other hand, curled in to a fist. With these living tools he reached in to the marble and worked the stone as if it were clay, chopping, stroking, carving, polishing. And from the stone a body began to rise as Aphrodite had risen from the white foam of the sea.

He never knew when he had finished. He had not eaten for three days. His brain was on fire, his hands flying. He had finished carving; he was polishing the marble girl now with delicate lines. Then, suddenly, he knew that it was finished. His head felt full of ashes; his hands hung like lumps of meat. He fell onto his pallet and was drowned in sleep.

He awoke in the middle of the night. The goddess was standing near his bed, he saw. Had she come to pose for him again? It was too late. Then he saw that it was not Aphrodite, but the marble figure standing in the center of the room, the white marble gathering all the moonlight to her. She shone in the darkness, looking as though she were trying to leap from the pediment.

He went to the statue and tried to find something unfinished, a spot he could work on. But there was nothing. She was complete. Perfect. A masterwork. Every line of her drawn taut by his own strength stretched to the breaking point, the curvings of her richly rounded with all the love he had never given a human being. There she was, an image of Aphrodite. But not Aphrodite. She was herself, a marble girl, modeled after the goddess, but different; younger; human.

“You are Galatea,” he said. “That is your name.”

He went to a carved wooden box and took out jewels that had belonged to his mother. He decked Galatea in sapphires and diamonds. Then he sat at the foot of the statue, looking at it, until the sun came up. The birds sang, a donkey brayed; he heard the shouting of children, the barking of dogs. He sat there, looking at her. All that day he sat, and all that night. Still he had not eaten. And now it seemed that all the other marble figures in the room were swaying closer, were shadows crowding about, threatening him.

She did not move. She stood there, tall, radiant. His mother’s jewels sparkled on her throat and on her arms. Her marble foot spurned the pediment.

The Myth of Pygmalion

Then Aphrodite herself stepped into the room. She said, “I have come to make you keep your promise, Pygmalion. You have finished the statue. You must marry.”

“Whom?”

“Whomever you choose. Do you not wish to select your own bride?”

“Yes.”

“Then choose. Choose any girl you like. Whoever she is, whatever she is, she shall love you. For I am pleased with the image you have made of me. Choose.”

“I choose—her,” said Pygmalion, pointing to the statue.

“You may not.”

“Why not?”

“She does not live. She is a statue.”

“My statues will outlive all who are living now,” said Pygmalion.

“That is just a way of speaking. She is not flesh and blood; she is a marble image. You must choose a living girl.”

“I must choose where I love. I love her who is made in your image, goddess.”

“It cannot be.”

“You said, ‘whoever she is, whatever she is ...’”

“Yes, but I did not mean a statue.”

“I did. You call her lifeless, but I say my blood went into her making. My bones shaped hers. My fingers loved her surfaces. I polished her with all my knowledge, all my wit. She has seen all my strength, all my weakness, she has watched me sleep, played with my dreams. We *are* wed, Aphrodite, in a fatal incomplete way. Please, dear goddess, give her to me.”

The Myth of Pygmalion

“Impossible.”

“You are a goddess. Nothing is impossible.”

“I am the Goddess of Love. There is no love without life.”

“There is not life without love. I know how you can do it. Look ... I stand here, I place my arm about her; my face against hers. Now, use your power, turn me to marble too. We shall be frozen together in this moment of time, embracing each other though eternity. This will suffice. For I tell you that without her my brain is ash, my hands are meat; I do not wish to breathe, to see, to be.”

Aphrodite, despite herself, was warmed by his pleas. After all, he had made a statue in her image. It was pleasing to know that her beauty, even cast in lifeless marble, could still drive a young man mad.

“You are mad,” she said, “Quite mad. But in people like you, I suppose, it is called inspiration. Very well, young sir, put your arms about her again.”

Pygmalion embraced the cold marble. He kissed the beautiful stiff lips, and then he felt the stone flush with warmth. He felt the hard polished marble turn to warm silky flesh. He felt the mouth grow warm and move against his. He felt arms come up and hug him tight. He was holding a live girl in his arms.

He stepped off the pediment, holding her hand. She stepped after him. They fell on their knees before Aphrodite and thanked her for her gift.

“Rise, beautiful ones,” she said. “It is the morning of love. Go to my temple, adorn it with garlands. You, Pygmalion, set about the altar those clever little dolls of me you have made. Thank me loudly for my blessings, for I fear the mothers of Cyprus will not be singing my praises so ardently for some time.”

She left. Galatea looked about the great dusty studio, littered with tools, scraps of marble, and spillings of clay. She looked at Pygmalion—tousled, unshaven, with bloodshot eyes and stained tunic—and said, “Now, dear husband, it’s my turn to work on you.”

“Pygmalion” in Bullfinch, Thomas, and George H. Godfrey. *The Golden Age of Myth and Legend*. London: George C. Harrap. 1919. Pp. 57-58.

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