

**TEACHER RESOURCE FOR *LONG WAY DOWN* BY JASON REYNOLDS**

This resource with its aligned lessons and texts can be used as a tool to increase student mastery of Ohio’s Learning Standards. It should be used with careful consideration of your students’ needs. The sample lessons are designed to target specific standards. These may or may not be the standards your students need to master or strengthen. This resource should not be considered mandatory.

**ANCHOR TEXT**

[Long Way Down](#)

(Order Copies from CCS Book Warehouse)

**SHORTER LITERARY TEXTS**

Available [HERE](#)

**INFORMATIONAL TEXTS**

Available [HERE](#)

**MEDIA/VISUAL TEXTS**

Available [HERE](#)



**OHIO’S LEARNING POWER STANDARDS**

[RL. 9-10.1](#), [RL. 9-10.2](#), [RL. 9-10.3](#), [RL.9-10.4](#),  
[RI. 9-10.1](#), [RI. 9-10.2](#), [RI. 9-10.3](#), [W. 9-10.3](#)

**RESOURCE FOCUS**

Student learning will focus on the analysis of both informational and poetic texts. Jason Reynold’s *Long Way Down* will serve as a mentor text. Students will analyze techniques used and draw evidence from several exemplar texts (informational and poetic) to support their mastery of citing text, determining theme/central idea, understanding complex characters/characterization, recognizing the cumulative impact of figurative language and poetic form, and finding connections between ideas introduced and developed in the texts. There will be much time spent with text-dependent questioning, many opportunities for classroom discussions, and a few creative narrative writing opportunities.

SAMPLE LESSON 1	SAMPLE LESSON 2	SAMPLE LESSON 3	SAMPLE LESSON 4
Prior to Reading	Pages 1-70	Pages 1-192 (through Floor 5)	Pages 1-278 (through Floor 3)
<a href="#">READING FROM THE INSIDE</a>	<a href="#">MY NAME IS</a>	<a href="#">THE LOST TOOTH</a>	<a href="#">LIKE BROTHERS</a>
<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST "READING FICTION" ARTICLE</a>	<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a>	<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a>	<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a>

SAMPLE LESSON 5	SAMPLE LESSON 6	SAMPLE LESSON 7	SAMPLE LESSON 8
Pages 1-298 (through Floor 2ish)	Full Text	After Reading	Extension of Standards to New Material
<a href="#">THE RULES</a>	<a href="#">EARTHQUAKE</a>	<a href="#">YOU COMING?</a>	<a href="#">FIFTEEN</a>
<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a> <a href="#">VOCABUARY LIST ("CODE" ARTICLE)</a>	<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST</a>	<a href="#">VOCABULARY LIST "ENDLESS" ARTICLE</a>	

**WRITING/SPEAKING PROMPTS (TASK TEMPLATES AND RUBRICS: [LDC 2.0](#), [LDC 3.0](#), [ARGUMENT RUBRIC](#), [INFORMATIONAL RUBRIC](#), [NARRATIVE RUBRIC](#), [LDC SPEAKING & LISTENING](#), [SPEECH](#))**

Argument	Informative/Explanatory	Narrative
<p>- An effective literary work does not merely stop or cease; it concludes. In the view of some critics, a work that does not provide the pleasure of significant closure has terminated with an artistic fault. A satisfactory ending is not, however, always conclusive in every sense; significant closure may require the reader to abide with or adjust to ambiguity and uncertainty. In an essay, discuss the ending of <i>Long Way Down</i>. Explain precisely how and why the ending appropriately or inappropriately concludes the work. Do not merely summarize the plot.</p> <p>- Some works of literature use the element of time in a distinct way. The chronological sequence of events may be altered, or time may be suspended or accelerated. Write a well-organized essay in which you show how the Reynolds’s manipulation of time contributes to the effectiveness of the work as a whole. Do not merely summarize the plot.</p> <p>- A symbol is an object, action, or event that represents something or that creates a range of associations beyond itself. In literary works a symbol can express an idea, clarify meaning, or enlarge literal meaning. Write an essay analyzing one symbol in <i>Long Way Down</i>. Be sure to discuss how the symbol functions in the work and what it reveals about the characters or themes of the work as a whole.</p>	<p>-After reading the essay “Does reading fiction make you a better person?” and examining the chart delineating the reading decline found in <i>The Washington Post</i> article “<a href="#">The Long, Steady Decline of Literary Reading</a>” by Christopher Ingraham, write an essay or prepare and deliver a speech in which you explore the social consequences of the dropping reading rate among Americans.</p> <p>-After reading or listening to this <a href="#">CBS This Morning interview</a> with Jason Reynolds, write an essay in which you explain why Reynolds believes searching for books in which young readers see themselves is of critical importance. Use examples from the interview, the novel, and your own experience to support your response.</p> <p>-Reynolds has spoken repeatedly about the role of hip hop in his development as a writer and poet. Write a well-organized essay, prepare and deliver a speech, or create an interactive hyperdoc in which you examine the role of his hop--in both style and content—as it impacts the novel <i>Long Way Down</i>.</p>	<p>- Write a sequel or expand the existing text of <i>Long Way Down</i> by imagining a return trip back up the elevator. Dramatize through the presence of new ghosts who usher in new or revised rules how Will has been altered by the decision to either enact revenge by killing Riggs or by some alternate decision he may have made. Use the setting of the elevator and Reynolds’s use of time stamps to structure your extended narrative.</p> <p>- Although the novel focuses on Will’s perspective, Reynolds includes several characters that affect Will. Choose one of the minor characters and write a short narrative poem or prose piece from either that character’s point of view or create a narrative in which you have a conversation with the character discussing a central feature of his or her characterization. Be sure to weave in specific details from the text that reveal your understanding of the character. Choose an existing title from Part One as the title for your piece.</p> <p>- People are already discussing the film possibilities for <i>Long Way Down</i>. Choose a section of the novel to focus on and consider how you would adapt it for the screen. Write a short screenplay that dramatizes the characters and events of the section.</p>

## SAMPLE LESSON 1

Prior to Reading *Long Way Down*

This lesson is aligned to Ohio ELA Standards RI. 9-10.1, 2, and 3. Students will be working with informational texts to determine the central idea, the development of that idea, and the analysis of the details and evidence that support the development of the central idea. Working with a video interview and a newspaper article, students will target and develop the skills of close reading, summary, analysis, and synthesis.

### READING FROM THE INSIDE: READING AND MIND (TWO TO THREE DAYS)

**OPENING READING:** Students should read [“Does Reading Fiction Make You a Better Person?”](#) from the *Washington Post* (Google Doc [HERE](#)). Have students take summary notes on the major points of the article and pose one question that the article raised for them as readers. Consider using a graphic organizer like the one below (Google Doc [HERE](#)) to structure their annotations.

Record main points in article (use your own words):	Record key details and phrases that illustrate the main points in the article
<i>For example:</i> People remember emotional reading experiences from their childhoods.	<i>“I began sobbing loudly enough to summon my mother from down the hallway.”</i>
<b>Question that the text invites you to consider:</b> <i>For example: I wonder what the research might say about reading disturbing stories about violent or oppressive people. Do these kinds of stories also increase empathy?</i>	

**REFLECTION:** Ask students to take a few minutes to write a short reflection in their spiral or digital (shared Google Folder) notebooks in which they write about a story, a movie, a narrative video game, song, or some other text that had a profound emotional effect on them. Ask them to briefly summarize the text and then to speculate on the reasons for its effect on them as readers or viewers. You may wish to revisit the opening paragraphs of the article “Does Reading Fiction Make You a Better Person” in which author Sarah Kaplan recounts her reaction to reading *Bridge from Terabithia*. Also consider sharing your own experiences with texts that have made a deep and lasting impact on your life.

When you give students time to write their reflections, write alongside them so students may see you model the writing and thinking processes in real time.

After giving students five to ten minutes for writing and reflection, have them partner up and share their responses. Invite partners to share highlights from their conversations with the class as a whole.

**WORKSHOP:** Next, prepare for a whole-group discussion by having students revisit the [“Does Reading Fiction Make You a Better Person?”](#) article in small groups. Have students answer the text-dependent questions below and/or share their main points and generated questions they completed on the [Does Reading Fiction Graphic Organizer](#) from the Opening Reading.

1. Keith Oatley claims that Kaplan’s emotional response to a fictional story was natural: “You were just being a human being.” What do you think Oatley means by this claim?
2. Why do you think human development and cooperation are fostered by our ability to “engag[e] with stories about other people”?
3. What brain activity is described by the concept of “mentalizing” and how is this activity related to “increase[ed] empathy and prosocial behavior”?
4. What do you think the phrase “form neutral” means? What evidence from the article leads you to form this hypothesis?
5. Why might reading literary fiction have more impact on developing “theory of mind” skills than nonfiction or genre fiction?

6. How are books “life simulators”?
7. Oatley claims that when we read fiction, we become the imagined characters, that “[w]e understand them from the inside.” What does it mean to understand someone else “from the inside”?
8. What is the relationship between storytelling, art, and burial? How do stories help us make sense and meaning of physical truths?
9. Extension question: What are the social repercussions of the declining reading rate among Americans? [Consider excerpting or showing the chart delineating the reading decline found in *The Washington Post* article [“The Long, Steady Decline of Literary Reading”](#) by Christopher Ingraham (Google Doc [HERE](#)).] What happens when neighbors, communities, generations, and citizens cannot understand each other’s experiences “from the inside”? How might reading about other’s experiences not only help us to understand other people but also help us to understand ourselves?
10. Extension question: What social problems exist today that reflect a breakdown in people’s ability to understand one another? How can reading literature help to mend these breakdowns?

**DISCUSSION:** Foster a whole-group discussion in which students share their workshop investigations and their answers to the question posed by *The Washington Post* article: “Does Reading Fiction Make You a Better Person?”. Extend the question by posing follow up questions such as: “If reading does, in fact, help us to become more empathic and cooperative, what can we do to increase reading?”. Encourage students to support their claims with direct evidence from the article as well as evidence from their own experience.

**CRITICAL VIEWING:** Introduce [Trevor Noah’s interview with Jason Reynolds](#) and preview the guided viewing questions below. Have students answer the questions while viewing the video.

1. Why does Noah suggest that it was “insane” that Reynolds hadn’t read a whole book until he was seventeen?
2. Reynolds concludes that it was and was not “insane.” Why, in one sense, wasn’t it “insane” for Reynolds not to have read a novel until he was that old?
3. What role did hip hop play in helping Reynolds to become a writer?
4. How did rap music give Reynolds “voice”?
5. Why does Reynolds consider his books to be “thank-you letters” and “love notes”?
6. Noah shares an [anecdote](#) regarding a young African American man who asked him about making a movie about his book *Born a Crime*. Why does Noah share this story?
7. Reynolds offers an explanation as to why some young people don’t connect with [canonical texts](#) such as those by Shakespeare. What is his explanation?
8. Reynolds outlines three approaches that may help students to connect with literature. What are they?
9. Reynolds concludes with a powerful claim: “Your life is dependent upon your relationship with words.” Explain what you think he means by this assertion.

Once students have had time to answer the questions individually (you may wish to show the video more than once or allow students to use personal devices to view at will), assign them to small groups to do the following:

1. Begin by discussing what each student found most relevant or intriguing in the video.
2. Review answers to the critical viewing questions.
3. Provide examples from your own lives that bear out the claims made by Reynolds or those experiences that may challenge Reynolds’s position.
4. Speculate how Reynolds would respond to the Kaplan question, “Does reading fiction make you a better person?”. Would he agree completely in the affirmative, would he disagree, or would he advance a more compromised position? What details from his interview support your answer?
5. Select a spokesperson to share the group’s answers to the discussion questions. Consider using the [“stand and share” protocol #8](#) (Google Doc [HERE](#)) for spokespeople to encourage more movement in discussions.

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Once groups have shared their discussion questions, have students separate from their groups. Take a few minutes to summarize the activities. Have students open their spiral/digital notebooks and respond to this prompt: How does the [cover art](#) for *Long Way Down* illustrate a central idea of either *The Washington Post* article or the Trevor Noah interview or both. Be sure to describe specifically the detail or details from the cover that connect with details from the newspaper article of the interview in your response.

-You may collect this or assess the prompt responses during a reading/writing workshop time on another day or during a reading/writing conference looking specifically and giving feedback for mastery of citing text RI.9-10.1, determining central idea RI.9-10.2, and making connections RI.9-10.3.

## SAMPLE LESSON 2

Prior to Lesson: Students should read Part I: Pages 1-70

The first part of this lesson is aligned to Ohio ELA Standards RL.9-10. 1 and RL. 9-10.3. Students will be working with poems that reveal complex characterization and plot & theme development. The reflection section of this lesson targets W.9-10.3 and W. 9-10.9 by asking students to write narratives in which they imagine experiences drawn from details in the text.

### MY NAME IS: UNDERSTANDING CHARACTER (TWO DAYS)

**MINI-LESSON:** Reynolds’s poem “My Name Is” on page two functions as an introduction not only to the central voice and character of the novel but also to the core conflict and theme of the work as a whole. Read the poem out loud to students as they follow along. Ask students to share what they learn about the narrative *persona* that inhabits the novel. Tell students that this lesson will help them cite evidence to support analysis as well as determine how writers create complex characters that advance the plot and theme of a text.

Then have the students read the poem again while focusing on the following questions: What do we learn about Will personally? What do we learn about his motivation for telling this story? What details or motives does Reynolds include that help us understand Will’s character? What does a person’s name reveal about him, his family, his past, his future? Review the [methods of direct and indirect characterization](#) (Google Doc [HERE](#)) with students and then have them analyze the poem for these methods (advise students that character name falls under “indirect characterization” but does not neatly fit one of the five core methods of STEAL on the handout—speech, thoughts, effect on others, actions, and looks). Below is a list of key details from the poem and teacher inferences for each to use as a guide for this lesson.

Method of characterization	Detail/Example	Explanation: what does this detail reveal about the character?
Name	“MY NAME IS / Will. / William. / William Holloman.”	By introducing the narrator with three names, Reynolds may be suggesting that Will is a complex person with many sides: informal and intimate: “Will,” formal and removed: “William,” and public, historic, and legal: “William Holloman.” Additionally, the names of “Will” and “Holloman” invite a more symbolic reading. The narrator’s first name is suggestive of volition, action, decision: will he or won’t he? Also note that the word “will” is both a noun and a verb. What does it mean to will something and what does the noun “will” imply that may be related to the story on these pages? How might the text as a whole be thought of as a will? Therefore, in this choice of name, Reynolds foreshadows the key conflict at the heart of the entire novel and the author’s purpose in writing the novel. Additionally, the surname “Holloman” is also suggestive: it calls to mind the words “hollow” and “man.” Perhaps Reynolds is alluding to T. S. Eliot’s poem <a href="#">“The Hollow Men”</a> or inviting associations with hollowness: Will is at present empty, grieving, traumatized. Will his “hollowness” ever be filled?
Name	“just Will. // So call me Will”	Reynolds extends name symbolism through repetition: he uses the name “Will” or “William” five times in the opening poem. In these lines, the narrator also directly addresses readers by inviting us to call him “Will.” Such an invitation reveals a character who is open and seems to want to extend that openness to readers. (This opening also calls to mind Herman Melville’s famous opening imperative: “Call me Ishmael” from <a href="#">Moby Dick</a> , an opening that also serves as a narrative frame for the novel by introducing a narrator who begins with a tone of surprising intimacy.)

Effect on others	“people who know me / know me”	The narrator repeats the phrase “know me” to acknowledge that there are depths to his personality: those who only know the exterior of his character and those who know the complexity of his character. By inviting readers to call him “Will,” the narrator is inviting us into the depths of his character; he appears <i>willing</i> to be open, honest, and vulnerable.
Speech	“after I tell you / what I’m about to tell you”	Reynolds extends the <a href="#">direct address</a> of the reader to create suspense for the story in the subsequent pages. This suspense helps to create plot momentum.
Thoughts	“you’ll either / want to be my friend / or not”	Reynolds has Will reveal that the story he is “about to tell” will have a dramatic impact on readers. Although Will seems to be friendly and open, he acknowledges that the story may cause people to reject him. This dichotomy of either/or extends the central conflict and begins to foreshadow a theme of the novel regarding choice and consequences.
Thoughts	“Either way, / you’ll know me / know me”	Reynolds concludes this poem by repeating both the core idea of choice: “either way” and knowledge: “you’ll know me.” Reynolds invites readers to consider that the book will have a critical choice at its heart, a choice that has more to do with readers than with the characters.

Once you have led students in modeling an analysis of the first poem and its significance in revealing character, conflict, theme, and initiating the plot, transition to the rest of section one to extend the lesson on characterization.

**STUDENT WORKSHOP:** In groups, assign or have students select one of the following characters to analyze in section one (pages 1-70). Have each character group complete a **Character Analysis Graphic Organizer** ([below](#) and Google Doc [HERE](#)) or record on butcher paper, their analysis to help develop their skills in character analysis, citing evidence, and exploring how characterization affects plot and theme. You may wish to direct students to particular poems for each character to help scaffold their analysis.

Will	Shawn	Tony	Riggs	Mom	Leticia
“I’m Only William” (3) “I’m Not Sure” (20) “I Felt Like Crying” (30) “Our Bedroom: A Square, Yellowy Paint” (36) “It Used to Be Different” (43) “And When I Was Thirteen” (44) “Now the Cologne” (46) “A Penny Drop” (53) “But I Also Feel Guilty” (62)	“Our Bedroom: A Square, Yellowy Paint” (36) “I Won’t Pretend that Shawn” (39) “My Mother Used to Say” (40) “A Penny Drop” (53) “The Yellow Light” (69)	“The Day Before Yesterday” (9) “After the Shots” (11) “In Case You Ain’t Know” (19) “A Penny Drop” (53)	“Which Brings Me to Carlson Riggs” (50) “People Said Riggs” (51) “Riggs and Shawn Were So-Called Friends, But” (52) “Reasons I Thought (Knew) Riggs Killed Shawn” (55) “The Plan” (67)	“And My Mom” (16) “In That Bag” (25) “Back on the Eighth Floor” (29) “My Mother Used to Say” (40) “In the Kitchen” (68)	“Things That Always Happen Whenever Someone Is Killed Around Here” (14) “I Won’t Pretend That Shawn” (39)

CHARACTER ANALYSIS GRAPHIC ORGANIZER (LONG WAY DOWN)

Character Detail: record a key feature of the character as revealed in the text	Quoted evidence and page number	Method of characterization (STEAL)	Significance of detail to character (the selected character or another character), plot, or theme.
EXAMPLE: Will looks up to Shawn as a role model	"he was the king / around here" (54)	Character's thoughts	This detail reveals that Shawn's actions and approval are very important to Will, helping readers understand why Will feels the need to defend Shawn by seeking revenge for his killing.

Once groups have finished their character analyses, use the "double jigsaw" protocol #18 (Google Doc [HERE](#)) for students to share their insights into character. Each new group should have at least one person from each original character group. Have each student complete a "Characterization Crosswalk" (Long Way Down) to record deeper insights into other characters learned about during conversations in the jigsaws.

CHARACTER CROSSWALK			
Character	Three key details/facts/traits about the character	What motivates this character? What is important to him or her?	What object (either from the text or one that you create) best represents this character?
Will			
Shawn			
Tony			
Riggs			
Mom			
Leticia			

Once students have completed their crosswalks, foster a discussion in which you explore the character insights, draw inferences about theme, and make predictions about plot and character development for the rest of the novel.

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT: NARRATIVE WRITING** Take a few minutes to summarize the activities. Have students open their spiral/digital notebooks to record their response to the following prompt:

In an earlier lesson, we explored how reading literature helps us develop empathy and cooperation by allowing us to enter the mind of someone else “from the inside.” Choose one of the characters we focused on in this lesson that you were drawn to in some way. Perhaps you identified with him or her, perhaps you were angered or annoyed with a choice that he or she made, or perhaps you were confused by why they behaved in some way or held certain beliefs. Write a short narrative poem or prose piece from either that character’s perspective or create a narrative in which you have a conversation with the character discussing a central feature of his or her character. Be sure to weave in specific details from the text that reveal your understanding of the character. Choose an existing title from one of the poems in Part One (pages 1-70) as the title for your piece.

As students work on this creative reflection, give feedback in real time via shared digital doc and/or circulate through the room conversing about the writing. Invite two to three students to share their pieces or sections of their pieces in the last few minutes of class. [See Kelly Gallagher and Penny Kittle’s workshop structure in *180 Days: Two Teachers and The Quest to Engage and Empower Adolescents* (2018) in which they close each class with the sharing of students’ “[beautiful words](#)” (43).]

You may collect this or assess it during a reading/writing workshop time on another day or during a reading/writing conference looking for student’s ability to understand the character they chose and to use or parody narrative/poetic techniques to develop characters.

For example:

Original poem	Text connections
<p>MY NAME IS Riggs. Carlson Riggs.</p> <p>But don’t call me Carlson, unless you want to get more than <b>this bark</b> in your neck.</p> <p>My <b>back of bone</b> was steeled in the <b>Dark Sun</b>, forged by my block boys who knocked stiff the <b>soft</b> of my mother’s dream.</p> <p>For me, she made me <b>wheel</b>, hoping I would never <b>drop</b>, but drop I did.</p> <p>Only no one knows <b>the worst thing</b> I did, how far I dropped, or who.</p>	<p>Title of poem on page 2</p> <p>Similar to opening of “My Name Is”</p> <p>Uses same method of direct address as in “My Name Is” (2)</p> <p>“He wanted to join so he / wouldn’t be looked at like / all bark no more” (55)</p> <p>“could have a backbone built for him” (55)</p> <p>“where the Dark Suns / hang and be wild” (55)</p> <p>“soft as his first name” (50)</p> <p>“when you wear tights and know how / to do a cartwheel” (51)</p> <p>“the best thing he ever did for Shawn / was teach him how to do a Penny Drop” (52)</p> <p>“The worst thing he ever did for Shawn / was shoot him” (52)</p>

### SAMPLE LESSON 3

Prior to Lesson: Students should through Floor Five: Pages 1-192.

This lesson aligns to Ohio ELA Standards RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2, and RL.9-10.4. Students will be engaging in the close reading and analysis of several poems with a particular focus on figurative language and drawing conclusions about the cumulative impact of images/symbolism to convey character, conflict, and theme.

### THE LOST TOOTH: IMAGE AS SYMBOL, PART ONE, LESSONS A & B (ONE TO TWO DAYS)

#### LESSON A

**MINI-LESSON:** This lesson focuses on how writers use images to introduce and develop symbolism.

**Step One** Ask students to write a short reflection in their spiral/digital notebooks about symbolism. Ask them to define “symbol,” provide an example of a symbol (personal, cultural, national, or universal), and then ask them to write a paragraph about why symbolism can be difficult to understand in poetry. Consider posting the following [Excerpt from Thomas Foster’s \*How to Read Poetry Like a Professor\* \(2018\)](#) as a starting point. You may wish to ask students to respond to one or more of the claims in Foster’s satiric “proof” with evidence from their own reading experiences to support, challenge, or qualify Foster’s claims.

**From Chapter Twelve: Images Symbols, and Their Friends** Thomas Foster’s *How to Read Poetry Like a Professor* (2018)

When people say they don't like poetry, this is almost certainly the part they mean. It makes your head hurt. It gives me a pain in the neck. There's a near-universal response that can be written as a proof:

1. Poems contain symbols;
2. Therefore, symbols are poems;
3. Poets put symbols into their poems;
4. Symbols are confusing;
5. Therefore, poets want their poems to be confusing;
6. Alternatively, teachers invent symbols that aren't really there;
7. Symbols are confusing;
8. Therefore teachers use “symbols” to confuse and control students;
9. Symbols give me a headache and make me feel inadequate;
10. Therefore, I hate symbols;
11. Therefore, I hate poetry. (138)

**Step Two** Have students pair up to share their responses and then share out to the class as a whole. Using a projected shared Google doc, document projector, or white board, take notes of student definitions, examples, and responses.

**Step Three** Introduce the formal [definition of symbol](#) and then explore the difficulties in not just identifying symbols but understanding their range of meanings. Foster defines a symbol as “an object or action or phrase that stands for something beyond itself” (145). Foster acknowledges the difficulty lies in that “‘something’ isn’t one and only one ‘thing’” (145). He cautions readers to recognize that “things in literature are first of all, their literal selves. A frog is a frog [...] So let’s remember always to acknowledge that the tulip is indeed a tulip before we go running off to assert that it’s really a fairy” (139). Advise students to begin always with the literal meaning of poems: what the words actually say and what kind of literal experience they convey. Then explore how certain words and phrases invite readers to explore the “small constellation of possible meanings” (Foster 146). Direct students to trust their instincts but keep the range of meaning tethered to the world of the poem.



**WORKSHOP:** Next, read the poem “[Summer Apples](#)” by Cathryn Essinger (Google Doc [HERE](#)) out loud to the students as they follow along with the text. Then have them work in small groups of two or three students on the “**Summer Apples**” **Initial Analysis Chart** (below and Google Doc [HERE](#)). Emphasize to students that this lesson will help them master RL.9-10.4 in which students will determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. You may wish to model a “think aloud” in arriving at an effective paraphrase for the sentences in the poem. Note that the final sentence is very difficult to paraphrase. Warn students of this challenge and encourage them to “struggle” with the text here as a way to build resiliency in reading. Emphasize the importance of uncertainty in poetry: it is ok and at times even desirable to not fully comprehend a complex text, especially in the initial reading.

POEM	PARAPHRASING	NOTICING/INFERENCING/WONDERING
<p><b>Summer Apples</b></p> <p>I planted an apple tree in memory of my mother, who is not gone,  but whose memory has become so transparent that she remembers  slicing apples with her grandmother <i>(yellow apples; blue bowl)</i> better than  the fruit that I hand her today. Still, she polishes the surface with her thumb,  holds it to the light and says with no hesitation, <i>Oh, Yellow Transparent . . .</i>  <i>they're so fragile, you can almost see</i> <i>to the core.</i> She no longer remembers how  to roll the crust, sweeten the sauce, but her desire is clear—it is pie that she wants.  And so, I slice as close as I dare to the core— to that little cathedral to memory—where  the seeds remember everything they need to know to become yellow and transparent.</p>	<p>Put poem sentences into your own words. (Note: you will have four sentences. A good paraphrase maintains the point of view and tense of the original but varies the word choice and sentence structure without leaving any details out. It should be equal to or longer than the original text.)</p> <p>For example:</p> <p>Sentence one: I give my mother fruit today but she doesn't remember because her memory is rooted in the past, a past in which she and her mother sliced yellow apples that were in a blue bowl; I planted an apple tree to represent my love for my mother and the legacy of her life even though she is still alive.</p> <p>Sentence two: My mother (either today when I handed her fruit or in her memory with her mother) rubs the skin of the apple with her thumb examining the fruit and remarks that the skin is so thin and delicate it appears to be so see-through that one can see to its center.</p> <p>Sentence three: My mother has forgotten the multiple steps and skills required to make a pie crust and fruit filling, but she is aware that she wants a pie and knows what it feels like to want something.</p> <p>Sentence four: Therefore, I carefully cut near to the center, which is an elaborate church that celebrates remembering, a place where the sources of life remember what is necessary so that they can transform and develop—they may finally be brightly colored and seen through.</p>	<p>Take note on what surprised you about the section noting inferences, confusions, or questions you may have.</p> <p>Example response:</p> <p>I was surprised that the speaker planted a tree in memory of her mother even though her mother is still alive. I guess the speaker has already begun to miss her mother, and in some way is experiencing grief and mourning for her mother because usually, when we do something “in memory” of someone, it is to honor and remember that person and help us come to terms with their loss.</p>

After students have spent some time working through the text, structure the sharing of their insights by asking each member of the group to share at least one component of their work:

- a paraphrase (one student can read the group’s paraphrase, another can discuss why they chose a certain word, or why they structured their sentence in the way that they did)
- an observation about where the text was easier and where it was more difficult to paraphrase and explore the reasons for this variability
- a question they had or confusion they experienced
- an inference or insight gained through the paraphrasing activity
- a surprise or insight into the text

Take and model class notes on a shared copy of the poem projected to the class. (A blank copy of the “**Summer Apples**” **Initial Analysis Chart** can be found [HERE](#).) Have students add to their own annotations as you work through the poem together.

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT/EXIT TICKET:** As a concluding activity, ask students to write in their spiral/digital notebooks or complete an exit ticket (possibly through Google Classroom) in which they identify a symbol in the poem “Summer Apples.” Ask them to identify the symbol and discuss at least two details in the poem that led them to infer that the meaning of the word, phrase, or action means something beyond its literal meaning. Ask them to conclude with a discussion of the possible meaning of the symbol. (You may wish to differentiate this task by increasing the range of associations, the number of supporting details, or the number of symbols to challenge and extend the assessment for gifted students.)

**LESSON B**

**MINI-LESSON:** Going deeper into image: when does an image become a symbol? This mini-lesson is designed to help students recognize the multiple meanings of words and phrases within a poem and how writers use language to invite this range of meaning. Lead students through an analysis of the poem by directing them to focus on the physical reality of certain details in the poem (the images) and then to explore the possible connotations of these images. Advise them to include their reasoning, an explanation of what warrants their figurative inferences. Below is a **Poem Organizer** (Google Doc [HERE](#)) with several examples to help scaffold the analysis. You may wish to lead students through this analysis or have students work together on one or two bolded phrases of their choice. (The **Poem Organizer** contains a blank organizer and a completed one.)

POEM	LITERAL MEANING OF PHRASE	FIGURATIVE/CONNOTATIVE MEANING OF PHRASE	REASONING
<p><b>Summer Apples</b></p> <p>I planted an <b>apple tree</b> in memory of my mother, <b>who is not gone,</b></p> <p>but whose <b>memory has become so transparent</b> that she remembers</p> <p>slicing apples with her grandmother (<b>yellow apples; blue bowl</b>) better than</p> <p><b>the fruit that I hand her</b> today. Still,</p>	<p>Apple trees in the summer</p> <p>The speaker has physically planted a real apple tree</p> <p>The mother uses her thumb to</p>	<p>Summertime is suggestive of growth, fertility, and maturation.</p> <p>The line break invites a more figurative understanding of this image. We mentally pause at the line break to consider what it might mean to plant a tree in memory. We can’t literally plant a tree in memory, so this image may be suggestive of the speaker’s love for and desire to remain united with her mother.</p> <p>The word “polish” is suggestive of fine</p>	<p>Flowers turn into fruits and ripen throughout the summer.</p> <p>The expression “to plant something in one’s memory” usually means that one wants the memory to be permanent. Also, while this tree is likely planted in the speaker’s yard, because she connects the tree to her mother and her memory, one cannot help but think of a family tree, the traditional symbol of the relationships between the generations in one’s ancestry. People create family trees to remember those who came before them.</p>

<p><b>she polishes the surface</b> with her thumb,</p> <p><b>holds it to the light</b> and says with no hesitation, <i>Oh, <b>Yellow Transparent</b></i> . . .</p> <p><i>they're so <b>fragile, you can almost see to the core.</b></i> She no longer remembers how</p> <p>to roll the crust, sweeten the sauce, but <b>her desire is clear</b>—it is <b>pie that she wants.</b></p> <p>And so, I <b>slice as close as I dare to the core</b>—to that <b>little cathedral to memory</b>—where</p> <p>the <b>seeds remember</b> everything <b>they need to know to become yellow and transparent.</b></p>	<p>rub and clean the skin of the apple.</p> <p>Yellow Transparent is a real apple variety known for its light color and thin skin.</p> <p>The speaker compares the core of an apple to a cathedral. This metaphor draws on the physical image of an apple core, the more fibrous core flesh that geometrically creates little shelters or rooms within which the seeds are protected. This image calls to mind the internal and external structural members of a cathedral which surround the heart of the church: the altar.</p>	<p>metals, jewels, and treasure. The mother treats the apple as if it were precious.</p> <p>The word “transparent” appears three times in the poem (in addition to the word “clear,” a common synonym), which suggests that the meaning is more than literal. Essinger compares memory to the skin of an apple to suggest not only its fragility but also its ability to connect us to our pasts, the experiences that created the core of our identities and relationships.</p> <p>Essinger suggests that this apple--its skin, flesh, and seeds—are symbolic of a holy object or personage—the core of which is the church within or throne upon which our memory presides. Like a bishop, priest, or other spiritual leader, our memories help us understand where we have come from and why we are here; they unite us with the mysteries of creation.</p>	<p>We usually polish silver, gold, and gemstones to bring out their value and beauty.</p> <p>“Transparent” means clear or being so thin as to allow light to pass through it. Etymologically, the word means to appear across. These definitions combined with its repetition in the poem deepen its significance. We usually repeat words or phrases that we want to emphasize. Also, poets care a lot about words, their meanings, and their roots, so it makes sense that Essinger would draw on the multiple meanings and roots of this word in her poem.</p> <p>A cathedral is an elaborate church designed as the principle center of worship for a diocese. Combining this detail with the earlier image of the speaker handing fruit to her mother, calls to mind the act of communion, the process by which Christians enact the spiritual union with Christ. Alluding to established Christian symbolism within the poem, Essinger wants the reader to consider the parallels between Christian communion and familial communion.</p>
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**WORKSHOP:** After processing the analysis with students, ask them to discuss the significance of the apple variety chosen for the poem. What details about its name, culture, and characteristics invited a more symbolic understanding of its physical presence in the poem? How would the poem’s meaning have changed if Essinger had chosen a different apple variety, or even a different kind of fruit? These questions should help students to appreciate the importance of specific details and their power of suggestion. Then have students either work individually or in small groups of no more than three students to complete the following tasks:

**Step One** Have students use this [Apple Varieties](#) page to complete the **Apple Variety Symbolism Chart** (below and Google Doc [HERE](#)) to brainstorm possible connotations implied by the names and descriptions. Alternately, they can research the [Apple Varieties](#) page on their own and choose varieties to list descriptions and connotations for in a chart that they make in the spiral/digital notebooks.

Apple Variety	Description (excerpted from <a href="#">Apple Varieties</a> page)	Connotations
Autumn Gold	Bright red blush over yellow-green. Keeps better than Golden Delicious.	
Ballarat Seedling	Large, green with red blush. Coarse, hard flesh. Subacid. Winter keeper, keeping several months without refrigeration. Excellent cooking apple.	
Black Oxford	Round deep purple fruit with a black bloom.	
Chivers Delight	Delightful, easy-going apple, sweet, juicy, crunchy - and some aromatic qualities	
Goof	A round, medium sized apple, pale green overlaid with deep purplish-red, and faint yellow streaks. White flesh is crisp, juicy and moderately subacid.	
King Luscious	Very large apple. Streaky, somewhat dull red over yellow green. Yellowish-white, fine-grained, crisp and juicy flesh.	
New Rock Pippen	An old English late-season dessert apple variety originating from Cambridgeshire. Highly regarded by 19th century writers for its dry firm flesh and rich flavour and hint of anise.	
Pixie Crunch	Small, sweet flavored, crisp and juicy apple. Greenish-yellow base color with 90-100% red-purple overcolor.	
Sweet Sixteen	Large, red striped fruit. Firm, crisp, aromatic flesh. Moderately acidic.	
William's Pride	Fruit is medium in size and slightly conic in shape with a rich aromatic flavor. Apples are 70-80% red with excellent eating quality.	

**Step Two** Instruct students to select one of the varieties from their chart or list whose name and/or characteristics makes them think of a particular person (self, friend, relative, or famous person) and write a paragraph in which they explain how the apple represents that person.

**Step Three** Now have students work individually in transforming their paragraph into a poem that centers on the symbol of the apple to communicate their attitude toward the person they believe the apple represents. Encourage them to think of a moment or scenario in which an apple is both an image—it physically exists in the poem—and a symbol—its meaning casts beyond its literal presence. There are several professional models to use to help students with this task including Peter Heller's "[Apples](#)," Donald Hall's "[White Apples](#)," Rainer Maria Rilke's "[The Apple Orchard](#)," Grace Shulman's "[Apples](#)," George Bradley's "[August in the Apple Orchard](#)," Robert Frost's "[After Apple Picking](#)," and John Bradley's "[Chernobyl Apples](#)." Below is a teacher example of steps two and three and can be found on a [Google Doc](#) HERE.

**Step Two: Reflect on person and symbol**

The apple Autumn Gold makes me think of my father. He is 83 years old, a fact that reminds me of the characteristic “keeps better than Golden Delicious.” He has lived a long, full life and I am grateful for my continued relationship with him as he remains a source of guidance, a model of integrity, and my foundation in love. This past year he has undergone heart surgery and is slowly but determinedly recovering. Seeing him navigate among these changing circumstances in his life while maintaining his spirit of curiosity and humility has deepened my appreciation and love for him. As he comes to terms with the limitations of his body and lifespan, he still teaches me what it means to never stop growing and learning. Like the apple’s name Autumn Gold, my father’s legacy is one that continues to ripen and increase in value.

**Step Three: Transform prose to poem**

Autumn Gold

No matter what time of year it was,  
there were always apples in the house,  
usually in a wooden bowl on the kitchen table.

And now, in early summer, well before the  
apples in my orchard blush into ripeness on their limbs,  
now, when they are fighting with Woolly Aphids,  
Codling Moths, and Redbanded Leafrollers for their  
survival, their kin delivered from other states  
shine in full splendor in my house.

When I last saw you, just freed from the hospital  
with a stack of scripts to fill in your hand,  
I drove you home and made a shopping list  
to fill the fridge and cabinets with health  
to ease the pressure on your heart.  
And mine.

I carried in the groceries—salmon, blueberries, broccoli—  
along with the Warfarin, Lasix, Amiodarone,  
and saw the apples on the table, Autumn Gold,  
still there, here, keeping better than we thought.

**Step Four:** Have students meet in small writing groups to share their drafts and give and receive feedback on the use of their central image. To support students in this process, students can consider these questions: Can the central image be determined by the group? Is it’s symbolism clear? Does the language used in the poem make you go WOW in a good way, or WHAT in a bad way? Have students revise to make the central image/symbolism clear and language produce a WOW effect.

**Step Five:** Conclude class with a symphony round in which each student shares at least one phrase, line, or section from their draft to the class as a whole. Have students acknowledge each other’s contribution with snaps, oohs, ahs, or some other small signal of community appreciation.

**Extension Step:** Have students use feedback to revise drafts for submission to electronic writing portfolio to share, publish, and assess at a later date. Consider having the students enter their poems into a contest, such as [Ohio Poetry Association’s High School Contest](https://www.ccsch.org/HighSchoolContest).

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Have students read the poem “[Scrapple](#)” by Afaa Michael Weaver (Google Doc [HERE](#)) and write a response in which they explain the significance of scrapple in the poem. Explain to students that scrapple is a mush made of pork scraps and cornmeal and/or wheat flour that is usually fried and served as a breakfast food.

**PROMPT:** What does scrapple come to symbolize about the speaker and his family in the poem? What qualities of the food item reflect qualities of the speaker’s family? What is the cumulative impact of food images/symbolism? In your response, cite and explain at least three details that develop the scrapple/food symbols in the poem. Determine the speaker’s attitude toward his family and support that determination with evidence from the text.

You may collect this or have students share it electronically for assessing during a reading/writing workshop on another day or during a reading/writing conference and have them add it to their electronic writing portfolio. Assessments should look for

### THE LOST TOOTH: IMAGE AS SYMBOL, PART TWO (TWO TO THREE DAYS)

**GUIDING LESSON:** Begin by reviewing the definition of image (picture that is evoked in your mind when you perceive a particular combination of words) and symbol (any image or thing that stands for something else) and then introduce the poems “The Sadness” on page six and “A Noise from the Hallway” on page 60. In these poems we see Reynolds creating a symbol in one poem and then developing the range of meanings of that symbol in the second poem. After reading the poems out loud, have students work in small groups of two or three students on the analysis questions below (Google Doc [HERE](#)). Emphasize to students that this lesson will help them to master the RL.9-10.4 in which asks students to determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; and analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone.

#### Text-Dependent Questions for Analysis of “The Sadness”

1. One common poetic technique is called [enjambment](#) in which poets extend a sentence beyond a line or stanza of poetry by running it over to the next line or stanza without end punctuation. When poets enjamb their lines, readers should **not** pause at the end of lines but continue reading on to the next to complete the thought. However, the physical separation the enjambment creates through the empty “white space” on the page serves to mentally isolate the words of each line and complicate their relationship. Reynolds often uses this technique most notably seen in his use of titles. Why would Reynolds want to create this barrier, this mental separation by enjambing the title into the first sentence? In other words, why might he want to isolate the words “the sadness” from the rest of the sentence? How is such a separation related to the experience of sadness in general?
2. Reynolds describes quite graphically the experience of having one’s tooth ripped out by a stranger. Notice the muscularity of his words. Note at least three active verbs that help to convey the physically assaulting nature of this experience.
3. Why does Reynolds describe the assault occurring in the night by a stranger? How do these details help to convey Will’s experience of losing his brother?
4. What other words in addition to “stranger” help to convey the mysterious nature of this comparison? What other details about Shawn’s murder that we learn elsewhere in the novel does this pattern of vague or mysterious language call to mind?
5. What details in the poem emphasize the symbolic significance of the tooth? How do they help us understand that the tooth is symbolic? What might this tooth symbolize? Which detail do you think is the most important in helping you narrow your answer?
6. Why does the speaker claim that the feeling of the missing tooth is actually worse than the pain of its extraction? What is the difference in each of these kinds of pain? What details in the poem help to clarify the differences in these forms of suffering?
7. Notice the dramatic enjambment of the last three lines of the poem. Reynolds not only enjambes the lines, but dramatizes the enjambment by creating extra space between the lines. How do these line spacing choices contribute to the theme of the poem? For support, students may use this [Theme Guidance](#) from the ODE and/or this [“The only way you will ever need to teach theme”](#) video.
8. The word “sadness” is a rather general abstract noun. In fact, it is the most abstract word in the poem. Why is it so “hard to explain” abstractions? (If you need a refresher on the difference between abstract and concrete nouns, check out this short [Khan Academy video](#) explaining the difference with special attention to the word “sadness”.)
9. What part of the poem did you find the most moving or effective? Why?
10. Condense the poem into six-words using words from the poem. For example: *Sadness is hard: someone no more.*

### Text-Dependent Questions for Analysis of “A Noise From the Hallway”

Part one of the novel includes poems that help us understand the hours between Will’s discovery of his brother’s death and his plan to enact revenge by taking his brother’s gun and entering the elevator in search of Riggs. We gain insight into his trauma and the thinking process that his memories and feelings affect in many of these poems. We gradually begin to see a portrait of a young man tortured by grief and twisted by moral anguish; he is struggling to follow “the rules” he has been taught, but is terrorized by the their implications.

1. How does Will’s mother respond to her son’s murder? How is her response similar to and different from Will’s? What role do “the rules” play in their different responses? What details in this poem show how Will and his mother are responding to Shawn’s death?
2. Unlike most of the poems in this novel, the title of this poem is not enjambed into the first sentence. Furthermore, the first stanza is a [rhetorical fragment](#), lacking grammatical completion. The isolated details conveyed in the title and the first stanza help to convey Will’s edginess. How so? How do these fragmented details help us enter Will’s mind? Why does it make sense that Will is nervous?
3. Reynolds describes Will’s mother “stumbling” to the bathroom. Certainly if we wake up suddenly in the night and walk in the dark, we might stumble. What other connotations does this word have within the context of the poem? How else is Will’s mother “stumbling”?
4. Reynolds complicates the image of Will’s mother walking to the bathroom by personifying the act of crying. He describes “her sobs leading the way.” What is Reynolds suggesting about Will’s mother by suggesting that she is not leading herself, that her tears are the leader? How does this technique help to show Will’s mother’s powerlessness? How does this detail contrast with Will? Which “rule” does it magnify?
5. Notice that once Will recognizes that the noise in the hallway is coming from his mother, he turns out the light. Why does he do this? How does this action further develop his sense of isolation?
6. Notice that there is only one verb in the poem: “slapped” but many verbals, especially adjectival [present participles](#) (verbs ending in -ing that function as adjectives). These participles convey images of action: “stumbling,” “leading,” “dropping,” “pushing,” but lack the more vigorous force of true verbs. Why might Reynolds prefer to render action as description rather than as force in this poem? How is Will’s behavior that of inaction? Why does it make sense that action be suspended at this point in the story?
7. Why does Will push the gun under his pillow? What does this action suggest about his attitude toward the handling of the gun?
8. The final line of the poem contains an evocative simile; Reynolds compares the gun to a “lost tooth.” Taken within the context of this poem alone, explain the appropriateness of the comparison.
9. This image of the lost tooth, however, is not limited to this poem alone. It calls to mind “The Sadness.” How has the image changed meaning in this poem?
10. The lost tooth in “The Sadness” has to do with the terror and grief of losing a loved one. In “A Noise From the Hallway” it has to do with a “pistol.” Why does Reynolds connect these two associations? If the tooth represented Shawn in the first poem and now represents Shawn’s gun, what might Reynolds be suggesting about the relationship between mourning and violence? Which “rule” does this relationship illustrate?
11. What part of the poem did you find the most moving or effective? Why?
12. Condense the relationship between “The Sadness” and “A Noise From the Hallway” into six-words using words from both poems. For example: *Imagine the worst part: darkness dropping.*

### WORKSHOP

Once students have analyzed the relationship between the two example poems in the Guiding Lesson and have shared answers with the class as a whole, introduce the **List of Symbols in Long Way Down** ([below](#) or Google Doc [HERE](#)) that Reynolds develops from pages 1-192. Alternatively, you could have them brainstorm their own list. Have them locate poems or select two (or more) poems from the [List of Symbols in Long Way Down](#) that feature a symbol and work in small groups unpacking the details that reveal how Reynolds is developing and complicating the meaning of the symbol through its repeated use. Have them look back at the questions in the Guiding Lesson to get analysis ideas. Have students complete the **Symbol Comparison in Long Way Down** graphic organizer ([below](#) and Google Doc [HERE](#)) digitally or post on butcher paper their analysis and then share out with the class. Alternatively, you could have the students complete a gallery walk or carousel in which each station has a group’s completed [Symbol Comparison in Long Way Down](#) graphic organizer on a shared electronic document or on large paper. At each station, visiting groups would take notes and provide feedback for each group’s analysis.

**List of Symbols in *Long Way Down* (pages 1-192)**

The Middle Drawer	Tupac and Biggie	Gold Chain	Cologne	The Elevator	The L Button	Monkey Bars	Cigarette Smoke	Shawn's Gun	Penny Drop
"The Middle Drawer" (38) "So Usually" (41) "Suddenly" (47) "The Middle Drawer Called to Me" (48) "The Elevator Rumbled" (96)	"Our Bedroom: A Square, Yellowy Paint" (36) My Mother Used to Say" (40) "It Used To Be Different." (43)	"I Stood There," (22) "Beef" (27) "A Guy Got On," (74) "There Are" (159)	"So Usually" (41) "And When I Was Thirteen" (44) "Now the Cologne" (46)	"At the Elevator" (70) "There's a Strange Thing" (73) "The Elevator Rumbled" (96) "The Elevator," (149)	"A Guy Got On" (74) "L Stood for 'Loser'" (75) "You Got Work To Do" (101) "She Checked To Make Sure" (111)	"From Where?" (124) "Me and My Friend Dani" (127) "Gunshots" (131)	"A Girl Stepped In " (110) "I Didn't Know" (112) "I Joined In" (116) "I Looked Back at Buck" (145) "Buck Offered," (146) "The Elevator," (149) "Cigarette Smoke" (150) "I Fanned and Coughed," (151) "There Are" (159) "Meanwhile" (191)	"The Middle Drawer" (38) "The Middle Drawer Called to Me" (48) "Nickname" (49) "I Had Never Held a Gun" (59) "A Noise From the Hallway" (60) "I Wrapped My Fingers" (64) "Catching My Breath, I Asked," (89)	"Riggs and Shawn Were So-Called Friends, But" (52) "A Penny Drop" (53) I Wrapped My Fingers" (64)

**Symbol Comparison in *Long Way Down***

SYMBOL:	POEM ONE TITLE:	POEM TWO TITLE:
Summarize the poem in two to three sentences.		
Cite the words, phrases, lines or sentences that feature the symbol.		
What are the possible meanings of the symbol in the poem? Describe at least two possible meaning.		



Explain your reasoning for your interpretation, why you believe the object means more than itself.			
What other techniques does Reynolds use in the poem that help highlight the significance of the symbol? Identify and cite <b>at least one</b> (consider the following techniques: imagery, figurative devices, sound devices, sentence or grammar elements, word order, spacing, enjambment, and repetition).			
Explain how the use of this device contributes to your understanding of the symbol.			
Discuss how the meaning of the symbol changes from the first poem to the second.			
What larger theme of the novel as a whole does this symbol help to convey and develop?			

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Take a few minutes to summarize the activities. Then have students read the poems “In That Bag” (25), “In the Kitchen” (68), “My Pop” (198) and “Is It Possible”(199). Have them write a response to the following prompt in their spiral/digital notebooks or Google Classroom Assignment as an exit ticket or formative assessment to the lesson.

**Prompt:** These poems [“In That Bag” (25), “In the Kitchen” (68), “My Pop” (198) and “Is It Possible”(199)]all make reference to the skin condition of eczema. [Note: the poem “My Pop” does not make explicit mention of eczema but is helpful in understanding its use in “Is It Possible.”] At first we might conclude that this detail is only significant in explaining why Shawn had to go to the store to buy “special soap.” However, Reynolds returns to this image several times in the novel, and in each occurrence the meaning slightly changes. How does the meaning of eczema change from its initial presence in “In That Bag,” to “In the Kitchen” and finally in “Is it Possible”? What is the cumulative impact of these references to/images of the skin condition of eczema on the overall meaning in *Long Way Down*? Cite specific details from each poem to support your answer to the prompt.

## SAMPLE LESSON 4

Prior to Lesson: Students should reread poems “Our Bedroom: A Square Yellowy Paint” (36), “Anagram” (37), “Confessed” (295), “Anagram No. 1” (88), “Anagram No. 2” (137), “Anagram No. 3” (169), and “Anagram No. 4” (188) and read through section three up through page 278.

This lesson aligns to Ohio ELA Standards RL.9-10.1-4 and W. 9-10.3 Students will be engaging in the close reading and analysis of several poems with a particular focus on language, and drawing conclusions about its impact on character, conflict, and theme.

### LIKE BROTHERS: ANAGRAMS AND CHARACTER (TWO TO THREE DAYS)

**MINI-LESSON:** Begin class by reading out loud “Our Bedroom: A Square Yellowy Paint” (36) and “Anagram” (37) as students follow along in their texts. Ask students to share what they know about anagrams. Have them write down in their spiral/digital notebooks the definition of [anagram](#) and one or two examples. Then lead a discussion in which students explore the following questions:

1. How are the words “ocean” and “canoe” “somehow connected”?
2. How are the words “scare” and “cares” connected?
3. How are anagrams “like brothers”?
4. What does the choice of wall decorations reveal about the values and personalities of Will and Shawn?
5. How are the posters of Biggie and Tupac related to Will’s anagram of “SCARE = CARES”?
6. Who is more like an ocean and who is more like a canoe, Will or Shawn? Why?

**WORKSHOP:** Using Reynold’s anagram poems as exemplars [“Our Bedroom: A Square Yellowy Paint” (36), “Anagram” (37), “Confessed” (295), “Anagram No. 1” (88), “Anagram No. 2” (137), “Anagram No. 3” (169), and “Anagram No. 4” (188)], have students compose their own poems using an anagram as the thematic heart First, have them brainstorm possible anagrams or use this [Anagram Generator](#). Model using the generator by plugging in some of your interests and some abstract words. Encourage them to write about themselves or their understanding of a close friend or family member. Below is an example of both the brainstorming and a resulting poem (Google Doc [HERE](#)).

When you give students time to write their poems, write alongside them so students may see you model the writing and thinking processes in real time.

Anagram Brainstorm		Teacher Model
teacher	cheater	Cheaters
garden	danger	This summer solstice I watch my neighbors leave in the dawn, gripping coffee and courage to meet the workday requirements all over again.
cat	act	
love	vole	I slowly turn from the window, still enslipped. No urgency at all. Cosiest.
escape	peaces	
rules	lures	Having not even set the alarm the night before, no intentions of setting it this night, I feel guilty at my lax, somehow still undeserving of all this lawlessness.
writing	grit win	
		TEACHERS = CHEATERS

At the close of the workshop time, invite students to share their poems or—minimally—their central governing anagrams. Those who don’t share their whole poems should be prepared to explain how their anagram reveals a key insight about the character they focus on in their poem.

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** As a closing activity, ask students write a response to the following prompt in their spiral/digital notebooks or Google Classroom Assignment as an exit ticket or formative assessment to the lesson. Let them know that they are working on both RL.9-10.3 and RL.9-10.4 because they are looking closely at how authors use anagrams as characterization.

Prompt: Define the term anagram, and then provide either your own example, or one that was shared in the class that provides an example of the literary use of the term. Identify the anagram and explain how it not only meets the definition of the term but also reveals a key insight about character.

### LIKE BROTHERS: PART TWO

**MINI-LESSON:** Part Two of the lesson is designed to help students understand how Reynolds uses anagrams not only to convey Will’s creative temperament, but also as a structural device through which he develops other characters, conflicts, and themes.

**Step One** One of the most important poems in the novel occurs near its conclusion when Will articulates his central conflict, a conflict that controls the plot and the resolution of the work as a whole. Have students read the poem “Confessed” (295) and discuss the nature of this conflict. Since this is in a section of the novel they may not have read yet, you will want them to read it at least twice.

**Step Two** Have students reread the poems within section seven (pages 73 to 106) and answer the following questions. You may lead the class in a whole-group investigation of the questions or assign small study groups focusing on one question each. Be sure to have all students explore the culminating question. You can find a Google Doc of the Questions and Graphic Organizer for the Culminating Question [HERE](#).

1. Will doesn’t immediately recognize who Buck is or that he is a ghost. Cite evidence from several of the poems that reveal Will’s ignorance.
2. When does Will realize who Buck is, what detail helps convince him of Buck’s identity? What is ironic about this detail? Discuss several ways in which this detail may be read ironically.
3. Likewise, Will is reluctant to accept that he is talking to a ghost. Cite details from at least two poems that reveal Will’s inner struggle to accept the existence of Buck’s ghost. How is this inner struggle similar to the larger struggle Will faces?
4. When Will begins to accept the reality of Buck’s ghost, he then considers the possible dangers of Buck’s ghost’s motivations. Will imagines that Buck may be present to kill him. Cite evidence for this interpretation from at least two poems.
5. Buck’s character is largely responsible for not only reinforcing the power and danger of The Rules but also encouraging Will to follow them. How does he serve as a role model and cautionary tale for the implication of following the rules? Cite specific examples from more than one poem to illustrate how Buck serves both functions.

**Culminating Question:** The numbered anagram poems coincide not only with the elevator floors but also with the roles and functions of the ghosts. How does “Anagram No. 1” (88) illustrate the central subject of the section, a key quality or function of the ghost in the section, a conflict, and a developing theme?

Teachers may use or adapt the following example organizer to clarify the demands of the culminating question:

ANAGRAM ANALYSIS ORGANIZER Example		
<b>Central Anagram:</b> ALIVE = A VEIL	<b>Elevator floor:</b> Seven	<b>Central Ghost:</b> Buck
<b>Analysis focus questions</b>	<b>Answers: Highlight terms of the anagram that you include in your response.</b>	<b>Evidence for answers</b>
How does the anagram reveal the central <b>subject</b> of this section?	An important development in this section of the novel is the introduction of the elevator as the room within which ghosts appear to Will on his way down to find Riggs and fulfill his mission to avenge his brother’s death. In this section, Will meets the first ghost, Buck. At first Will cannot accept the reality of Buck’s ghost	“You don’t recognize me?” (78)  “I looked harder” (78)

	but later accepts his supernatural presence. In a sense, Will gradually is able to see that the barrier that separates the <b>living</b> and the dead may be better understood as a <b>veil</b> . We may have the ability to see through this barrier. The elevator cabin becomes this <b>veil</b> .	<i>“Please don’t say / I’m dead” (89)</i>
How does the anagram connect to the <b>character</b> of the ghost on the elevator during this section?	Buck claims he is in the elevator to check on his gun, the gun that he gave to Shawn that Will now has. He challenges Will to follow Rule #3 by teasing and demeaning Will, treating him as though he isn’t strong or brave enough to follow The Rules. This instigating role is related to the anagram in that Buck implies that Will’s apparent fear of death reveals his ignorance and incompetence. Only those who can confront the reality of their own deaths—in effect stripping themselves of the illusion of the preciousness of their own lives— have true courage. Therefore, valuing <b>life over death</b> is a kind of <b>veil</b> that hides one’s cowardice. The anagram, understood in this way, encapsulates Buck’s moral code.	<i>“Taught him how to use it too. / Taught him The Rules” (93)</i>  <i>“But you ain’t / got it in you, Will, / he said, cocky “ (101)</i>  <i>“You don’t got it in you, / he repeated / over and over again / under his un-breath” (106)</i>
How does the anagram connect to a key <b>conflict</b> within Will, the ghost, or the larger society?	Will is struggling to honor his brother and uphold the social code of The Rules but is unsure if <b>killing</b> Riggs is the “right thing.” This moral conflict increases in tension for the rest of the novel. The anagram connects to Will’s conflict in that he cannot see clearly the path ahead. This moral confusion may be understood as a kind of <b>veil</b> that prevents him from seeing clearly and acting in accordance with sound moral reasoning.	<i>“I was scared” (87)</i> <i>“and I replied / with as much / tough in my voice as / I could” (93)</i> <i>“I got work to do. / A job to do. / Business to handle” (99)</i> <i>“How many should there be?” (103)</i>
What larger <b>theme</b> that Reynolds develops throughout the novel does the anagram encapsulate?	One of the central themes of the novel involves the psychological, social, and ethical repercussions of vengeance as an instrument to secure justice. Reynolds dramatizes the trauma wrought through the violent death of a loved one and how that trauma is exacerbated by the perceived absence of a civic system designed to remedy such injustices.  Ideal justice is often personified by the image of Lady Justice, a blindfolded— <b>veiled</b> —woman holding scales in balance. The image of the <b>veil</b> in Reynolds’s anagram relates to the central theme of justice in the novel: ideal justice should be impartial and fair, but Reynolds’s work challenges the equal application of this ideal in communities such as Will’s. One wonders if such a <b>veiled</b> form of justice is <b>alive</b> in distressed communities.	<i>“I’m about to do what I gotta do. / What you would have done/ .... Follow The Rules” (95)</i>  <i>“It’s a long / way / down” (97)</i>  <i>“And now almost shot / myself trying / to figure out / how to” (102)</i>

**STUDENT WORKSHOP:** Assign students or allow them to choose among the remaining anagram poems [“Anagram No. 2” (137), “Anagram No. 3” (169), and “Anagram No. 4” (188)] to explore how they function within section seven (pages 73 to 106) as well as the novel as a whole to develop character, conflict, and theme. Students should use a blank copy of the **Anagram Analysis Organizer** (below and Google Doc [Here](#)). As students are working in small groups, be prepared to help students navigate through the tasks. Encourage divergent responses especially when students attempt to link subject, character, conflict, and theme with the two terms of the centering anagram. [Also note that not all of the anagram poems fit neatly within the elevator levels or focus exclusively on one Ghost. For example, “Anagram No. 3” (169) and “Anagram No. 4” both occur within the fifth floor section but the first focuses more on Mark and the second may be better understood as connecting to the imminent presence of Will’s father who appears within the fourth floor section.]

Have students share their analysis by projecting the shared Google doc, on the document projector if **Anagram Analysis Organizer** was handed out, or on butcher paper that you post around the room.

ANAGRAM ANALYSIS ORGANIZER		
Central Anagram:	Elevator floor:	Central Ghost:
Analysis focus questions	Answers: Highlight terms of the anagram that you include in your response.	Evidence for answers
How does the anagram reveal central a <b>subject</b> of this section?		
How does the anagram connect to the <b>character</b> of the ghost on the elevator during this section?		
How does the anagram connect to a key <b>conflict</b> within Will, the ghost, or the larger society?		
What larger <b>theme</b> that Reynolds develops throughout the novel does the anagram encapsulate?		

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** As an extension and formative assessment, have students read “Anagram No. 6” ( 276) and write an extended response in their spiral/digital notebooks (or on Google Classroom) in which students respond to one of the following prompts:

- What is ironic about Will’s failure to generate an anagram for the word “poser”? While Will may not be able to generate an anagram, the poet Reynolds certainly can. Why would Reynolds dramatize Will’s imaginative barrier at this point in the text? How does it develop his central conflict and or a theme of the work as a whole? Be sure to embed direct, quoted evidence from poems within this section to support your response.
- As this poem comes near the end of the third floor section, the ghost of Frick appears. What might it suggest about his character? In what way is Frick a poser? Be sure to embed direct, quoted evidence from poems within this section to support your response.
- How might all the ghosts be thought of as posers? How does the concept of posing relate to and convey a central theme of the text as a whole? Be sure to embed direct, quoted evidence from poems within this section to support your response.
- The word “poser” has several obvious anagrams: pores, prose, ropes, and spore. Choose one and defend its appropriateness on the grounds of Reynolds treatment of character, conflict, or theme. Be sure to embed direct, quoted evidence from poems within this section to support your response.

For theme support, students may use this [Theme Guidance](#) from the ODE and/or this [“The only way you will ever need to teach theme”](#) video. You may collect this writing assessment or have students share it electronically for assessing during a reading/writing workshop on another day or during a reading/writing conference looking for textual citation to show impact of techniques on meaning, conflict, character, or theme.

## SAMPLE LESSON 5

Prior to Lesson: Students should through page 298 and especially read/reread these poems about rules: “No. 3: Questions” (18), “In Case You Ain’t Know” (19), “I Felt Like Crying,” (30), “The Rules No. 1: Crying” (31), “No. 2: Snitching” (32), “No. 3: Revenge” (33), “There’s A Strange Thing” (73), “And I’m Glad I Found It” (94), “You Got Work To Do” (101), “I Had Half a Second” (109), “When They Said” (135), “Dani Was Killed” (141), “But To Explain Myself” (173), “Uncle Mark Huffed” (174), “The Scene” (176), “I Wiped My Face” (209), “What You Think You Should Do” (210), “But You Did What You Had To Do” (217), “Shawn Ain’t Say Nothing” (253), “Again” (267), “Tony Talking” (273), “When the Elevator Door Opened” (281), “I Told Him” (293), “Explained” (294), “The Rules Are The Rules” (296), “I Looked Back at Shawn” (298).

This lesson is aligned to Ohio ELA Standards RI. 9-10.1-3 and RL.9-10.2. Students will be working with informational texts and poems to determine the central idea, the development of that idea, and the analysis of the details and evidence that support the development of the central idea. Working with a video interview, a magazine article, and selected poems, students will target and develop the skills of close reading, summary, analysis, and synthesis.

## THE RULES PART ONE: UNDERSTANDING NORMS (ONE TO TWO DAYS)

**OPENING LESSON:** Introduce students to the concept of social norms. You may begin by asking them to define the concept or provide it and then ask them to exemplify it. According to the Stanford [Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#), social norms are “ the customary rules that govern behavior in groups and societies.” These rules are unwritten and often tacitly understood. They are among the forces that shape identity and society. Have student discuss this idea for a few moments and then ask them to write an extended response in their spiral/digital notebooks in which they identify a social norm that they believe is valuable either to themselves, their family, or their community. Ask them to describe it and explain why the norm is important. After five to ten minutes of writing, have students share with partners (this step is a [think, write, pair, share protocol](#)). As groups share out, record and display class notes on a shared Google doc so students may better understand the variety of examples and the importance of them in forming identity and social bonds.

## STUDENT WORKSHOP: CODE OF THE STREET

In addition to the standards and skills mentioned above, this workshop is designed to help students understand the complexity of social norms as they impact race, youth, class, gender, and survival in communities.

**Step One** Introduce [Elijah Anderson](#) and preview the guided-viewing questions below. Have students answer these [Code of the Street Questions](#) (below) while viewing the short video [Code of the Street](#).

### Critical Viewing

1. What conditions contribute to the weakening of the “civil law” and the strengthening of the “code of the street”?
2. What principle of justice does the “eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth” mentality exemplify?
3. Whose perspective is often missing from discussions of inner-city justice?
4. Anderson interviews two young men--James and Mustafa--within this video. Why is their participation important?
5. Mustafa’s story in particular illustrates the intersection between alienation and “decency.” How so? What do you think Anderson means by “decency”?
6. Why does Anderson interview Bilal Qayyum? What insight does his participation provide?
7. What is the role of the concept of “manhood” in the “code of the street”?
8. What is the role of “respect” in the “code of the street”?
9. Anderson claims that “street cred is high maintenance.” What does he mean?
10. What are most of the fights about in “the street”?
11. Why has fist fighting declined?
12. Anderson claims that the “code of the street is a kind of social exchange that allows for a certain order in the community.” How does the “code” establish and maintain order? How does it erode or undermine order? What does social order mean?
13. What does respect for the police have to do with the “code of the street”?
14. Why has such respect eroded?
15. What role does class have on the strength and prevalence of the “code of the street”? Why?

16. Qayyum explains that although young people don't want to engage in violence or crime, they often feel like they have no choice, that they become the "creature of [their] own environment." How do Mustafa's and James's final remarks exemplify this problem?
17. How do the images and music contribute to the effectiveness of the video? Choose one image or sound that you find particularly effective. Explain its impact on the video.
18. Extension Question: Anderson concludes by asserting that the problem of survival lies at the heart of "this country's racial divide." What do you think he means by this claim? Do you agree? Why or why not?

**Step Two** After viewing the video (you may need to show it twice), have students answer this final reflection question with a neighbor: What part of the video most resonated with you? Which detail, insight, quotation, question, or other element elicited the most pronounced response from you (either positively or negatively).

**Step Three** Share out some of the reflections to the class as a whole.

**Step Four** Introduce *The Atlantic* article "[The Code of the Streets](#)" by Elijah Alexander (Google Doc [HERE](#)) and explain that this essay advances a more elaborate investigation of the "code of the street." The essay consists of seven sections: Decent and Street Families, Campaigning for Respect, Self-Image Based on "Juice", By Trial of Manhood, Girls and Boys, "Going for Bad," and An Oppositional Culture. Begin the essay together reading out loud as students follow along the first five paragraphs wherein you will model the strategy of [reciprocal teaching](#). Then either have students choose a section/text chunk or assign sections/text chunks to small groups (this will allow you to differentiate by ability) wherein they will apply the reciprocal teaching strategies to understand their section. Use or adapt the [Reciprocal Teaching Organizer](#) (below and linked) to support students as they work through this process. The [Reciprocal Teaching Organizer](#) has an example of the first chunk of the article completed for you and a blank organizer. You can use it to model the strategy for the first section/text chunk (first five paragraphs) before breaking students into small groups. The groups can use a hard or digital copy of the blank organizer while reading their section/text chunk.

Text Chunk	Prediction	Questions (create at least one literal and one inferential question for each paragraph)	Clarification	Summary
<p><b>EXAMPLE: Headline and summary chunk:</b></p> <p><b>The Code of the Streets</b></p> <p><i>In this essay in urban anthropology a social scientist takes us inside a world most of us only glimpse in grisly headlines—"Teen Killed in Drive By Shooting"—to show us how a desperate search for respect governs social relations among many African-American young men.</i></p>	<p><b>I predict</b> that this article will be a kind of inside look into the lives of African American youth that most people never see.</p> <p><b>My evidence for this prediction</b> are the words "inside" and glimpse." The author will go beyond the surface to help readers understand underlying causes.</p>	<p>Who is the audience for this article? (<i>Inferential</i>)</p> <p>What kind of perspective does the headline "Teen Killed in Drive By Shooting" exemplify? (<i>inferential</i>)</p> <p>What "governs social relations among many African American young men"? (<i>literal</i>)</p>	<p>Anthropology is the study of how human societies and cultures develop. Knowing this definition may help students understand the scientific lens through which the essay is framed.</p> <p>The words "grisly" and "desperate" create two different responses from the reader. Knowing that "grisly" means causing horror or disgust may help readers to understand that the author wants to elicit a different response to stories of inner-city violence, a response of not disgust but empathy and understanding.</p>	<p><b>This part of the text</b> reveals the intended audience—people who are unfamiliar with the lives of inner-city African Americans—and the purpose of the essay—to help readers understand that violence among African American inner-city young men arises out of a deep need for respect.</p>

**Step Five** Have each group set up a station to share their completed [Reciprocal Teaching Organizer](#) of predictions, summaries, questions and clarifications for the section/text chunk they read. They can choose to have their organizer in digital or hard copy format at their station. Once stations are set up, give each student access to [Code of the Streets Note Taking Chart](#) (below and Google Doc [HERE](#)). Each student should now visit each station and take notes on their copy of the [Code of the Streets Note Taking Chart](#) in the



corresponding row for each station to help clarify their understanding. If more clarification is needed, they should have a conversation with one of the members of the group for the station they want clarified.

**Code of the Streets Note Taking Chart**

Section Title/Text Chunk	Key terms/vocabulary	Summary	Questions I have	Connections I see (with own experience and with details from <i>Long Way Home</i> )
Decent and Street Families				
Campaigning for Respect				
Self-Image Based on "Juice"				
By Trial of Manhood				
Girls and Boys				
"Going for Bad"				
An Oppositional Culture				

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT**

Take a few minutes to summarize the activities. Then have students reread the poems "The Rules No. 1: Crying" (31), "No. 2: Snitching" (32), and "No. 3: Revenge" (33).

Have them write a response in their spiral/digital notebooks as an exit ticket to the lesson.

Prompt: How do the poems "The Rules No. 1: Crying" (31), "No. 2: Snitching" (32), and "No. 3: Revenge" (33) exemplify Alexander's claims in his essay "The Code of the Streets"? Cite evidence from both the essay and the poems to justify your response.

Let them know that you are looking to see if the students are able to cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the article and poems say explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the texts.

**THE RULES PART TWO: CODE COMPLICATIONS (ONE TO TWO DAYS)**

**OPENING:** Begin by revisiting the exit-ticket responses for the prompt: How do the poems "The Rules No. 1: Crying" (31), "No. 2: Snitching" (32), and "No. 3: Revenge" (33) exemplify Alexander's claims in his essay "The Code of the Streets"? Cite evidence from both the essay and the poems to justify your response. Consider digital sharing/projecting of this [Claim Connections](#) organizer (below and linked) to illustrate the intersections between the poems and the claims in the essay as students revisit and share their responses to the prompt. An example is completed for you in the first row.

Poem	Claim from “The Code of the Streets”	Evidence from poem	Evidence from “The Code of the Streets”
The Rules No. 1: Crying	Example: Alexander emphasizes the importance of the performance of “manhood.” Young men feel compelled to display a certain emotional toughness requiring them to suppress their vulnerability.	“No matter what” (31).	“[Manhood] implies physicality and a certain ruthlessness.... For many inner-city youths, manhood and respect are flip sides of the same coin; physical and psychological well-being are inseparable, and both require a sense of control, of being in charge” (14)
No. 2: Snitching			
No. 3: Revenge			

### STUDENT WORKSHOP: COMPLICATING THE CODE

This workshop is designed to help students understand how Reynolds’s novel may be understood as the imaginative manifestation of Alexander’s description of the “code of the streets.” This part of the lesson will help students particularly with Standard RL. 9-10.2. They will be analyzing how Reynolds develops and complicates the theme topic of “The Rules” throughout the novel. Remember “The Rules’ is a theme topic and not a fully developed theme. A theme is the message conveyed by a text that applies to multiple other texts described in a phrase or clause, not in a single word. It implies a conflict and/or an argument about the core idea. So, if “The Rules” is a core idea, one would need to say what the message(s) of the novel is around that core idea/topic to create theme(s).

Have students form small “theme topic study” groups in which they will select five poems featuring “The Rules” to track the theme topic’s expression and development. They will work together to complete the following **THEME TOPIC ANALYTICAL ORGANIZER** which you can share digitally or hand out (below and linked). The **THEME TOPIC ANALYTICAL ORGANIZER** has both a blank version and an exemplar one. Have students review all of the poems featuring “The Rules” and select five that seem to form a pattern that reveals Reynolds’s development of his attitude toward “the rules,” i.e. what message he may be trying to form around the topic of “the rules.”

The following poems feature “the rules”: “No. 3: Questions” (18), “In Case You Ain’t Know” (19), “I Felt Like Crying,” (30), “The Rules No. 1: Crying” (31), “No. 2: Snitching” (32), “No. 3: Revenge” (33), “There’s A Strange Thing” (73), “And I’m Glad I Found It” (94), “You Got Work To Do” (101), “I Had Half a Second” (109), “When They Said” (135), “Dani Was Killed” (141), “But To Explain Myself” (173), “Uncle Mark Huffed” (174), “The Scene” (176), “I Wiped My Face” (209), “What You Think You Should Do” (210), “But You Did What You Had To Do” (217), “Shawn Ain’t Say Nothing” (253), “Again” (267), “Tony Talking” (273), “When the Elevator Door Opened” (281), “I Told Him” (293), “Explained” (294), “The Rules Are The Rules” (296), “I Looked Back at Shawn” (298).

**THEME TOPIC ANALYTICAL ORGANIZER (exemplar)**

Poem	Summary	Evidence from poem that reflects key "Rule"	Explanation of how the evidence reflects the rule and/or Reynolds's critique of the rule	Text Feature and example that contributes to the theme topic's development (literary techniques)
No. 3: Questions	This poem describes the aftermath of Shawn's death when police arrived at the scene and began interviewing witnesses. No one present claimed to know or have seen anything.	"Even he knew better than to / know anything"	Reynolds describes Marcus Andrews, the "neighborhood / know-it-all" who is following the rule regarding "snitching." He knows that it is socially unacceptable to report to the police any information regarding the homicide.	<b>Irony:</b> By describing Andrews as the "know it all" who claims to not know anything, Reynolds uses <b>irony</b> to clarify the power of the rule and its importance in establishing and maintaining social bonds. In order for Andrews and Will to maintain their ties to their community, they cannot violate the rule of no "snitching." They must find ways outside of the official legal codes to seek justice.
In Case You Ain't Know	This poem extends the previous poem by making a broader generalization regarding the reaction to homicide within Will's community. In Will's experience, most people retreat from gunfire and pretend that they heard and/or saw nothing.	"Best to become invisible / in times like these"	Reynolds describes the more general social behavior of people withdrawing from getting involved in reporting violence because they deem it "[b]est." In other words, people have made a calculated moral decision to not participate in police investigations. Reynolds's ambiguity in his use of the word "best" begins to indicate the complexity of this "rule."	<b>Direct Address:</b> Reynolds's title "In Case You Ain't Know" directly addresses the reader, a reader who is not an insider, who does not already know what is "best." This address heightens the <b>irony</b> of Will's claim that "Everybody knows" that cooperation with the police is not an acceptable choice in his community.
No. 2: Snitching	This poem succinctly states the rule that prohibits police cooperation.	"Don't."	The concision of this poem combined with its expression of the rule as a mandate, an imperative, illustrates its centrality in Will's community. Whether explicitly or implicitly taught, Will and the other members of his community do not question this rule, "[n]o matter what."	<b>Rhetorical Fragments:</b> This poem consists of rhetorical fragments, each line containing a deliberate incomplete sentence. These fragments highlight the tacit acceptance of the rule: its presentation within this poem as simply a mandate without explanation, elaboration, cause or effect enacts the critical importance of the rule in Will's society. Reynolds expresses the rule as a commandment, one whose obedience is a matter of life or death.
Shawn Ain't Say Nothing	Will describes Shawn's response to Buck's murder: he didn't talk to the police or to anyone; he simply began	"Shawn Ain't Say Nothing"	The title of the poem encapsulates Shawn's internalization of Rule #2. When the police came to interview him regarding the death of his friend	<b>Diction:</b> Reynolds's use of words such as "locked" and "caught" imply connotations of isolation and entrapment. Shawn's grief and trauma combined with his alienation

	preparing to follow Rule # 3.		“James” as described in the previous poem, Shawn remains committed to the social norm forbidding police cooperation. As this commitment results in Shawn’s own murder, Reynolds underscores the tragic consequences of this powerful code.	from traditional avenues of justice contribute to a kind of prison from which the only perceived escape is the upholding of Rule #3: Revenge.
Tony Talking	This poem clarifies the difference between talking to police, (snitching) and talking to members of one’s own community. Tony, who may have witnessed Buck’s murder, told Shawn that Frick was responsible.	“Tony talking / was laying claim, / loyalty / an allegiance to / the asphalt around / here”	Reynolds’s poem describes the need for internal systems of justice that fill the vacuum created by the loss of faith in the traditional justice system. As Elijah Alexander describes in “The Code of the Streets,” “[M]any residents feel they must be prepared to take extraordinary measures to defend themselves and their loved ones against those who are inclined to aggression.” Here, Tony feels compelled to assert his own power and increase his status within his community by helping its members to find justice, “one way or another.”	<b>Assonance:</b> Reynolds links the words “allegiance” and “asphalt” by repeating the initial vowel sound to emphasize the power of community within Will’s world. The “rules” are a means through which community members enact their commitment to each other and to justice, even though that commitment may result in the exponential perpetuation of cycles of violence.

**THEME TOPIC ANALYTICAL ORGANIZER (blank)**

Poem	Summary	Evidence from poem that reflects key “Rule”	Explanation of how the evidence reflects the rule and/or Reynolds’s critique of the rule	Text Feature and example that contributes to the theme topic’s development (literary techniques)

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Take a few minutes to summarize the activities. Then have students read the poems “I Was Breaking Down” (297) and “I Looked Back at Shawn” (298). Have them write a response in their spiral/digital notebook (or Google Classroom) for the following prompt as an exit ticket or formative assessment to the lesson.

**Prompt:** In the poems “I Was Breaking Down” (297) and “I Looked Back at Shawn” (298), Reynolds describes Will starting to cry and then Shawn crying as well. How do these poems reflect the complex nature of the rules? What theme can be formed around the topic of the rules based on how we see Will struggling with his need to follow the rules while at the same time beginning to realize how self-destructive the rules can be? Cite specific details from each poem to support your answer to the prompt.

## SAMPLE LESSON 6

Prior to Lesson: Students should finish reading the novel and reread poems “I’ve Never Been” (13), “In His Hand” (24), “At the Elevator” (70), “But” (143), and “The Rules are the Rules” (296).

This lesson aligns to Ohio ELA Standards RL.9-10.1-2, and W. 9-10.3. Students will be engaging in the close reading and analysis of several poems with a particular focus on language and form drawing conclusions about their impact on character, conflict, and theme.

### EARTHQUAKE: THE POWER OF FORM ( ONE TO TWO DAYS)

**MINI-LESSON:** Begin class by projecting the poem “I’ve Never Been” (13). Invite three separate students to read it out loud, having all students follow along in their texts.. Encourage them to make their own decisions about pace and pausing. Between each reading, ask the class to note observations about the student’s decisions. What details in the text did the readers respond to and interpret in their performances? How else might the poem be read? What details create a range of possible performance choices in the reading of the poem? How might the poem’s force be altered if Reynolds had not shaped the poem in the same way?

Introduce the concept of [concrete poetry](#) and then ask the students to identify the ways in which Reynolds uses “nonlinguistic elements” to create meaning. How does his use of spacing, [caesuras](#), and lineation support the feeling of shock and trauma Will describes in discovering the death of his brother? How is such an experience like an earthquake?

**STUDENT WORKSHOP:** Have students compose their own group or individual concrete poem about a symbol, character, conflict, or theme of the novel. Consider using the tips for writing concrete poetry taking from the [Powerpoetry.org](#) website (below and Google Doc [HERE](#)):

1. Write: With concrete poetry, it’s a good idea to first write out your whole poem without putting it into a shape and then add then let the words make up the shape later. There are no rules when it comes to a concrete poem, so you’re free to let your imagination run wild and create any story you’d like! Don’t worry about the length of your poem, but remember that the more words you have, the bigger your shape will be.
2. Shape: Pick a shape that you want your poem to create. If someone looks at your poem from far away, they will see the outline of the shape, but up close they will actually be able to read the words. Knowing this, you will probably want to pick a pretty simple shape. First, think of what story your poem will tell, and match the shape to the theme of the poem. For example, if you are writing a love poem you might want the poem to be shaped like a heart.
3. Draw: You don’t need to be an artist to make this poem look great! Just draw an outline of the shape you picked, either on paper or with a drawing tool from a computer program like Paint, or Photoshop if you’re feeling fancy. If you’re going to draw your concrete poem by hand, you can always scan the picture and upload it to your computer so you have a virtual version too!
4. Words: Remember, the words of the poem are just as important as the shapes they make for a concrete poem. So, it’s a good idea to experiment with using bold, italics, or even colors to add shade and texture to the words or to make whatever shape you use look 3D! Then, either by hand or using a program, paste the words of the poem you’ve written onto the outline of the shape in the order you want them to be read! Now, you will have created your own original poetic picture!
5. Make a Scene: Don’t just stop at one shape — make a whole scene! Go crazy and write a whole bunch of poems that are different lengths and turn them into all different sizes of shapes to create an image that tells its own story! You could even make a picture book using your concrete poetry.
6. Power Poetry: As always, the possibilities are endless. Make sure to post your concrete poem to PowerPoetry.org to inspire other poets to turn their poems into visual art too!

Here is an example concrete poem about the choice Will faces at the close of the book and the role his relationship with his brother figures in that choice:

In the Mirror

I see you, my brother,  
so young,  
so scared,

like me.

I want to tell you,  
I want to.

But.

I'm trapped  
in between  
you and these doors.

It's too

late.

I see you, my brother,  
finally, but  
I can't see

your eyes.

What do you want  
me to do?

Shawn?

Answer me  
please  
know me now before

it's too

late.

After the workshop, have each group or individual share their concrete poems by posting them around the room for a [gallery walk](#) or adding them to a shared Google Doc/Google Classroom assignment. Then assign students into small groups of two to four students to respond to several poems. Give students different colors of Post It notes on which to record their notes or have them comment in different colored typeface on the following prompts for each poem:

1. I NOTICE: What did you notice about the use of visual space and/or typography in the poem? Cite and explain one detail that shows how the poet(s) used shape to convey the meaning of the poem.
2. I NOTICE: How did the poet(s) make clear a symbol, character, conflict, or theme of *Long Way Down*? Cite and explain how that symbol, character, conflict, or theme contributes to the meaning of the poem.
3. I WONDER: What questions do you have about the poem—a line, a word, an image, an idea—you would like to pose to the poet(s)? Pose at least one question.
4. I ENJOY: What do you appreciate or particularly enjoy about the poem? Cite a detail or technique that you think is particularly effective and briefly note why you liked this choice.

After students have completed their gallery walks, conclude the activity by having the poet(s) examine the feedback Post It notes/comments and writing or discussing what they learned about how their choices impacted their audience. What was surprising about the feedback? What was encouraging? What might they change in a revision, what might they add or eliminate if they had more time? What would they keep the same?

As an extension, have the class submit their poems to the Powerpoetry.org website where they can publish and comment on poems on the site. Consider creating a [classroom group](#) where you can have students post and comment in a more organized and safe way.

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** Have students write in their spiral/digital notebooks about concrete poetry. What advantages does this form have? What are its disadvantages? Why do they think Reynolds wrote so many poems that relied on shape to convey meaning as much as words?

Extension Exit Ticket: Choose one of the following poems and discuss the ways in which Reynolds uses “nonlinguistic elements” to convey or enhance the meaning of the poem as a whole: “In His Hand” (24), “At the Elevator” (70), “*But*” (143), “The Rules are the Rules” (296). Briefly summarize the poem and then discuss at least two ways in which Reynolds uses spacing and/or shape to enact the meaning of the poem. What impact do the “nonlinguistic elements” have on character, conflict, or theme.



## SAMPLE LESSON 7

Prior to Lesson: Students should read full text.

This lesson is aligned to Ohio ELA Standards RI.9-10.1-2 and RL.9-10.1-2. Students will be working with informational texts and poems to determine the central idea, the development of that idea, and the analysis of the details and evidence that support the development of the central idea. Working with video, news articles, a scholarly article, and selected poems, students will target and develop the skills of close reading, summary, analysis, and synthesis. Additionally, the seminar portion of the lesson can help students to develop mastery of Speaking and Listening standards SL. 9-10. 1.

### YOU COMING?: READER RESPONSIBILTY (THREE TO FOUR DAYS)

**OPENING:** One of the most compelling and provocative aspects of Reynolds’s novel in verse is the ending: “You coming?”. Reynolds leaves the reader to decide if his protagonist will carry out his plan for vengeance. This question governs the plot and theme of the novel and is therefore a fitting question for a Socratic seminar discussion.

**Step One** Begin class by asking students to write in their spiral/digital notebooks about their reaction to the ending of the novel. Ask them to respond to one or more of the following questions for reflection:

1. How did you react to the ending? Was it surprising, disappointing, appropriate, frustrating, or did it evoke some other reaction? Examine your reaction and explore the possible reasons for your reaction.
2. How might Will answer this question? Is he, in fact, coming? Provide a rationale for what you think his answer would likely be.
3. Why do you think Reynolds chose to end his novel in this way? Does its ambiguity broaden or narrow the significance of the story? How?
4. Why do writers sometimes write endings that do not end? Why do readers seem to need “closure,” the feeling of an ending? Why would a writer withhold such a feeling?

**Step Two** After giving students time to write, have them share their thoughts with a partner using the [Think, Write, Pair, Share](#) strategy.

**Step Three** After sharing with the class some of their initial thoughts, introduce the article “[Endless fascination: in praise of novels without neat conclusions](#)” by Lee Rourke for *The Guardian*(Google Doc [HERE](#)). Explain that Rourke presents an explanation for and defense of books that end without establishing “closure.” Lead students through a close reading of this article by having them annotate the text or by answering the text-dependent questions below if scaffolding is needed. Provide students with the [vocabulary](#) for the article ahead of time to help them overcome barriers to comprehension. Be sure students are well grounded in the meaning of the word “ambiguity” before reading.

Text-Dependent Questions:

1. What words in the title and subtitle best reveal Rourke’s position regarding ambiguous endings?
2. Rourke does not present his argument in a vacuum. He is responding to an ongoing conversation about narrative endings. How does he situate his argument within a broader context of opinions about endings?
3. Rourke does not directly attack Williams’s position regarding “tidy endings,” instead he presents a more complex response to her position. What details does he include about her view that reveal his more nuanced position? Why is such a positioning an effective argumentative move? How would his argument be less effective if he directly attacked her position in his opening paragraph?
4. What is the “well-worn formula” for most stories? Why do we like so many of our stories to “make sense” either from the beginning or by the end? Think of an example of a story that follows this formula. What was so satisfying about it?
5. Explain the “double-edged event” that writers grapple with as they work out their plots with their readers in mind.
6. Why does Rourke include a discussion of the play *Waiting for Godot*? ([Here](#) is a link to student-friendly summary of the play from Shmoop).
7. Rourke claims that only when we encounter “oblique junctures” such as those at the heart of Beckett’s play do we realize that tidy endings “don’t cut it.” What does he mean by this phrase? Look up both words “oblique” and “junction” and explain how they relate to endings that don’t fully conclude.
8. Rourke argues that narratives that conclude “in an orderly fashion” leave us initially satisfied, but don’t have a lasting effect on our experience. Why not?
9. Why does Rourke advocate for endings that do not end? What is his central criterion for art that is implicit in his defense of narratives with ambiguous endings? In other words, what do you think Rourke believes is the purpose of art?
10. Do you agree with Rourke’s argument? Why or why not?
11. Would Reynolds agree with Rourke’s argument? Why or why not?

**STUDENT SEMINAR OVERVIEW:** Spend some time describing the purpose, methodology, and structure of [Socratic seminars](#) to students. Spend one to two days preparing for the seminar by having students read and annotate the supplemental sources (linked below) and looking for connections to the core text: *Long Way Down*. In addition to annotating the texts, students should prepare for the discussion by answering the core question in writing with as much detail and evidence as possible. You may use the template for [Socratic seminars](#) to provide instruction. Be sure to put the core question on the template and think about adding a few additional questions. Be sure to keep the area on the template where students can add their own questions. Students should also come prepared with answers to the questions on the template including their own to use to help take ownership of the discussion.

**CORE QUESTION:** Lee Rourke claims, “Much like real life does, novels without endings reveal to us the ambiguity that is crucial to our own desire to simply find out things for ourselves.” He goes on to assert that novels without resolution have “more reality” than any novel with a clear beginning, middle, and end. Reynolds not only ends his book steeped in ambiguity, he does so by posing a question not just to Will but to the reader as well.

- Why does Reynolds end his novel so provocatively? Why is such an ending more “real” than one that provides an answer?

**Supplemental Sources:**

Chicago Tribune story [“Tyshawn on swing when gangbangers out for revenge targeted him: prosecutors”](#)

Chicago Tribune story [“Tyshawn Lee’s killing the fourth in recent feud between gang factions”](#)

CBS This Morning story [“Inside the Gun Violence Epidemic on Chicago’s South Side”](#)

Video trailer for the film [The Mask You Live In](#) (Note: voiceover language is deliberately provocative)

USA Today article [“A chain of violence: Gang retaliation has made Wilmington an especially deadly place for teens”](#)

Video sneak peek for *The Mask You Live in*: [The Men that Men Look Up To: Masculinity in Popular Culture](#) (Note: contains violent imagery)

Excerpt of scholarly article [“Violent Stories: Personal Narratives, Street Socialization, and the Negotiation of Street Culture Among Street-Oriented Youth”](#) by Timothy Lauger

**SEMINAR PREPARATION:** Create seven stations around the room, each equipped with several copies of one of the supplemental texts or with devices through which the students may engage the texts. Separate the class into seven groups and assign each group a starting station. Give them 15 to 20 minutes for each station during which they will read or view their text and complete an **Analysis/Synthesis Chart** (below and Google doc [HERE](#)). Consider displaying a countdown timer to help students manage their time. Below is a sample [Analysis/Synthesis Chart](#) to use or modify for your students.

TASKS	Source:
<b>SUMMARIZE:</b> Summarize the source in one to three sentences including its main idea.	
<b>OUTLINE:</b> Outline the key supporting points	
<b>CITE:</b> Cite the most compelling facts, statistics, testimony, or images in the source.	
<b>REACT:</b> Describe you reaction to the source: what was surprising? disturbing?	

provocative? What ideas can you relate to and which seem distant or unconvincing?	
<b>QUESTION:</b> What questions does this source elicit? Pose at least one question you have that springs from this source.	
<b>CONNECT:</b> Describe and cite connections to specific sections in <i>Long Way Down</i>	
<b>CONNECT:</b> How might you use this source to answer the core seminar question or another seminar question or the one that you generated?	

**SEMINAR PARTICIPATION:** Invite a student to begin the seminar by either asking one of his or her own questions, or by responding to one of the questions that connects directly to students’ experiences. Beginning and ending seminars with student experience helps students to understand the relevance and importance of the lesson. Students may wish to begin with their [spiral/digital notebook reflections](#) from the first day to warm up to the core question and the investigation of the supplemental texts. As students speak, use this [Socratic Seminar Standard List](#) to assess how students are progressing on RI.9-10.1-3 and RL.9-10.2.

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** At the conclusion of the seminar, ask students to complete a self-evaluation (found on page 9 of this [Socratic seminars](#) document) in which they reflect on how well they prepared for and participated in seminar. Ask them to make a goal for improvement in the next seminar. Also ask them to identify and celebrate someone in the class who made a significant contribution to the discussion or who took a successful risk in the discussion. Share these celebrations with the class if time allows or revisit when the class next meets and you discuss the seminar as a whole.

## SAMPLE LESSON 8

Prior to Lesson: Students should read William Stafford’s “Fifteen” (Google Doc [HERE](#)).

The aim of this lesson is for students to apply the skills developed throughout the earlier lessons by analyzing new material. Many of the lessons have focused on RL.9-10.1-3, how writers use details, techniques, and sequencing to develop themes/theme topics, characters/conflict, and convey literal and inferential meanings. This lesson will expand students’ ability by having them apply these skills.

### FIFTEEN (ONE TO TWO DAYS)

**MINI-LESSON:** Read “Fifteen” out loud to students as they follow along with their texts. Ask them to notice how Stafford creates structure with lineation and develops meaning, character, conflict, and theme through his use of repetition, language, caesura, enjambment, and line breaks. Have them write in their spiral/digital notebooks at least three parallels between the speaker in Stafford’s poem and Will in *Long Way Down*. Have students share their reflections in small groups or the whole class.

**WORKSHOP:** Break the class into small groups assigning each group a different stanza of the poem to examine. Have each group complete a **Stanza Analysis Chart** (below and Google Doc [HERE](#)) to examine how Stafford marries technique to meaning. They can do this in their spiral/digital notebooks in a four-column chart or you can share the **Stanza Analysis Chart** with them. The sections of the analysis chart are *Stanza Number*, *Summary/Paraphrase*, *Techniques and Examples*, and *Effects*. Encourage students to examine how the techniques within their focus stanza relate to the development of the poem as a whole. Below (and [here](#)) is a sample organizer for students to use in their analysis.

For example, an analysis of the third stanza may look like the following:

Stanza Number:	Summary/Paraphrase:	Techniques and Examples:	Effects:
Four	After contemplating a future of adventures with this motorcycle, I discovered the owner of the vehicle who was just coming back into consciousness after his accident in which he was thrown over the guard rail. I noticed that he seemed to be in shock from the accident, having lost blood, color, and consciousness, so I guided him back to his motorcycle. He caressed the bike, thanked me for my goodness, and rode aggressively away.	<p><b>Caesura:</b> “Thinking, back farther...””</p>	Stafford begins the fourth stanza with a participle followed by inverted syntax that delays the target noun for the modifier “thinking.” This deliberate pause and delay enacts the speaker’s own thinking process which is slow and just coming into focus as he begins to recognize the repercussions of the choice he was just contemplating. In effect, the earlier stanzas dramatize the actions, admirations, and imaginings of the speaker, but not his rational or ethical “thinking.” This stanza includes the seeds of such considerations.
		<p><b>Diction:</b> pattern of language connoting danger and transgression:                      “flipped over the rail”                      “blood on his hand, was pale”                      “roared”</p>	While readers understand in earlier stanzas that the speaker recounts an experience in which he came upon a recent vehicular accident, Stafford delays the images of the accident—its victim, cause, and consequences—until this stanza. Surprisingly, the earlier stanzas are completely devoid of the language of danger and transgression that populate this stanza. Stafford includes such language here to add to the speaker’s ethical calculations as he decides what moral choice he will make.
		<p>Breaking of the <b>refrain:</b> “I was fifteen”</p>	After reading the first three stanzas, readers expect to find the closing refrain “I was fifteen.” Its absence here is surprising and discomfiting. The reader’s expectation is not fulfilled creating added ambiguity. The earlier iterations move in tone from factual, to explanatory, to enthusiastic as if to capture the speaker’s growing awareness of his position on the cusp of manhood, about to enjoy the power and freedom of adulthood.

			The refrain's absence in this stanza seems sobering, like the effect of the caesura at its opening.
		<b>Irony:</b> "called me a good man"	While the owner of the motorcycle is clearly grateful for the speaker's help in regaining his vehicle, his expression "good man" is ironic for several reasons. Stafford clearly emphasizes the speaker's age of fifteen (he uses the word "fifteen" five times), so he is not yet a "man." Furthermore, he has just contemplating stealing the motorcycle and escaping the scene of the accident with no regard for the health or life of the victim. Such actions are not deemed morally "good." Additionally, while the speaker may be acting like a "good man," one who shows concern for others and respects property, the final line of the poem—"I stood there, fifteen"—enacts a sense of regret on the part of the speaker. He recognizes that although he did a "good" thing, something remains lacking in his life, a power, an escape, a transcendence whose evasion renders him static and isolated.
		<b>Possible Theme:</b> Illegal/Immoral choices can be enticing even though they are ethically wrong.	In this poem, the youth (fifteen) "indulged a forward feeling, a tremble" when he interacted with the motorcycle. The thought of stealing it enticed him. To tie this theme to the entire poem and relate it to <i>Long Way Down</i> , one could narrow the theme to say that Illegal/Immoral choices can be enticing to young people, even though they are ethically wrong. The effect is the same—the theme offers some insight into humanity.

Have students share their analyses with the rest of the class. Foster a discussion in which you explore how Stafford's language and form are instrumental in conveying a theme of the poem.

**REFLECTION/FORMATIVE ASSESSMENT:** As an exit ticket or formative assessment, have students read the poem "[Looking for Omar](#)" by E. Ethelbert Miller (Google Doc [HERE](#)) and answer the following prompt: In a well-crafted essay, detail how "Looking for Omar" is similar in theme to "Fifteen." Identity, cite, and explain at least two techniques that the poems have in common that support the development of the theme. You can use this assessment to determine mastery of RL.9-10.1-2 and/or include mastery of RL.9-10. 3 or 4, depending on techniques used by students. You may wish to share this [Summary Document](#) to help students understand assessment criteria. This [Summary Document](#) can be used as a cover page to shorten grading time and increase student ownership because it asks students to detail items in their writing .

## SHORTER LITERARY TEXTS FOR PAIRING

### Summer Apples by Cathryn Essinger

I planted an apple tree in memory  
of my mother, who is not gone,

but whose memory has become  
so transparent that she remembers

slicing apples with her grandmother  
(*yellow apples; blue bowl*) better than

the fruit that I hand her today. Still,  
she polishes the surface with her thumb,

holds it to the light and says with no

hesitation, *Oh, Yellow Transparent . . .*

*they're so fragile, you can almost see  
to the core.* She no longer remembers how

to roll the crust, sweeten the sauce, but  
her desire is clear—it is pie that she wants.

And so, I slice as close as I dare to the core—  
to that little cathedral to memory—where

the seeds remember everything they need  
to know to become yellow and transparent.

### Scrapple by Afaa Michael Weaver

It was cousin Alvin who stole the liquor,  
slipped down Aunt Mabie's steps on the ice,  
fresh from jail for some small crime.

Alvin liked to make us laugh while he took  
the liquor or other things we did not see,  
in Aunt Mabie's with her floors polished,  
wood she polished on her hands and knees  
until they were truth itself and slippery  
enough to trick you, Aunt Mabie who loved  
her Calvert Extra and loved the bright inside  
of family, the way we come connected in webs,  
born in clusters of promises, dotted  
with spots that mark our place in the karma  
of good times, good times in the long ribbon  
of being colored I learned when colored  
had just given way to Negro and Negro was  
leaving us because blackness chased it out  
of the house, made it slip on the ice, fall  
down and spill N-e-g-r-o all over the sidewalk  
until we were proud in a new avenue of pride,  
as thick as the scrapple on Saturday morning  
with King syrup, in the good times, between

the strikes and layoffs at the mills when work  
was too slack, and Pop sat around pretending  
not to worry, not to let the stream of sweat  
he wiped from his head be anything except  
the natural way of things, keeping his habits,  
the paper in his chair by the window, the radio  
with the Orioles, with Earl Weaver the screamer  
and Frank Robinson the gentle black man,  
keeping his habits, Mama keeping hers,  
the WSID gospel in the mornings, dusting  
the encyclopedias she got from the A&P,  
collecting the secrets of neighbors, holding  
marriages together, putting golden silence  
on children who took the wrong turns, broke  
the laws of getting up and getting down  
on your knees. These brittle things we call  
memories rise up, like the aroma of scrapple,  
beauty and ugliness, life's mix  
where the hard and painful things from folk  
who know no boundaries live beside  
the bright eyes that look into each other,  
searching their pupils for paths to prayer.

Looking for Omar by E. Ethelbert Miller

I'm in the school bathroom  
washing my hands without  
soap but I'm still washing my hands.

I turn the water off  
and look for a paper towel  
but paper towels have been gone  
since the first day of school  
and it's June now.

I start to leave the bathroom  
with my wet hands but then  
the big boys come in talking  
loud and cussing like they  
rap stars or have new sneakers.

I hear the one named Pinto  
talking about how someone  
should get Omar after school  
since he's the only Muslim they know.

Pinto talks with an accent  
like he's new in the neighborhood too.

I don't have to ask him  
what he's talking about  
since everybody is talking  
about the Towers and how they  
ain't there no more.

My momma said it's like  
a woman losing both  
breasts to cancer and my daddy

was talking at the dinner table  
about how senseless violence is  
and Mrs. Gardner next door lost  
two tall boys to drive-bys

Bullets flying into  
both boys heads  
making them crumble too.

Everybody around here is  
filled with fear and craziness  
and now Pinto and the big boys  
thinking about doing something bad.

I stare at my wet hands  
dripping water on my shoes  
and wonder if I should run  
and tell Omar or just run.

I feel like I'm trapped  
in the middle of one of those  
Bible stories but it ain't  
Sunday.

I hear my Momma's voice  
saying

*Boy, always remember to wash  
your hands but always remember  
you can't wash your hands from  
everything.*

Nashville, TN      10/12/01

### In Defense of “Moist” by Hanif Willis-Abdurreaqib

Sprawling river / peeling off the chest / a wet slap / endless summer / not quite drenched to the bone / yet still a burden / how it sits heavy on the tongue / after being spoken / leaving the mouth / a humid storm / becoming the definition of itself / inside you / heaviness in the prison of your body / I am trying to pull my shirt over my head / after a full court game / in June / and I am thinking of how everyone I love / was once taken from the inside of another person / *moist* with what carried them / into the world / isn't that worth the smallest praise / I am closing my eyes / as the shirt's cotton clings to my back / and I am thinking that all wetness must have teeth / especially the wetness that grows from within / and spills out / or / chews its way through the skin / and falls onto another's skin / the night Michael Jackson died / everyone black / in Ohio / danced in a basement / until the walls were *moist* / until it rained indoors / and we saw our heroes /resurrected in the reflection / of our own drowning / I say *moist* / and do not first think about two naked bodies / the sound their skin might make / when they awkwardly press into each other / underneath a hungry sun / in an apartment with a broken air conditioner / I say *moist* / and first think of / the eager and swallowing mud / the bullet that burrowed into Sean's chest / on Livingston Ave / the country of dark red / that grew across his white tee / while his mother held / his paling face / I say *moist* / as in / *my homie's blood left the corner of my block moist* / or / *his mama had her hands moist with what once kept her baby alive* / or / *my eyes were moist when I heard the o.g. say / "someone gonna die every day"* / and then he wiped blood off of his shoe / and it felt like summer for ten years

### On Revenge by Frances Bacon

REVENGE is a kind of wild justice; which the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For as for the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong pulleth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is superior; for it is a prince's part to pardon. And Salomon, I am sure, saith, *It is the glory of a man to pass by an offence.*

That which is past is gone, and irrevocable; and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come: therefore they do but trifle with themselves, that labour in past matters.

There is no man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake; but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honour, or the like. There why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong merely out of ill nature, why, yet it is but like the thorn or briar, which prick and scratch, because they can do no other.

The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law or remedy; but then let a man take heed the revenge be such as there is no law to punish; else a man's enemy is still beforehand, and it is two for one.

Some, when they take revenge, are desirous the party should know whence it cometh: this is the more generous. For the delight seemeth to be not so much in doing the hurt as in making the party repent: but base and crafty cowards are like the arrow that flieth in the dark.

Cosmus, Duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable: *You shall read* (saith he) *that we are commanded to forgive our friends.* But yet the spirit of Job was in a better tune: *Shall we* (saith he) *take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also?* And so of friends in a proportion.

This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well.

Public revenges are for the most part fortunate; as that for the death of Caesar; for the death of Pertinax (1); for the death of Henry the Third of France (2); and many more. But in private revenges it is not so. Nay rather, vindictive persons live the life of witches; who as they are mischievous, so end they unfortunate.

(1) Publius Helvius Pertinax became emperor of Rome in 193 and was assassinated three months after his accession to the throne by a soldier in his praetorian Guard.

(2) King of France, 1574-1589, assassinated during the Siege of Paris.



Excerpt from Hamlet: Act 3:3

Now might I do it pat. Now he is a-praying.  
And now I'll do 't. And so he goes to heaven.  
And so am I revenged.—That would be scanned.  
A villain kills my father, and, for that,  
I, his sole son, do this same villain send  
To heaven.  
Oh, this is hire and salary, not revenge.  
He took my father grossly, full of bread,  
With all his crimes broad blown, as flush as May.  
And how his audit stands who knows save heaven?  
But in our circumstance and course of thought  
'Tis heavy with him. And am I then revenged  
To take him in the purging of his soul  
When he is fit and seasoned for his passage?  
No.  
Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid hent.  
When he is drunk asleep, or in his rage,  
Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed,  
At game a-swearing, or about some act  
That has no relish of salvation in 't—  
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heaven,  
And that his soul may be as damned and black  
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays  
This physic but prolongs thy sickly days.

"Fifteen" by William Stafford

South of the bridge on Seventeenth  
I found back of the willows one summer  
day a motorcycle with engine running  
as it lay on its side, ticking over  
slowly in the high grass. I was fifteen.

I admired all that pulsing gleam, the  
shiny flanks, the demure headlights  
fringed where it lay; I led it gently  
to the road, and stood with that  
companion, ready and friendly. I was fifteen.

We could find the end of a road, meet  
the sky on out Seventeenth. I thought about  
hills, and patting the handle got back a  
confident opinion. On the bridge we indulged  
a forward feeling, a tremble. I was fifteen.

Thinking, back farther in the grass I found  
the owner, just coming to, where he had flipped  
over the rail. He had blood on his hand, was pale—  
I helped him walk to his machine. He ran his hand  
over it, called me good man, roared away.

I stood there, fifteen.

Peter Heller's "Apples," Donald Hall's "White Apples," Rainer Maria Rilke's "The Apple Orchard," Grace Shulman's "Apples," George Bradley's "August in the Apple Orchard," Robert Frost's "After Apple Picking," and John Bradley's "Chernobyl Apples."

## INFORMATIONAL TEXTS FOR PAIRING

[“Does reading fiction make you a better person” from \*The Washington Post\*](#)

[“The Long, Steady Decline of Literary Reading” from \*The Washington Post\*](#)

[“The Code of the Streets” from \*The Atlantic\*](#)

[“Endless fascination: in praise of novels without neat conclusions” by Lee Rourke from \*The Guardian\*](#)

[CBS This Morning story “Inside the Gun Violence Epidemic on Chicago’s South Side”](#)

[USA Today article “A chain of violence: Gang retaliation has made Wilmington an especially deadly place for teens”](#)

[“Tyshawn on swing when gangbangers out for revenge targeted him: prosecutors” from the \*Chicago Tribune\*](#)

[“Tyshawn Lee’s killing the fourth in recent feud between gang factions” from the \*Chicago Tribune\*](#)

[“Violent Stories: Personal Narratives, Street Socialization, and the Negotiation of Street Culture Among Street-Oriented Youth” by Timothy Lauger \(excerpt\)](#)

## MEDIA/VISUAL TEXTS FOR PAIRING

[Daily Show with Trevor Noah interview with Jason Reynolds](#)

[CBS This Morning Gail King Interview with Jason Reynolds](#)

[CBS This Morning: Gail King interview with Jason Reynolds \(extended Green Room conversation\)](#)

[Audio recording of Jason Reynolds reading opening excerpt from \*Long Way Down\* \(with illustrations by Chris Priestly\)](#)

[Code of the Street YouTube documentary](#)

[Video trailer for the film \*The Mask You Live In\*](#)

[Video sneak peak for \*The Mask You Live in: The Men that Men Look Up To: Masculinity in Popular Culture\*](#)

[Podcast 74 Seconds about the death of Philando Castile and the trial of Jeronimo Janez](#)

[Link to cover image of \*Long Way Down\*](#)

# OHIO'S LEARNING STANDARDS-CLEAR LEARNING TARGETS

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS-READING LITERATURE, GRADES 9-10

<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; display: inline-block; margin-bottom: 10px;"> <b>RL.9-10.1</b> </div> <p>CITE STRONG AND THOROUGH TEXTUAL EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ANALYSIS OF WHAT THE TEXT SAYS EXPLICITLY AS WELL AS INFERENCES DRAWN FROM THE TEXT.</p>		<p><b><u>Essential Understanding</u></b>          -Reading comprehension          -Draw inferences          -Cite specific textual evidence to support inferences and text meaning          -Analyze the text          -Evaluate evidence          -MLA formatting for in-text citations and works cited pages</p>	<p><b><u>Academic Vocabulary/Language</u></b>          -analyze/analysis          -cite          -drawn          -explicit          -evaluate          -inference          -MLA Formatting          -textual evidence</p>
<p>CCR ANCHOR: READ CLOSELY TO DETERMINE WHAT THE TEXT SAYS EXPLICITLY AND TO MAKE LOGICAL INFERENCES FROM IT, CITE SPECIFIC TEXTUAL EVIDENCE WHEN WRITING OR SPEAKING TO SUPPORT CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE TEXT.</p>		<p><b><u>*Extended Understanding</u></b>          -Determine where text leaves matters uncertain</p>	
<p><b>ULTIMATE LEARNING TARGET TYPE: REASONING</b></p>	<p><b><u>BROAD LEARNING TARGET:</u></b>          The student can cite textual evidence that strongly and thoroughly supports an analysis of what the text says and inferences it makes.</p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:</u></b>          The student can recognize textual evidence and inferences.</p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:</u></b>          The student can analyze text to cite textual evidence that is explicitly stated.          The student can analyze text to cite textual evidence that is inferred.          The student can evaluate the strength of textual evidence.          The student can evaluate the thoroughness of textual evidence.</p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Product Learning Targets:</u></b>          The student can use correct MLA format for in-text citations and works cited pages.</p>		
<p><b>CCS ELA 6-12 PAGE:</b>  <a href="https://tinyurl.com/CCSEnglish6-12">https://tinyurl.com/CCSEnglish6-12</a>          (CAREER CONNECTIONS)</p>			

# OHIO'S LEARNING STANDARDS-CLEAR LEARNING TARGETS

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS-READING LITERATURE, GRADES 9-10

**RL.9-10.2**

**ANALYZE LITERARY TEXT DEVELOPMENT.**

A. DETERMINE A THEME OF A TEXT AND ANALYZE IN DETAIL ITS DEVELOPMENT OVER THE COURSE OF THE TEXT, INCLUDING HOW IT EMERGES AND IS SHAPED AND REFINED BY SPECIFIC DETAILS.  
 B. PROVIDE AN OBJECTIVE SUMMARY OF THE TEXT THAT INCLUDES THE THEME AND RELEVANT STORY ELEMENTS.

CCR ANCHOR: DETERMINE CENTRAL IDEAS OR THEMES OF A TEXT AND ANALYZE THEIR DEVELOPMENT; SUMMARIZE THE KEY SUPPORTING DETAILS AND IDEAS.

**Essential Understanding**

- Recognize and understand theme
- Analyze theme development
- Recognize refinement and shaping of theme
- Analyze relationship of literary/story elements and details to theme development
- Objectively summarize the text
- Summarize a theme of a text using relevant story elements

**\*Extended Understanding**

- Relational analysis of two or more themes

**Academic**

**Vocabulary/Language**

- analyze
- central idea
- determine
- development
- emerge
- literary/story elements (e.g., conflict, characterization, plot, tone, etc.)
- objective
- refine
- summarize/summary
- theme

**ULTIMATE LEARNING TARGET TYPE: REASONING**

**BROAD LEARNING TARGETS:**

- The student can analyze literary text development.
- The student can determine the theme of a text and analyze its development, showing how it emerges and is shaped and refined by details.
- The student can objectively summarize a text.
- The student can include theme and story elements in a summary of theme.

**Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:**

- The student can define, understand, and recognize theme and summary.
- The student can follow the development of theme in a text.
- The student can recognize refinement and shaping of theme in a text.

**Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:**

- The student can analyze how a theme emerges in a text.
- The student can distinguish between textual facts and opinions.

**CCS ELA 6-12 PAGE:**

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 (CAREER CONNECTIONS)

# OHIO'S LEARNING STANDARDS-CLEAR LEARNING TARGETS

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS-READING LITERATURE, GRADES 9-10

**RL.9-10.3**

**ANALYZE HOW COMPLEX CHARACTERS (E.G., THOSE WITH MULTIPLE OR CONFLICTING**

**MOTIVATIONS) DEVELOP OVER THE COURSE OF A TEXT, INTERACT WITH OTHER CHARACTERS, AND ADVANCE THE PLOT OR DEVELOP THE THEME.**

CCR ANCHOR: ANALYZE HOW AND WHY INDIVIDUALS, EVENTS, AND IDEAS DEVELOP AND INTERACT OVER THE COURSE OF A TEXT.

**Essential Understanding**

- Understand and identify characterization (direct and indirect) in a text
- Analyze how conflicting or multiple motivations reveal character, affect character development, and influence relationships in a text
- Analyze how complex characters advance the plot line or theme in a text

**\*Extended Understanding**

- Analyze rhetorical strategies used by characters in a text

**Academic Vocabulary/Language**

- analyze
- character
- characterization
- complex character
- develop
- interact
- motivation
- plot
- propel
- theme

**ULTIMATE LEARNING TARGET TYPE: REASONING**

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**BROAD LEARNING TARGETS:**

The students can analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text to advance plot or develop theme.

The students can analyze how the interactions of a complex character with other characters advance plot or develop theme.

**Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:**

The student can understand and identify direct and indirect characterization.

The student can identify complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations).

**Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:**

The student can analyze how conflicting or multiple motivations reveal character, affect character development, and influence relationships in a text.

**RL.9-10.4**

DETERMINE THE MEANING OF WORDS AND PHRASES AS THEY ARE USED IN THE TEXT, INCLUDING FIGURATIVE AND CONNOTATIVE MEANINGS; ANALYZE THE CUMULATIVE IMPACT OF SPECIFIC WORD CHOICES ON MEANING, MOOD, AND TONE (E.G., HOW THE LANGUAGE EVOKES A SENSE OF TIME AND PLACE; HOW IT SETS A FORMAL OR INFORMAL TONE).

CCR ANCHOR: INTERPRET WORDS AND PHRASES AS THEY ARE USED IN A TEXT, INCLUDING DETERMINING TECHNICAL, CONNOTATIVE, AND FIGURATIVE MEANINGS, AND ANALYZE HOW SPECIFIC WORD CHOICES SHAPE MEANING OR TONE.

**Essential Understanding**

-Interpret words and phrases  
 -Determine figurative and connotative word meanings in a text  
 -Analyze how diction impacts meaning and tone  
 -Distinguish between formal and informal tone

**\*Extended****Understanding**

-Identify and understand elements of language/rhetoric

**Academic****Vocabulary/Language**

-analyze  
 -connotation/denotation  
 -cumulative  
 -diction  
 -evoke  
 -figurative language  
 (See your adopted textbook's glossary for grade-level appropriate figurative language devices or <https://literarydevices.net/figurative-language/>.)  
 -mood  
 -phrases  
 -tone

**ULTIMATE LEARNING  
 TARGET TYPE:  
 REASONING**

**BROAD LEARNING TARGETS:**

**The student can determine the figurative, literal, and connotative meaning of words and phrases based on how they are used in a text.**

**The student can analyze the cumulative impact of diction on meaning, mood, and tone.**

**Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:**

The student can identify words and phrases that have connotative and figurative meaning used in a text.

The student can recognize several instances of similar word choices in a text.

**Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:**

The student can determine, interpret, clarify, or verify the figurative, literal, and connotative meanings of words and phrases by using context clues, applying knowledge of Greek/Latin affixes and roots, making cultural and literary connections, and/or consulting reference materials.

The student can determine the tone (formal, informal, positive, neutral, negative, etc.) and mood in a text, and interpret the relationship between diction and tone, mood, or meaning.

# OHIO'S LEARNING STANDARDS-CLEAR LEARNING TARGETS

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS-READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT, GRADES 9-10

<div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">RI.9-10.1</h3> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">CITE STRONG AND THOROUGH TEXTUAL EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ANALYSIS OF WHAT THE TEXT SAYS EXPLICITLY AS WELL AS INFERENCES DRAWN FROM THE TEXT.</p>	<p><b><u>Essential Understanding</u></b>            -Reading comprehension            -Draw inferences            -Cite specific textual evidence to support inferences and text meaning            -Analyze the text            -Evaluate evidence            -MLA formatting for in-text citations and works cited pages</p>	<p><b><u>Academic Vocabulary/Language</u></b>            -analyze/analysis            -cite            -drawn            -explicit            -evaluate            -inference            -MLA Formatting            -textual evidence</p>
<p>CCR ANCHOR: READ CLOSELY TO DETERMINE WHAT THE TEXT SAYS EXPLICITLY AND TO MAKE LOGICAL INFERENCES FROM IT, CITE SPECIFIC TEXTUAL EVIDENCE WHEN WRITING OR SPEAKING TO SUPPORT CONCLUSIONS DRAWN FROM THE TEXT.</p>		<p><b><u>*Extended Understanding</u></b>            -Determine where text leaves matters uncertain</p>	
<p><b>ULTIMATE LEARNING TARGET TYPE: REASONING</b></p>	<p><b><u>BROAD LEARNING TARGET:</u></b>            The student can cite textual evidence that strongly and thoroughly supports an analysis of what the text says and inferences it makes.</p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:</u></b>            The student can recognize textual evidence and inferences.</p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:</u></b>            The student can analyze text to cite textual evidence that is explicitly stated.            The student can analyze text to cite textual evidence that is inferred.            The student can evaluate the strength of textual evidence.            The student can evaluate the thoroughness of textual evidence.</p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Product Learning Targets:</u></b>            The student can use correct MLA format for in-text citations and works cited pages.</p>		
<p><b>CCS ELA 6-12 PAGE:</b>  <a href="https://tinyurl.com/CCSEnglish6-12">https://tinyurl.com/CCSEnglish6-12</a>            (CAREER CONNECTIONS)</p>			

# OHIO'S LEARNING STANDARDS-CLEAR LEARNING TARGETS

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS-READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT, GRADES 9-10

<div style="border: 2px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">RI.9-10.2</h3> </div>	<p><b>ANALYZE INFORMATIONAL TEXT DEVELOPMENT.</b></p> <p>A. 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.</p> <p>B. PROVIDE AN OBJECTIVE SUMMARY OF THE TEXT THAT INCLUDES THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CENTRAL IDEA AND HOW DETAILS IMPACT THIS IDEA.</p>	<p><b><u>Essential Understanding</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Recognize and understand central idea</li> <li>-Analyze central idea development</li> <li>-Recognize refinement and shaping of central idea</li> <li>-Analyze relationship of details to central idea development</li> <li>-Objectively summarize the text</li> </ul> <p><b><u>*Extended Understanding</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Relational analysis of two or more central ideas</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Academic Vocabulary/Language</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-analyze</li> <li>-central idea</li> <li>-determine</li> <li>-development</li> <li>-emerge</li> <li>-objective</li> <li>-refine</li> <li>-summarize/summary</li> </ul>
<p>CCR ANCHOR: DETERMINE CENTRAL IDEAS OR THEMES OF A TEXT AND ANALYZE THEIR DEVELOPMENT; SUMMARIZE THE KEY SUPPORTING DETAILS AND IDEAS.</p>			

<p><b>ULTIMATE LEARNING TARGET TYPE: REASONING</b></p>	<p><b><u>BROAD LEARNING TARGETS:</u></b></p> <p>The student can analyze informational text.</p> <p>The student can determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development, showing how it emerges and is shaped and refined by details.</p> <p>The student can objectively summarize a text, including the development of the central idea and how details impact this idea.</p>
<p><b>CCS ELA 6-12 PAGE:</b></p> <p><a href="https://tinyurl.com/CCSEnglish6-12">https://tinyurl.com/CCSEnglish6-12</a></p> <p><b>(CAREER CONNECTIONS)</b></p>	<p><b><u>Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:</u></b></p> <p>The student can define, understand, and recognize central idea and summary.</p> <p>The student can follow the development of central ideas in a text.</p> <p>The student can recognize refinement and shaping of central ideas in a text.</p> <p><b><u>Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:</u></b></p> <p>The student can analyze how a central idea emerges in a text.</p> <p>The student can distinguish between textual facts and opinions.</p>



# OHIO'S LEARNING STANDARDS-CLEAR LEARNING TARGETS

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS-READING INFORMATIONAL TEXT, GRADES 9-10

<div style="border: 2px solid #8B4513; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; display: inline-block;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">RI.9-10.3</h3> </div>	<p style="text-align: center;">ANALYZE HOW THE AUTHOR UNFOLDS AN ANALYSIS OR SERIES OF IDEAS OR EVENTS, INCLUDING THE ORDER IN WHICH THE POINTS ARE MADE, HOW THEY ARE INTRODUCED AND DEVELOPED, AND THE CONNECTIONS THAT ARE DRAWN BETWEEN THEM.</p>	<p><b><u>Essential Understanding</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Identify the order in which points are made in an informational text</li> <li>-Identify and analyze how points are introduced and developed in an informational text</li> <li>-Identify and analyze connections between points made in an informational text</li> <li>-Analyze how an author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas/events in an informational text</li> </ul> <p><b><u>*Extended Understanding</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Analyze why an author orders points and develops them in a chosen manner</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Academic Vocabulary/Language</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-analysis</li> <li>-analyze</li> <li>-connections</li> <li>-develop</li> <li>-drawn</li> <li>-event</li> <li>-introduce</li> <li>-series of ideas/events</li> <li>-unfolds</li> </ul>
<p>CCR ANCHOR: ANALYZE HOW AND WHY INDIVIDUALS, EVENTS, AND IDEAS DEVELOP AND INTERACT OVER THE COURSE OF A TEXT.</p>			

<p><b>ULTIMATE LEARNING TARGET TYPE: REASONING</b></p>	<p><b><u>BROAD LEARNING TARGETS:</u></b></p> <p><b>The student can analyze how an author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas/events in an informational text, including the order in which points are made, how points are introduced and developed, and the connections drawn between points in an informational text.</b></p>
<p><b>CCS ELA 6-12 PAGE:</b>  <a href="https://tinyurl.com/CCSEnglish6-12">https://tinyurl.com/CCSEnglish6-12</a>          (CAREER CONNECTIONS)</p>	<p><b><u>Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:</u></b></p> <p><b>The student can identify the order in which points are made, when ideas/events are introduced and developed, in an informational text.</b></p> <p><b>The student can identify where connections are drawn between points made in an informational text.</b></p>

# OHIO'S LEARNING STANDARDS-CLEAR LEARNING TARGETS

## ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS-WRITING, GRADES 9-10

W.9-10.3

WRITE NARRATIVES  
TO DEVELOP REAL  
OR IMAGINED

EXPERIENCES OR EVENTS USING  
EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUE, WELL-  
CHOSEN DETAILS, AND WELL-  
STRUCTURED EVENT SEQUENCES.

CCR ANCHOR: WRITE NARRATIVES TO DEVELOP REAL OR IMAGINED EXPERIENCES OR EVENTS USING EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUE, WELL-CHOSEN DETAILS, AND WELL-STRUCTURED EVENT SEQUENCES.

### Essential Components

#### W.9-10.3.a-e

- a. Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters; create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- b. Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, and multiple plot lines, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.
- c. Use a variety of techniques to sequence events so that they build on one another to create a coherent whole.
- d. Use precise words and phrases, telling details, and sensory language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.
- e. Provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on what is experienced, observed, or resolved over the course of the narrative.

### \*Extended Understanding

- Extend a short narrative into a novella or novel

### Academic

#### Vocabulary/Language

- analyze
- characters/characterization
- clauses      -coherent
- convey      -detail
- develop      -elaborate
- elements of plot (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, denouement, resolution, conflict, protagonist/antagonist, etc.)
- elements of prose (diction, syntax, imagery, figurative language, style, theme, tone, etc.)
- engage      -establish      -event
- illustrate      -interact      -narrative
- narrative techniques (dialogue, pacing, description, flashback, foreshadow, framing device, multiple plot lines, reflection, shift, time frame, point of view, etc.)
- narrator      -orient
- phrases      -point of view
- precise      -progression
- reflection      -relevant
- sensory language
- sequence      -setting
- signal      -unfold      -vivid

ULTIMATE LEARNING  
TARGET TYPE: PRODUCT

CCS ELA 6-12 PAGE:

<https://tinyurl.com/CCSEnglish6-12>

(CAREER CONNECTIONS)

#### BROAD LEARNING TARGET:

The student can write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

#### Underpinning Knowledge Learning Targets:

The student can define, identify, and use elements of prose (style, theme, tone . . .), elements of plot (conflict, climax, protagonist . . .), and narrative techniques (dialogue, pacing, description, reflection, multiple plot lines, . . .) to develop experiences, events, and characters.

The student can define, identify, and use a variety of transitional words, phrases, and clauses to connect sequences of events, shifts in time, changes in settings, and relationships among experiences and events.

The student can define, identify, and use precise, grade-level appropriate vocabulary, sensory language, and figurative language to convey a vivid picture of the experiences, events, setting, and/or characters.

#### Underpinning Reasoning Learning Targets:

The student can engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation, establishing one or multiple point(s) of view, introducing a narrator and/or characters, and creating a smooth progression of experiences or events.

The student can provide a conclusion that follows from and reflects on the narrated experiences or events.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Teacher Resource was created during the summer of 2018 as part of an initiative to increase textual choice for teaching Ohio’s Learning Standards. It is part of a series of Teacher Resources for the following newly adopted supplemental literature. Note: Please adhere to the grade level chosen for each title to avoid textual overlap for our students.

### Grade Six

*A Midsummer Night’s Dream* by William Shakespeare  
(No Fear Shakespeare Edition)

*Hello, Universe* by Erin Kelly

### Grade Seven

*The Crossover* by Kwame Alexander

### Grade Eight

*The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare  
(No Fear Shakespeare Edition)

### Grade Nine

*Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson

### Grade Ten

*Othello* by William Shakespeare  
(No Fear Shakespeare Edition)

*Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds

### Grade Eleven

*The Help* by Kathryn Stockett

### Grade Twelve

*Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare  
(No Fear Shakespeare Edition)

## TEACHER RESOURCE WRITERS

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## Supplemental Resources for *Long Way Down*

NOTE: The lessons included in these supplemental resources may not be aligned to Ohio’s Learning Standards or the Common Core. Please make choices about using any of the lessons and ideas included here based upon how they can help students meet and exceed learning targets.

[Simon & Schuster’s Reading Group Guide for \*Long Way Down\*](#)

[TeachingBooks site for \*Long Way Down\*](#)

[Scholastic lesson on Teaching Poetry Through Rap](#)

[Yale Teachers Institute lesson: “The Beats in Poetry and the Poetics in Rap: Learning the Elements of Poetry through Rap Lyrics and Applying Those Learned Elements to Poetry”](#)