

10.4.1

Lesson 2

Introduction

In this lesson, students continue their reading and analysis of E. B. White’s “Death of a Pig,” identifying and analyzing the development of a central idea in section 2 of the text (from “Shortly after five o’clock I remembered that” to “vicariously, and life seems insecure, displaced, transitory”). Analysis will focus on White’s rumination on the bond between E. B. White and his sick pig—and the imbalance it has created in White’s inner life—as well as the tragic trajectory of the events of the essay. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: What specific details in this section contribute to the development of a central idea? Students continue to make meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary in context while annotating the text in preparation for the End-of-Unit Assessment.

For homework, students preview the third section of the essay and identify and look up definitions for unfamiliar vocabulary. Additionally, students continue their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR).

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.9-10.2	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.9-10.9.b	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research. b. Apply <i>grades 9–10 Reading standards</i> to literary nonfiction (e.g., “Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a text, assessing whether the reasoning is valid and the evidence is relevant and sufficient; identify false statements and fallacious reasoning”).
L.9-10.4.a	Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on <i>grades 9–10 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.

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.

- What specific details in this section contribute to the development of a central idea?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify a central idea of the text (e.g., disorder or imbalance, mortality, especially the contemplation of mortality, relationship between man and nature, etc.).
- Identify specific details from the second section of the essay that contribute to the development of that idea (e.g., This central idea is developed through White’s inner thoughts about the pig’s sickness—it is his own personal “failure” (section 2, paragraph 1) and it has made him feel “imbalance[d]” and “insecure” about life (section 2, paragraph 3). The pig’s sickness has caused White to consider his own mortality.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- desultory (adj.) – not having a definite plan, regularity or purpose
- divination (n.) – unusual insight; practice of predicting the future
- corrugated (adj.) – having a wavy surface
- ruse (n.) – trick or act that is used to fool someone
- positive (adj.) – unable to be doubted, certainly true
- revulsion (n.) – a very strong feeling of dislike or disgust
- lustiness (n.) – strength, vitality, health
- earnest (n.) – a token of what is to come

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

- vicarious (adj.) – experienced or felt by watching, hearing about, or reading about someone else rather than by doing something yourself
- transitory (adj.) – lasting only for a short time; temporary

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

- shortly (adv.) – in or within a short (small amount of) time
- armed (adj.) – having something that provides security or strength (usually + with)
- upset (v.) – forced (something or someone) out of the usual upright position
- righted (v.) – put back in an upright position
- housefly (n.) – a common insect that lives in or near people’s houses
- flashlight (n.) – a small electric light that can be carried in the hand

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RI.9-10.2, W.9-10.9.b, L.9-10.4.a • Text: “Death of a Pig,” by E. B. White, section 2, paragraphs 1–3 	
Learning Sequence:	
1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda	1. 5%
2. Homework Accountability	2. 20%
3. Reading and Discussion	3. 55%
4. Quick Write	4. 15%
5. Closing	5. 5%

Materials

- Chart paper
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 10.4.1 Lesson 1)

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: RI.9-10.2. In this lesson, students analyze the development of a central idea in the text while continuing to make meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

20%

Instruct students to do a Turn-and-Talk in pairs about the assigned homework. (Reread section 1 of “Death of a Pig” and identify a central idea of the text.) Instruct students to discuss and compare the central ideas they identified, as well as share the portion of text that supports the central idea they identified.

☞ Student responses may include:

- Death/mortality: “things might easily have gone the other way round and none left to do the accounting” (section 1, paragraph 1); “it is a tragedy” (section 1, paragraph 2)
- Imbalance/disorder: “once in a while something slips” (section 1, paragraph 3); “the play would never regain its balance” (section 1, paragraph 3); “the collapse of the performance” (section 1, paragraph 8); “I wanted no interruption in the regularity” (section 1, paragraph 8); “no interruption ... no deviation” (section 1, paragraph 8)
- Relationship between man and nature: “cast suddenly in the role of pig’s friend and physician” (section 1, paragraph 3); “when a pig (or child) refuses supper a chill wave of fear runs through any household” (section 1, paragraph 5); “I just wanted to keep on raising a pig” (section 1, paragraph 8)

ⓘ Consider providing students with the terms “mortality,” “disorder,” and the idea of the relationship between man and nature if they do not volunteer these central ideas.

Instruct student pairs to combine to form small groups. Provide each group with a piece of chart paper. Instruct student groups to record all central ideas that they identified for homework onto the chart paper. Inform students that they add to this chart paper throughout this lesson as they analyze the second section of “Death of a Pig” and continue their exploration of central ideas in the text.

- ▶ Students form small groups and record central ideas on chart paper.

① Students will return to this chart paper in later lessons as they continue to analyze the development of ideas in this text.

Lead a brief, whole-class discussion of the central ideas students identified and recorded.

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion

55%

Instruct students to read section 2 of “Death of a Pig” in their groups (from “Shortly after five o’clock I remembered that” to “vicariously, and life seems insecure, displaced, transitory”) and annotate for central ideas. As students read and analyze section 2, they should add evidence and central ideas to the chart paper they began during Homework Accountability.

Remind students that annotating will help them keep track of evidence they will be using later in lesson assessments and the Performance Assessment, which focus on the development of central ideas.

- ① This focused annotation supports students’ engagement with W.9-10.9.b, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.
- ① Students have listened to a masterful reading of the full text. However, if necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the focus excerpt for the lesson.

Instruct student groups to reread section 2, paragraphs 1 and 2 (from “Shortly after five o’clock I remembered that” to “his legs released, the pig righted himself”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *desultory* means “not having a definite plan, regularity or purpose”; *divination* means “unusual insight; practice of predicting the future”; and *corrugated* means “having a wavy surface.”

- ① Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the class.
 - ▶ Students write the definitions of *desultory*, *divination*, and *corrugated* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *shortly* means “in or within a short (small amount of) time”; *armed* means “having something that provides security or strength”; *upset* means “forced (something or someone) out of the usual upright position”; and *righted* means “put back in an upright position.”
 - ▶ Students write the definitions of *shortly*, *armed*, *upset*, and *righted* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

- ① It may also be helpful to clarify for students the less common use of *human intercourse* in this paragraph, meaning “conversation or socializing.”

What words and phrases reveal White’s attitude toward the events that are taking place?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- The words *conflict*, *desultory*, *inappropriate*, *failure*, and *evil* reveal that White’s attitude is one of failure or frustration.
- He does not want to go to his “dinner date,” because it is happening on the same evening as his “pig failure” (section 2, paragraph 1). White also refers to giving the pig medicine as happening in an “evil hour” (section 2, paragraph 1), which implies that he has a negative feeling toward taking this action.
- In the second paragraph of section 2, the author describes how the pig is feeling—“uncomfortable and uncertain,” which seems to be how the author is also feeling.

What might it mean for White to refer to these events as a “failure” in section 2, paragraph 1? Who has failed?

🗨 Since White refers to this as a “failure,” it implies that he feels some kind of personal responsibility for the pig getting sick, that he has failed in some way.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Students may need additional support understanding the uncommon use of *upset* meaning “to become overturned,” and *righted* meaning “restored to the normal or upright position.” Consider providing visual aides to help support this understanding.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to reread section 2, paragraph 3 in their groups (from “In the upset position the corners of his mouth had been turned down” through “vicariously, and life seems insecure, displaced, transitory”) and annotate for words and phrases that White uses to describe how the pig is feeling.

🗨 Student annotations may include:

- “frowning expression”
- “set smile that a pig wears even in sickness”
- “wicked eyes, shaded by their coy little lashes, turned on me in disgust and hatred”
- “seeming to rehearse in his mind the indignity”
- “he just stared at it”
- “miserable”
- “he felt a positive revulsion”

- ① Remind students of their work with *personification* in 10.2.1 Lesson 13, so they might employ this term during their discussion of the relationship between White’s descriptions of the pig in terms of human emotion and the connection to his own emotional state. If necessary, remind students that personification is a type of figurative language that gives human qualities or characteristics to an animal, nonliving object, or idea. For example, the expression “love is blind” personifies love.

Provide students with the following definitions: *ruse* means “trick or act used to fool someone,” *revulsion* means “a very strong feeling of dislike or disgust,” and *lustiness* means “strength, vitality, health.”

- ① Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the class.
- ▶ Students write the definitions of *ruse*, *revulsion*, and *lustiness* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.
- ① It may also be helpful to clarify for students the less common uses of *positive* meaning “unable to be doubted, certainly true,” and *earnest* meaning “a token of what is to come” in this paragraph.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *housefly* means “a common insect that lives in or near people’s houses,” and *flashlight* means “a small electric light that can be carried in the hand.”
- ▶ Students write the definitions of *housefly* and *flashlight* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Post or project the following questions for student groups to answer before sharing out with the class.

How do these descriptions of the pig’s emotions refine your understanding of a central idea?

- 🗨️ These descriptions refine the central idea of mortality, because they reveal the level of the pig’s sickness and how White thinks he is feeling about approaching death. The pig is “disgust[ed]” and powerless at the “indignity.” The pig’s life is at the mercy of the man who is caring for him, but he is “miserable” and will not eat.

How does White describe the weather in this paragraph? What effect does this description create?

- 🗨️ Student responses may include:
 - The descriptions of the weather are dramatic and foreboding. The weather is “unseasonable” with a “creeping” fog that is “taking possession of houses, men and animals.”
 - The weather is both unpleasant—“hot, close”—and unusual.

- There is also a “failure” associated with the weather, because it continues to be hot and unpleasant even though everyone wishes it would go back to normal.

What do these descriptions reveal about how the author feels?

🗨️ Student responses may include:

- The description of the pig’s feelings and the description of the weather reveal the author’s deep discomfort at the events that are taking place.
- The pig’s sickness is upsetting to the author, and the way he personifies the pig’s feelings stands as a representation of his own feelings of sadness and powerlessness to fix what is wrong with the pig.
- The descriptions of the weather further support this, since the weather is adding to White’s discomfort and sense that things are not how they should be.

① Remind students to add evidence to their collaborative chart paper as they discuss these questions.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to reread the end of section 2, paragraph 3 (from “At this point, although a depression had settled over me” through “vicariously, and life seems insecure, displaced, transitory”), and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

What relationship does White establish between himself and the pig?

- 🗨️ White establishes a relationship in which what happens to the pig directly affects the man. When the pig is “a healthy pig,” the man also feels healthy—he can anticipate “some later feast of his own”—but when the pig is feeling sick, “the pig’s imbalance becomes the man’s.”

How can this relationship help clarify the meaning of *vicariously* in this context?

- 🗨️ Since “vicariously” is used to describe the relationship of a man feeling the way his pig is feeling, it must mean to feel something through the experience of another person or thing.

① Consider drawing students’ attention to the application of L.9-10.4.a through the process of using context as a strategy to make meaning of unknown words.

What words and phrases in the text can help you make meaning of *transitory* in this context?

- 🗨️ *Insecure* and *displaced* are in a list with *transitory*. Since *insecure* means something that is not certain and *displaced* means something that is out of order, *transitory* must mean something that is not certain or will not happen in the order it’s supposed to. Since this list is referring to

“life,” it must be referring to the uncertainty of life—not knowing how long someone is going to live.

- ① Consider drawing students’ attention to the application of L.9-10.4.a through the process of using context as a strategy to make meaning of unknown words.

How does the closing sentence of section 2, paragraph 3 refine your understanding of a central idea of the text?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- The closing sentence of section 2, paragraph 3 sums up the author’s feelings about the pig’s sickness and how it is affecting him.
- It refines the central idea of death or mortality, because the author feels that the pig’s sickness is making him question his own health and the “insecur[ity]” of his “life.”
- It refines the central idea of the relationship between man and nature by drawing a very clear connection between what is happening to the pig and what is happening to the man: “from the lustiness of a healthy pig a man derives a feeling of personal lustiness.”
- The closing sentence refines the central idea of imbalance or disorder by emphasizing the pig and the author’s “imbalance.”

- ① Remind students to add evidence to their group’s chart paper as they discuss this question.

- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** Students may need additional support in understanding this particularly dense section of text. Students may benefit from spending additional time with the most critical question of this sequence: “What relationship does White establish between himself and the pig?” Consider rephrasing the question to “How are White and the pig connected? How are they the same?”

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student observations. Have student groups share the evidence they added to their group’s chart paper during their discussion of central ideas.

Activity 4: Quick Write

15%

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

What specific details in this section contribute to the development of a central idea?

Instruct students to look at their annotations to find evidence. Ask students to use this lesson’s vocabulary wherever possible in their written responses. Remind students to use the Short Response Rubric and Checklist to guide their written responses.

- ▶ Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.

① 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.

Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to preview section 3 of “Death of a Pig” (from “As my own spirits declined” through “the pig was not going to live”). Direct students to box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Instruct them to choose the definition that makes the most sense in the context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.

Also for homework, students should continue to read their AIR text through the lens of a focus standard of their choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Preview section 3 of “Death of a Pig” (from “As my own spirits declined” through “the pig was not going to live”). Box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in the context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.

Also, continue reading your Accountable Independent Reading text through the lens of a focus standard of your choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.