Introduction

In this lesson, the last before the Mid-Unit Assessment, students read *A Room of One’s Own* by Virginia Woolf, chapter 3, pages 51–52 (from “This may be true or it may be false” to “publicity in women is detestable. Anonymity runs in their blood”), in which Woolf writes about the stress of society’s expectations on female writers throughout history. Students analyze this portion of the excerpt through the lens of a new focus standard, RI.11-12.3. Students examine the interaction of ideas and events, and consider how the experiences of a “gifted girl” (p. 51) like Judith Shakespeare interact with expectations of female chastity. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does the experience of a “gifted girl” (p. 51) in London interact with and develop a central idea in the text?

For homework, students review, organize, and expand their notes and annotations in preparation for the 11.1.3 Mid-Unit Assessment. Students review their annotations for central ideas and note where these ideas are introduced, developed, and refined. They then return to their objective summary from 11.1.3 Lesson 3 and expand it to include a central idea and supporting evidence. Also for homework, students continue reading their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) texts through the lens of the focus standard RL.11-12.6 or RI.11-12.6.

Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessed Standard(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RI.11-12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyze a complex set of ideas or sequence of events and explain how specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individuals, ideas, or events interact and develop over the course of the text.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Addressed Standard(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L.11-12.4.a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple meaning words and phrases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>based on <em>grades 11–12 reading and content</em>, choosing flexibly from a range of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strategies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment

Assessment(s)

Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson. Students respond to the following prompt, citing textual evidence to support analysis and inferences drawn from the text.

- How does the experience of a “gifted girl” (p. 51) in London interact with and develop a central idea in the text?

High Performance Response(s)

A High Performance Response should:

- Identify a central idea in the text (e.g., madness, gender roles).
- Analyze how the difficult experience of a “gifted girl” (p. 51) interacts with and develops a central idea in the text (e.g., Woolf’s description of the experience of a “gifted girl” who lived “in London in the sixteenth century” (p. 51) interacts with and develops the central idea of madness by demonstrating how a “gifted girl’s” “inner strife” (p. 52) would have made her mad and destroyed her. Woolf writes that a “highly gifted girl who ... tried to use her gift for poetry” would have been driven insane by the “contrary instincts” (p. 51) within her to pursue her passion and at the same time conform to society’s demands. Even if this hypothetical girl had succeeded in writing and reading and “survived” (p. 51) the “inner strife” (p. 52), her writing would have been “twisted and deformed” (p. 51) by the traumatic experience of being a female writer. The writer herself would “certainly have gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village” (p. 51). In other words, the female writer would have gone crazy and been a social outcast. Woolf develops the central idea of madness through her description of the experience of a “gifted girl” who lived “in London in the sixteenth century” (p. 51).)

Vocabulary

Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)

- thwarted (v.) – opposed successfully; prevented from accomplishing a purpose
- hindered (v.) – prevented from doing, acting, or happening
- fetish (n.) – any object, idea, etc., eliciting unquestioning reverence, respect, or devotion
- morbid (adj.) – suggesting an unhealthy mental state or attitude; unwholesomely gloomy, sensitive, extreme
- homage (n.) – something that is done to honor someone or something
Vocabulary to teach (may include direct word work and/or questions)

- asunder (adv.) – into separate parts; in or into pieces

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

- sanity (n.) – the condition of having a healthy mind
- anguish (n.) – extreme suffering, grief, or pain
- irrational (adj.) – not thinking clearly; not able to use reason or good judgment
- dilemma (n.) – a situation in which you have to make a difficult choice
- relic (n.) – something that is from a past time, place, culture, etc.
- anonymity (n.) – the quality or state of being unknown to most people
- detestable (adj.) – causing or deserving strong dislike

Lesson Agenda/Overview

Student-Facing Agenda

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards &amp; Text:</th>
<th>% of Lesson</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standards: RI.11-12.3, L.11-12.4.a</td>
<td>1. 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text: <em>A Room of One’s Own</em> by Virginia Woolf, Chapter 3, pages 51–52</td>
<td>2. 15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Sequence:

1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda
2. Homework Accountability
3. Reading and Discussion
4. Quick Write
5. Closing

Materials

- Student copies of the 11.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool (refer to 11.1.1 Lesson 1)
- Student copies of the Central Ideas Tracking Tool (refer to 11.1.3 Lesson 1)—students may need additional blank copies
- Student copies of the Short Response Rubric and Checklist (refer to 11.1.1 Lesson 1)
Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda 10%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RI.11-12.3. In this lesson, students read the last part of the excerpt from *A Room of One’s Own* and examine the interaction of ideas and events, and consider how the experiences of a “gifted girl” (p. 51) like Judith Shakespeare interact with expectations of female chastity.

Students look at the agenda.

Instruct students to take out their copies of the 11.1 Common Core Learning Standards Tool. Inform students that in this lesson they begin to work with a new standard: RI.11-12.3. Instruct students to individually read the standard on their tools and assess their familiarity with and mastery of it.

Students read and assess their familiarity with standard RI.11-12.3.

Ask students to reread standard RL.11-12.3 and form pairs to discuss the similarities and differences between RL.11-12.3 and RI.11-12.3.

Both standards are about analyzing how elements interact and develop. RL.11-12.3 is about how literary elements interact and develop: setting, plot, characters. RI.11-12.3 is about how events, individuals, and ideas interact and develop.

Activity 2: Homework Accountability 15%

Instruct students to talk in pairs about how they applied focus standard RL.11-12.6 or RI.11-12.6 to their AIR texts. Lead a brief share out on the previous lesson’s AIR homework assignment. Select several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied focus standard RL.11-12.6 or RI.11-12.6 to their AIR texts.
Students (or student pairs) discuss and share how they applied the focus standard to their AIR texts from the previous lesson’s homework.

Instruct students to take out their responses to the previous lesson’s homework assignment. (Respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: Write an objective summary of pages 48–51 of A Room of One’s Own.) Instruct students to form pairs and share their responses to the homework assignment, comparing which aspects of the text they chose to emphasize.

- Student responses may include:
  - Woolf states that it would have been “impossible” (p. 48) for a woman born in the time of Shakespeare to have written the plays of Shakespeare.
  - Woolf imagines that Shakespeare had a “wonderfully gifted sister, called Judith” (p. 48), who was denied the opportunities her brother had, and ran away from home to seek her fortune when her parents tried to force her into marriage.
  - Judith found herself mocked and was refused entry to the theater. When a theater manager, Nick Greene, took pity on her, she became pregnant by him and killed herself.
  - Woolf suggests that female genius like that of the working classes is “unthinkable” (p. 50) because women and workers are too busy to develop their genius. If a woman were a genius, she would likely have “gone crazed, shot herself, or ended her days in some lonely cottage outside the village” because of the “anguish” (p. 51) of being gifted but not being able to use her gift. At the very least, a female writer would take “refuge” in publishing in anonymity (p. 51).

Activity 3: Reading and Discussion  60%

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to continue to annotate the text as they read and discuss.

1. Remind students to use the Central Ideas Tracking Tool to record central ideas they identify and discuss.
2. If necessary to support comprehension and fluency, consider using a masterful reading of the focus excerpt for the lesson.
3. Differentiation Consideration: Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

   How does Woolf describe the experience of a “gifted girl” (p. 51) in London?
Instruct student groups to read page 51 (from “This may be true or it may be false” to “half witch, half wizard, feared and mocked at”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

**What is the impact of Woolf’s question, “who can say?” on page 51? How does it support her claim about women in the age of Shakespeare?**

- The rhetorical question “who can say” creates uncertainty; it reinforces Woolf’s claim that facts are hard to come by because gifted women are forced to remain anonymous.

**What does Woolf claim is true in the story she has told?**

- Woolf claims that any woman born with a great gift in Elizabethan times would have “gone crazed” and “ended her days” as an outsider, “feared and mocked” (p. 51), because of the strictness of gender roles in society.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct students to read page 51 (from “For it needs little skill in psychology” to “she must have lost her health and sanity to a certainty”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *thwarted* means “opposed successfully; prevented from accomplishing a purpose” and *hindered* means “prevented from doing, acting, or happening.”

1. Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.
   - Students write the definitions of *thwarted* and *hindered* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

1. **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definition: *sanity* means “the condition of having a healthy mind.”
   - Students write the definition of *sanity* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

**By whom or what was Judith “thwarted and hindered” (p. 51)?**

- Judith was “thwarted and hindered” by “other people” (p. 51).

**Use context clues to determine the meaning of *asunder*. By whom or what was Judith “tortured and pulled asunder” (p. 51)?**

- The word *asunder* means “into pieces.” Judith is “tortured and pulled asunder by her own contrary instincts” (p. 51), which means her instincts move in opposite directions.
Consider drawing students’ attention to their application of standard L.11-12.4.a through the process of determining the meaning of words through contexts.

**Differentiation Consideration:** Consider asking the following extension question to support comprehension:

What is the impact of Woolf’s use of contrary to describe a “gifted girl[s]” instincts (p. 51)?

Instincts are natural thoughts or actions. Contrary means “opposite or conflicting.” Contrary instincts means that a “gifted girl[s]” instincts were opposed to or conflicted with her role or place in society.

What prevented Judith from pursuing her dreams?

Both “other people” and the torture of “her own contrary instincts” (p. 51) prevented Judith from pursuing her dreams.

What rhetorical device does Woolf use in the sentence that begins “For it needs little skill in psychology” (p. 51)? What effect does the rhetorical device have on Woolf’s purpose?

Woolf uses parallel structure in this sentence: “so thwarted and hindered by ... so tortured and pulled asunder by” (p. 51). Through this use of parallel structure, Woolf furthers her argument that a “gifted girl” (p. 51) could not have survived in Elizabethan England. The parallel phrases emphasize the internal and external pressures on a female writer.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to read page 51 (from “No girl could have walked to London” to “for chastity may be a fetish invented by certain societies for unknown reasons—but were none the less inevitable”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definition: fetish means “any object, idea, etc., eliciting unquestioning reverence, respect, or devotion.”

Students may be familiar with this word. Consider asking students to volunteer a definition before providing it the group.

**Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: anguish means “extreme suffering, grief, or pain” and irrational means “not thinking clearly; not able to use reason or good judgment.”
Students write the definitions of *anguish* and *irrational* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What language does Woolf use to emphasize the fact that she is using Judith to represent all women of that time?

- Woolf uses the term “No girl” (p. 51) at the start of the sentence to emphasize that the story of Judith Shakespeare is not the story of an individual but of the condition of women.

What concept makes the anguish of a gifted woman “irrational” and “inevitable” (p. 51), according to Woolf? Why does Woolf describe the anguish as both “irrational” and “inevitable”?

- The anguish was “irrational” because chastity was “invented by certain societies for unknown reasons” but, at the same time, “inevitable” because chastity has become so internalized that “to cut it free ... demands courage of the rarest” (p. 51).

Remind students of their work with *chastity* in 11.1.2 in relation to the character of Ophelia in *Hamlet*. Instruct student groups to review their notes and annotations to find the definition of *chastity*.

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to reread pages 51–52 (from “Chastity had then, it has even now” to “publicity in women is detestable. Anonymity runs in their blood”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.

Provide students with the following definitions: *morbid* means “suggesting an unhealthy mental state or attitude; unwholesomely gloomy, sensitive, extreme” and *homage* means “something that is done to honor someone or something.”

- Students may be familiar with some of these words. Consider asking students to volunteer definitions before providing them to the group.

Students write the definitions of *morbid* and *homage* on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

**Differentiation Consideration:** Consider providing students with the following definitions: *dilemma* means “a situation in which you have to make a difficult choice,” *relic* means “something that is from a past time, place, culture, etc.,” *anonymity* means “the quality or state of being unknown to most people,” and *detestable* means “causing or deserving strong dislike.”
Student write the definitions of dilemma, relic, anonymity, and detestable on their copies of the text or in a vocabulary journal.

What role did chastity play in Elizabethan times, and how does it compare to Woolf’s time?

Chastity, according to Woolf, had “a religious importance” (p. 51) in a woman’s life in Elizabethan times, which means it was incredibly important, and continues to have such importance in Woolf’s own time. Woolf states, “Chastity had then, it has even now, a religious importance in a woman’s life” (p. 51), demonstrating the power of chastity in both the past and present.

How does Woolf’s use of figurative language with regards to chastity support a central idea in the text?

The imagery of “nerves” and of “cut[ting] free” (p. 51) both imply that chastity was intertwined with or connected to women in a way that made it difficult to “bring it to the light of day” (p. 51), or look at it clearly. Because chastity defines the expectations for women, it further develops the central idea of gender roles in the text.

What does Woolf suggest happened to a gifted woman “in London in the sixteenth century” (p. 51)?

Woolf suggests that the pressure of living “a free life” would have been such “a nervous stress and dilemma” for a gifted woman that it may have killed her or at least it would surely have made her writing “twisted and deformed” (p. 51).

If a gifted woman had managed to write, under what name would she have written? Why?

None; a gifted woman would have written anonymously. According to Woolf, anonymity is both a “refuge” and a convention dictated by “the last relic of chastity” (p. 51). Chastity protected women from publicity, which was “detestable in a woman” (p. 52) and associated with a lack of chastity—for example, the suggestive “hint[s]” (p. 49) of the theater manager who laughed in Judith Shakespeare’s face. To remain anonymous is to remain chaste while writing.

This point in Woolf’s text presents a rich opportunity for students to reconsider the figure of the Duchess as viewed through the Duke’s eyes in Browning’s “My Last Duchess,” and to remind students of the central idea of voice. Encourage students to think about the connections between voice (or lack of a voice) and madness.

Inform students that Currer Bell (Charlotte Brontë), George Eliot (Mary Anne Evans), and George Sand (Aurore Dupin) are all examples of women who wrote under male names.
Explain what Woolf means by “inner strife” (p. 52). What does Woolf suggest were the possible outcomes of “inner strife”?

- By “inner strife,” Woolf refers to the suffering of gifted women as a result of the conflict between the expression of their gift and the strict constraints of gender roles. This leads, in Judith Shakespeare’s case, to madness and suicide.

Consider reminding student to annotate for the central idea madness at “inner strife” (p. 52).

Woolf notes that gifted women sought to “veil themselves” (p. 52). What associations does Woolf’s use of the word veil create?

- Veils are associated with anonymity, because they hide the face of the wearer, and chastity, because they are associated with brides and nuns.

To what convention does using the name of a man pay “homage”?

- Using the name of a man pays “homage” to the convention that “publicity in a woman is detestable,” or the idea that “a woman is not to be talked of” (p. 52).

When Woolf suggests that “[a]nonymity runs in their blood” (p. 52), what does she imply has happened to the convention that women should remain anonymous?

- Woolf implies that anonymity has been internalized and passed down from generation to generation. Like genetics, it “runs in their blood” (p. 52).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Activity 4: Quick Write 10%

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

How does the experience of a “gifted girl” (p. 51) in London interact with and develop a central idea in the text?

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

- Students listen and read the Quick Write prompt.

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

Transition to the independent Quick Write.

- Students independently answer the prompt using evidence from the text.
See the High Performance Response at the beginning of this lesson.

**Activity 5: Closing**

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to review, organize, and expand their notes and annotations in preparation for the 11.1.3 Mid-Unit Assessment. Ask students to review their annotations and tools for central ideas and note where these ideas are introduced, developed, and refined. Then ask students to return to their objective summaries from 11.1.3 Lesson 3 and expand them to include a central idea and supporting evidence.

Also for homework, instruct students to continue to read their AIR texts through the lens of focus standard RL.11-12.6 or RI.11-12.6 and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their texts based on that standard.

- Students follow along.

**Homework**

Review, organize, and expand your notes and annotations in preparation for the 11.1.3 Mid-Unit Assessment. Review your annotations and tools for central ideas and note where these ideas are introduced, developed, and refined. Then return to your objective summary from 11.1.3 Lesson 3 and expand it to include a central idea and supporting evidence.

Also, continue to read your Accountable Independent Reading text through the lens of focus standard RL.11-12.6 or RI.11-12.6, and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.
# Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

**Name:**

**Class:**

**Date:**

**Directions:** As you read, record evidence of central ideas as well as explanations of how the evidence is connected and/or demonstrates the development of the central ideas in the text.

## Text:

A Room of One’s Own by Virginia Woolf

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page #</th>
<th>Central Ideas</th>
<th>Evidence, Connections, and Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page 51</td>
<td>Madness</td>
<td>The “inner strife” (p. 52) Woolf describes demonstrates how a woman who tried to defy the expectations of gender roles “would have certainly gone crazed, shot herself” from the emotional stress (p. 51).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 51</td>
<td>Gender roles</td>
<td>Woolf describes how chastity “has so wrapped itself round with nerves and instincts that to cut it free and bring it to the light of day demands courage of the rarest” (p. 51) and that the “religious importance” (p. 51) of chastity oppresses women by defining their gender roles and expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 52</td>
<td>Gender roles</td>
<td>On page 52, Woolf writes, “Anonymity runs in [women’s] blood,” by which she means that anonymity has become such a social pressure, expectation, and part of women’s gender roles that generation after generation of women pay “homage” to the idea that women should not be seen or “talked of” (p. 52), so they either sign their work anonymously or use a man’s pseudonym.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>