

10.2.2

Lesson 8

Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze paragraphs 23–26 of “A Genetics of Justice” (from “She had named me, her second of four daughters” to “If looks could kill”), in which Alvarez describes her relationship with her mother. Students explore how Alvarez unfolds and connects her ideas and then analyze how she uses specific details to shape and refine central ideas. Student learning culminates in a Quick Write on the following prompt: How do the connections Alvarez draws in paragraphs 23–26 further shape and refine a central idea? For homework, students continue their Accountable Independent Reading.

Standards

Assessed Standard(s)	
RI.9-10.2	Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
RI.9-10.3	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.
Addressed Standard(s)	
None.	

Assessment

Assessment(s)
<p>Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do the connections Alvarez draws in paragraphs 23–26 further shape and refine a central idea?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify one or more connections Alvarez draws in paragraphs 23–26 (e.g., Alvarez draws connections between the way her mother “found ways of controlling [her]” (par. 24) and the way Trujillo controlled people of the Dominican Republic).
- Identify a central idea related to the connections in paragraphs 23–26 (e.g., the central idea of silence versus voice is developed through the connection between Alvarez’s mother and Trujillo).
- Explain how the connections in paragraphs 23–26 refine a central idea (e.g., the way Alvarez’s mother and Trujillo both use threats and fear to prevent people from speaking the truth develops the central idea of silence versus voice).

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- adolescence (n.) – the period in human development that occurs between the beginning of puberty and adulthood
- outlandish (adj.) – freakishly or grotesquely strange or odd, as appearance, dress, objects, ideas, or practices
- disown (v.) – to deny the ownership of or responsibility for

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

- None.

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda	% of Lesson
<p>Standards & Text:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards: RI.9-10.2, RI.9-10.3 • Text: “A Genetics of Justice” by Julia Alvarez, paragraphs 23–26 <p>Learning Sequence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda 2. Homework Accountability 3. Masterful Reading 4. Reading and Discussion 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 5% 2. 10% 3. 10% 4. 55%

5. Quick Write	5. 15%
6. Closing	6. 5%

Materials

- Student copies of the Central Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 10.2.1 Lesson 5)—Students may need blank copies of the tool if they have run out of space on their original tool.
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer 10.2.1 Lesson 1)

Learning Sequence

How to Use the Learning Sequence	
Symbol	Type of Text & Interpretation of the Symbol
10%	Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.
no symbol	Plain text indicates teacher action.
	Bold text indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.
	<i>Italicized text indicates a vocabulary word.</i>
▶	Indicates student action(s).
☞	Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.
ⓘ	Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.

Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda

5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and assessed standards for this lesson: RI.9-10.2 and RI.9-10.3. In this lesson, students analyze how Alvarez unfolds ideas and draws connections between them. Students also analyze how Alvarez refines the essay's central ideas.

- ▶ Students look at the agenda.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability

10%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied their focus standard to their text. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson's AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text.

- ▶ Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied their focus standard to their AIR text from the previous lesson's homework.

Instruct students to form new pairs and exchange their responses to the 10.2.2 Lesson 7 homework prompt (Analyze how Alvarez develops her description of her mother in relation to Trujillo in paragraphs 1–22.).

🗨️ Student responses may include:

- As a girl, Alvarez’s mother was “kept . . . out of the public eye,” so she wouldn’t catch Trujillo’s eye and be a victim of his “appetite for pretty girls” (par. 2).
- Alvarez’s grandparents “were afraid to say anything—even to their own children—against the regime” (par. 3), so Alvarez’s mother knew little of Trujillo’s true character.
- She thought of Trujillo “as a kind of movie star” (par. 3) and in her daydreams, “her great love wore the handsome young dictator’s face” (par. 4).
- By the time Alvarez’s mother married Alvarez’s father, she “knew all about the true nature of the dictatorship” (par. 5). Family friends had disappeared and she knew that Trujillo had killed thousands of people.
- Alvarez’s mother was “doubly revolted” by Trujillo and thought of him as a “cold-blooded monster” (par. 6).
- Trujillo even became “something of an obsession” to Alvarez’s mother. She used him as a boogeyman in “cautionary tales” to Alvarez and her sisters.
- Alvarez’s mother suffered in the parade for Trujillo, marching “for hours in the hot sun” until she felt like “she was going to faint” and her “feet were swollen and hurting” (par. 12).
- The parade increased Alvarez’s mother’s obsession with Trujillo. Even after she left the Dominican Republic, she still lived with “the habits of repression, censorship, terror” (par. 17).
- Trujillo so affected Alvarez’s mother that she enforced on her daughters the same “mandate of silence” (par. 22) that Trujillo had enforced in the Dominican Republic.

Activity 3: Masterful Reading

10%

Have students listen to a Masterful Reading of paragraphs 23–26 from “A Genetics of Justice,” (from “She had named me, her second of four daughters” to “If looks could kill”). Ask students to listen for details that develop the central ideas in the story.

- ▶ Students follow along, reading silently.

Activity 4: Reading and Discussion

55%

Explain to students that, throughout the discussion, they stop and take notes about what has been discussed in preparation for the Quick Write assessment. Instruct students to take notes in their notebooks or add to their text annotation.

- ▶ Students listen.

Provide students with the following definition: *adolescence* means “the period in human development that occurs between the beginning of puberty and adulthood.”

- ▶ Students write the definition of *adolescence* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Instruct students to form pairs. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss.

Instruct student pairs to reread paragraph 23 (from “She had named me, her second of four daughters” to “but adolescence was a full-fledged war”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

What ideas about herself does Alvarez reveal in paragraph 23?

- 🗨 Student responses may include:
 - Alvarez reveals that she talked a lot: “I would not shut up.”
 - She frequently disagreed and argued with her mother: “I always had to answer her back when I disagreed with her.”
 - Her relationship with her mother was strained: “Childhood was rocky, but adolescence was a full-fledged war.”
 - She also reveals that she shares the same name with her mother.

What words does Alvarez use to describe her relationship with her mother? How does the word choice develop Alvarez’s relationship with her mother?

- 🗨 Alvarez describes the relationship as “rocky” and “a full-fledged war” (par. 23). These word choices develop the reader’s understanding of the conflict that defines the relationship.

How is Alvarez different from her mother? Cite specific examples from paragraph 23 and earlier in the essay to support your analysis.

- 🗨 Alvarez does “not shut up.” She also feels the need to answer back when she disagrees with her mother. In contrast, her mother is “afraid of awful consequences if [she speaks] out or disagree[s] with authorities” (par. 18).

How does the contrast between Alvarez and her mother develop one of the essay’s central ideas?

- 🗨 The contrast between Alvarez and her mother develops the central idea of silence. When Alvarez says she was “the best behaved [child] until [she] learned to talk” (par. 23), she reinforces that authority figures in her life often prefer when people are silent.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses. Distribute or ask students to take out their Central Ideas Tracking Tool and record how central ideas are developed in paragraph 23.

Provide students with the following definitions: *outlandish* means “freakishly or grotesquely strange or odd, as appearance, dress, objects, ideas, or practices” and *disown* means “to deny the ownership of or responsibility for.”

- ▶ Students write the definitions of *outlandish* and *disown* on their copy of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

Instruct student pairs to read paragraphs 24–26 (from “Still, my mother found ways of controlling me” to “If looks could kill”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Why did the Trujillo “cautionary tales” work only “momentarily”?

- ☞ The cautionary tales worked only momentarily because Alvarez loved hearing the stories that were supposed to serve as warnings.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with this question, consider asking them to revisit the “cautionary tales” Alvarez relates in paragraphs 7 and 8. Then ask the following question:

According to paragraphs 7–8, why does Alvarez’s mother tell “cautionary tales”?

- ☞ She tells the cautionary tales when the girls “misbehaved” (par. 7) or “cared too much about our appearance” (par. 8) to get them to see Trujillo’s bad example and behave better.

Where did Alvarez’s mother learn her definition of disrespect? How does Alvarez’s mother’s definition of “disrespect” develop the central idea of silence?

- ☞ Alvarez’s mother learned her severe, strict definition of “disrespect” from the dictatorship. This definition of disrespect as “anything short of worship” (par. 24) develops the central idea of silence by revealing that “saying the truth” (par. 25) about family members is forbidden.
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students struggle with the question above, consider asking the following scaffolding question:

How does Alvarez say her mother defines “disrespect”?

- ☞ Alvarez says her mother defines disrespect as “anything short of worship” (par. 24).

How does Alvarez develop the contrast between herself and her mother in paragraphs 24–26?

- ☞ Alvarez reveals that she is concerned about “just saying the truth” (par. 25), but her mother is concerned about enforcing silence and respect for authority. For example, when Eleanor Roosevelt’s grandson calls Roosevelt a “plain woman” (par. 25) Alvarez’s mother says “Truth! What about honoring his grandmother?” (par. 26).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Consider suggesting students refine the central idea of “silence” to “silence versus voice.” Define the term “voice” as “the relationship between self-expression and power.” Then, discuss the following questions as a class:

How does the contrast in paragraphs 24–26 refine one of the essay’s central ideas?

- The different reactions to Roosevelt’s grandson’s biography develop the idea of silence versus voice. Alvarez’s mother promotes silence when she says the grandson “should be ashamed of himself . . . for calling his grandmother a plain woman” (par. 24). Alvarez, on the other hand, believes the grandson can say whatever he wants because he is “just saying the truth” (par. 25).

What connections does Alvarez draw between her mother and Trujillo? Consider evidence about Alvarez’s mother in comparison to descriptions of Trujillo earlier in the essay.

- Even though Alvarez’s mother despises Trujillo, she mirrors some of his behaviors in the tactics she uses to control Alvarez. For example, Alvarez’s mother threatens to “disown” her for being “disrespectful” (par. 24). Similarly, Trujillo uses threats and fear so “parents were afraid to say anything—even to their own children” (par. 3).
- ① **Differentiation Consideration:** If students need additional support to identify the connections between Alvarez’s mother and Trujillo, consider asking the following questions.

What methods does Trujillo use to control people (paragraphs 3–5)?

- Student responses may include:
 - Trujillo uses fear to control people: “[P]arents were afraid to say anything—even to their own children” (par. 3).
 - Trujillo reminds people he is in charge. All houses hang the declaration “In this house Trujillo is chief” (par. 4).
 - Trujillo creates fear because he kills or imprisons people who challenge him: “Family friends . . . turned out to have been disappeared” (par. 5).

How did Alvarez’s mother control Alvarez (paragraphs 24–26)?

- Student responses may include:
 - Alvarez’s mother tells “Trujillo cautionary tales” (par. 24) to warn Alvarez.
 - Alvarez’s mother uses “threats to disown” Alvarez for showing “anything less than worship” (par. 24).

- Alvarez’s mother tries to use fear to influence Alvarez: “My mother’s eyes had that look she saw in my eyes when she said ‘If looks could kill’” (par. 26).

Ask students to use their Central Ideas Tracking Tools to record how central ideas have developed in paragraphs 24–26.

Activity 5: Quick Write

15%

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

How do the connections Alvarez draws in paragraphs 23–26 further shape and refine a central idea?

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

- ① Display the prompt for students to see, or provide the prompt in hard copy.
 - ▶ Students independently answer the prompt, using evidence from the text.
 - ▶ See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

Activity 6: Closing

5%

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to continue reading their AIR text through the lens of a focus standard of their choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their text based on that standard.

- ▶ Students follow along.

Homework

Continue reading your AIR text through the lens of a focus standard of your choice and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.

Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

Name:		Class:		Date:	
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Directions: Identify the central ideas that you encounter throughout the text. Trace the development of those ideas by noting how the author introduces, develops, or refines these ideas in the texts. Cite textual evidence to support your work.

Text:	“A Genetics of Justice”
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Paragraph #	Central Ideas	Notes and Connections
Alvarez 23	Silence	The contrast between Alvarez and her mother develops the central idea of silence. When Alvarez says she was “the best behaved [child] until [she] learned to talk” (par. 23), she reinforces that authority figures in her life prefer when people are silent.
Alvarez 24–26	Silence versus voice	Alvarez defends Eleanor Roosevelt’s grandson because he is “just saying the truth” (par. 25). She believes the writer can write what he wants to write. Alvarez’s mother, on the other hand, says the grandson “should be ashamed of himself . . . for calling his grandmother ‘a plain woman’” (par. 24). The connections between Alvarez’s mother and Trujillo develop the central idea of silence versus voice. Trujillo is brutal and violent, and Trujillo’s mother is not, but they both try to silence someone else’s voice as a method of control. For example, if Alvarez shows “anything less than worship” to someone she should respect, her mother uses “threats to disown” her (par. 24). In a much more brutal sense, Trujillo kills and imprisons people until “parents [are] afraid to say anything—even to their own children” (par. 3).