

12.1.1 Lesson 6

Introduction

In this lesson, students begin to draft their personal narratives. Students examine the opening structure of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, paying close attention to the ways in which this introductory paragraph orients the reader to the text. Student learning in this lesson is assessed via students’ draft introductions.

For homework, students read chapter 5 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and develop 2–3 discussion questions focused on RI.11-12.6, boxing any unfamiliar words in the chapter and looking up their definitions.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
W.11-12.3.a	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
Addressed Standard(s)	
W.11-12.3.f	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences. f. Adapt voice, awareness of audience, and use of language to accommodate a variety of cultural contexts.
W.11-12.5	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
L.11-12.4.c	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. c. Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation of a word or determine

	or clarify its precise meaning, its part of speech, its etymology, or its standard usage.
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Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>Student learning is assessed via a written response to the following prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft an introduction in response to one of the Common Application prompts, focusing on engaging and orienting the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance; establishing one or multiple point(s) of view; and introducing a narrator and/or characters. <p>i Student responses will be evaluated using the 12.1 Narrative Writing Rubric.</p>
High Performance Response(s)
<p>A High Performance Response should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage and orient the reader (e.g., If my life to date were a novel, the motif would be “shoes.” Shoes have made a huge impact on my life in ways varied and unexpected.). • Set out a problem, situation, or observation (e.g., Shoes have shaped my college and career plans, and shoes have even affected me personally.). • Establish one or multiple points of view and introduce a narrator and/or characters (e.g., A passion for shoes is a family trait. My father was a long-distance runner and an early athletic-shoe aficionado who later became CFO of an athletic shoe manufacturer, where he helped develop some of the first high-tech running shoes. Following in my father’s footsteps, I acquired a passion for learning about shoes and have amassed an impressive collection of athletic shoes.).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None.*
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None.*
Additional vocabulary to support English Language Learners (to provide directly)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None.*

*Because this is not a close reading lesson, there is no specified vocabulary. However, in the process of returning to the text, students may uncover unfamiliar words. Teachers can guide students to make meaning of these words by following the

protocols described in 1e of this document http://www.engageny.org/sites/default/files/resource/attachments/9-12_ela_prefatory_material.pdf.

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
Standards & Text:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Standards: W.11-12.3.a, W.11-12.3.f, W.11-12.5, L.11-12.4.c Text: <i>The Autobiography of Malcolm X</i> as told to Alex Haley, Chapters 1–4 	
Learning Sequence:	
1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda	1. 10%
2. Homework Accountability	2. 20%
3. Writing Instruction: Engaging and Orienting the Reader	3. 20%
4. Drafting and Assessment	4. 45%
5. Closing	5. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the 12.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool (refer to 12.1.1 Lesson 1) (optional)
- Student copies of their statements of purpose from 12.1.1 Lesson 2
- Student copies of the 12.1 Narrative Writing Rubric and Checklist (refer to 12.1.1 Lesson 2)

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

10%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: W.11-12.3.a. In this lesson, students begin drafting the introductions of their personal narratives. Additionally, students engage in a group discussion around the effective use of introductions in personal narrative by examining the introduction to *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. This work also supports W.11-12.5, which asks students to develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

- ▶ Students look at agenda.

① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students are using the 12.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool, instruct them to refer to it for this portion of the lesson introduction.

Post or project standard L.11-12.4.c. Instruct students to talk in pairs about what they think the standard means. Lead a brief discussion about the standard.

☞ Student responses should include:

- The standard asks students to use reference materials like dictionaries and glossaries to determine the meaning of words they do not know.
- The standard asks students to use reference materials to find out more information about a word, like its part of speech, its origin, and how it is used in a sentence.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

20%

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson's homework assignment. (Write a list of ideas about how you would respond to the following college interview question. Remember to keep in mind your task, purpose, and audience as you consider your response. What three adjectives best describe you?)

Instruct students to form pairs to ask and answer the college interview question. For this initial practice session, students should focus on communicating their information by speaking clearly and making eye contact.

- ▶ Students practice asking and answering the college interview question.

① Instruct students to keep their interview preparation notes in a writing journal or folder as a portfolio of their interview preparation throughout the module.

Instruct students to take out their second homework assignment. (Reread pages 1–4 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and then respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: In chapter 1,

how does the author of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance; establishing one or multiple point(s) of view; and introducing a narrator and/or characters?)

Instruct students to talk in pairs about their answers to the prompt.

● Student responses may include:

- The author begins the story before Malcolm X is born: “When my mother was pregnant with me, she told me later” (p. 1). He describes an attack by the Ku Klux Klan on his house. By beginning with this intense event, the author immediately engages the reader and sets out the situation of the world he was born into, which was racist, dangerous, and violent.
- The author introduces the character of Malcolm X’s father by describing how he was “enraged” (p. 1) by the attack from the Klan and decided to move his family, even though “he was not a frightened Negro” (p. 2). The author depicts Malcolm X’s father as a strong man who believed that “freedom, independence, and self-respect could never be achieved by the Negro in America” (p. 2). Malcolm X’s father had already seen four of his brothers die by violence, and he was willing to “risk and dedicate his life” to spreading the philosophy that African Americans should “return” to their “land of origin” (p. 2). The reader gets a strong impression of the character of Malcolm X’s father and learns about his history at the beginning of the narrative.
- Malcolm X connects himself, as narrator, to his father and his father’s siblings and their struggle in America by stating, “It has always been my belief that I, too, will die by violence” (p. 2). This statement helps to establish Malcolm X’s point of view that his life will also be a struggle, connecting him to the struggle of his ancestors.
- Malcolm X makes the observation that the University of Michigan is located near the town where he used to live, and he describes an occasion later in life when he spoke to a group of students at the university. He tells the students that when he was young, the people in the town nearby had “harassed [his family] so much that [they] had to move” (p. 4). By jumping forward in time to describe how he speaks to a group of students, Malcolm X shows how he has gone from being harassed by the people in the town to being asked to speak at the university, which foreshadows how much his life is going to change in the course of the text.

Instruct students to discuss in pairs the third part of the homework assignment. (Reread your statement of purpose from 12.1.1 Lesson 2 and consider which Common Application prompt will allow you to best achieve your purpose.)

① Consider posting or projecting for student reference the following prompts from the Common Application:

- Some students have a background or story that is so central to their identity that they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
- Recount an incident or time when you experienced failure. How did it affect you, and what lessons did you learn?
- Reflect on a time when you challenged a belief or idea. What prompted you to act? Would you make the same decision again?
- Describe a place or environment where you are perfectly content. What do you do or experience there and why is it meaningful to you?
- Discuss an accomplishment or event, formal or informal, that marked your transition from childhood to adulthood within your culture, community, or family.

Explain to students that they should now select a prompt to use in this lesson to craft an introduction. Students will have opportunities to work with different prompts in future lessons if they identify a prompt that will better help them accomplish their task and purpose and appeal to their audience.

- ▶ Students choose a Common Application prompt.

Activity 3: Writing Instruction: Engaging and Orienting the Reader

20%

Explain to students that the introduction of a personal narrative is different from the introduction of a formal essay or research-based argument paper. The introduction to a personal narrative should establish a relationship between the narrator and the reader, and orient the reader to the problems or events that will be addressed in the rest of the narrative.

① Consider reminding students of their work with narrative writing and W.11-12.3 in Module 11.4.

Lead a whole-class discussion to allow students to consider the language of W.11-12.3.a. Ask students the following questions.

What does it mean to “engage” a reader?

- ☛ To involve the reader in the story by capturing his or her interest.

What does it mean to “orient” a reader?

- ☛ To give the reader a sense of where and when he or she is in the story.

Why does an author need to engage and orient their reader?

- ☛ An author engages and orients the reader in order to capture the reader’s attention, encourage the reader to continue reading the story, and explain what the narrative is about.

According to standard W.11-12.3.a, how might the author engage and orient the reader?

- By setting out a problem or situation, or making an observation and explaining or suggesting why it is important.

Instruct students to turn to the opening paragraph of chapter 1 in *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and consider how the first paragraph engages and orients the reader. Ask students to consider the first sentence:

“When my mother was pregnant with me, she told me later, a party of hooded Ku Klux Klan riders galloped up to our home in Omaha, Nebraska, one night.” (p. 1)

How does the first sentence of the text establish a narrator and set out a problem or situation?

- The first sentence establishes that the narrator is the unborn child. The story is taking place in Omaha, Nebraska, where a group of Ku Klux Klan riders have surrounded the house.

Instruct students to consider the second sentence of the paragraph:

“Surrounding the house, brandishing their shotguns and rifles, they shouted for my father to come out.” (p. 1)

How does the second sentence further develop the problem or situation?

- The second sentence adds clarifying details to the situation, and it raises the tension of the encounter. Now the reader knows that not only have the Klansmen arrived in the night, they are armed and have surrounded the house.

Instruct students to consider the third and fourth sentences of the paragraph:

“My mother went to the front door and opened it. Standing where they could see her pregnant condition, she told them that she was alone with her three small children, and that my father was away, preaching, in Milwaukee.” (p. 1)

What information do these sentences establish about the narrator’s mother and father?

- The opening sentences inform the reader that the narrator’s father is a traveling preacher. They also show that the narrator’s mother is not easily scared: she goes to the front door and tells the armed men threatening her and her family that the person they are looking for is not there.

Instruct students to consider the final sentence of the paragraph:

“The Klansmen shouted threats and warnings at her that we had better get out of town because ‘the good Christian white people’ were not going to stand for my father’s ‘spreading trouble’ among the ‘good’ Negroes of Omaha with the ‘back to Africa’ preachings of Marcus Garvey.” (p. 1)

How does the final sentence of the paragraph continue to orient the reader to the situation?

- The final sentence shows that the Klansmen are threatening Malcolm X's family out of prejudice and racism, because they believe Malcolm X's father is causing trouble and inciting the rest of the African-American community.

How does the first paragraph establish a point of view? What is the tone of the first paragraph?

- The first paragraph establishes the narrator's point of view as someone who did not witness the incident but knows the details. The narrator's use of unemotional, factual statements to describe the Klansmen's terrifying visit creates an ominously calm tone. The narrator also puts some phrases in quotes to indicate that he does not agree with the Klansmen's descriptions; this use of quotations creates a sarcastic or angry tone. This tone helps to establish the narrator's point of view about the incident by suggesting that he views the actions of the Klansmen with disdain and anger.

Explain to students that they should provide the same level of information and vivid detail in their own introductions to orient and engage the reader with the text. However, the scope of their personal narratives may focus on a much shorter amount of time and the events may be less intense than Malcolm X's experiences.

Explain to students that it is helpful to keep in mind who the reader is in order to engage and orient him or her. Inform students that they should always consider the task, purpose, and audience as they craft their introductions. Instruct students to take out their statements of purpose from 12.1.1 Lesson 2 and consider whether they would like to revise their statements of purpose based on their Accountable Independent Writing (AIW) work over the past several days. In reading model college application essays and brainstorming, students may have refined their understanding of purpose, task, or audience. If students would like to revise their statements of purpose, allow time for them to do so.

Direct students to Think, Pair, Share about the following questions.

- ① [Students were introduced to the concepts of task, purpose, and audience in 12.1.1 Lesson 2.](#)

How does the task inform your introduction?

- Student responses may include:
 - When writing a personal essay, the task of the introduction is to engage the reader in the story from the beginning.
 - The introduction should orient the reader to the situation or problem in the story so that the reader can follow the narrative more easily.

- In an essay of 650 words, the introduction should quickly and effectively engage and orient the reader in order to leave space for the narrative to develop and conclude.

How does your purpose inform your introduction?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- Since the purpose is to allow a college admissions board to get to know the applicant better and to convince the board to accept the applicant, the introduction should convey the writer’s point of view and use a style that is formal, yet also personal.
- The introduction, like the rest of the essay, should be well written, using a clear and logical style to demonstrate the applicant’s writing abilities to a college admissions board.
- The introduction should be interesting and memorable and grab the attention of a college admissions board in order to help the applicant stand out from other applicants.
- The introduction should set out a problem that will be solved over the course of the essay.

How does your audience inform your introduction?

🗨 Student responses may include:

- The introduction should be written with a tone appropriate for a college admissions board.
- Since a college admissions board does not know the applicant, he or she needs to explain anything that may be personal or unfamiliar in the introduction.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Remind students to be mindful of their task, purpose, and audience as they craft their introductions.

Activity 4: Drafting and Assessment

45%

Explain to students that this lesson assesses how effectively they engage and orient the reader; set out a problem, situation, or observation; and establish one or multiple points of view. Remind students to keep in mind their task, purpose, and audience as they draft their introductions.

- ▶ Students listen.

Remind students to use the 12.1 Narrative Writing Rubric and Checklist to guide their writing. Lead a brief discussion of the rubric and checklist categories: W.11-12.3.a and W.11-12.3.f. Review the components of a High Performance Response.

Instruct students to respond in writing to the following prompt. Remind students to pay close attention to how their language creates an engaging progression of events.

Draft an introduction in response to one of the Common Application prompts, focusing on engaging and orienting the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance; establishing one or multiple point(s) of view; and introducing a narrator and/or characters.

- ▶ Students listen and read the writing prompt.

① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.

Transition to the independent writing.

① Consider drawing students' attention to their work with W.11-12.3.f as they adapt voice and language use to reflect their appropriate audience.

- ▶ Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.

☛ See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

① Instruct students to keep their narratives in a writing journal or folder as a portfolio of their narrative writing throughout the module.

Activity 5: Closing

5%

Display or distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to read and annotate chapter 5 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and develop 2–3 discussion questions focused on how style and content contribute to the power or beauty of the text (RI.11-12.6). Instruct students to prepare possible answers to their questions for discussion.

Also, direct students to box any unfamiliar words in the chapter and look up their definitions. Instruct them to choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.

① Students may also annotate for parts of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* that they find engaging and where they would like to consider using similar techniques in their own writing.

- ▶ Students follow along.

① For AIW homework, instruct students to continue drafting their narratives. Students can continue the draft they worked on during this lesson or choose to respond to a new Common Application prompt. Remind students to focus on engaging and orienting the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance; establishing one or multiple point(s) of view; introducing a narrator and/or characters; and creating a smooth progression of experiences or events.

Homework

Read and annotate chapter 5 of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* and develop 2–3 discussion questions focused on how style and content contribute to the power or beauty of the text (RI.11-12.6). Prepare possible answers to your questions for discussion.

Also, box any unfamiliar words in the chapter and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.