Introduction

In this lesson, students read and analyze pages 171–175 of “The Palace Thief,” (from “‘Well, young man,’ I said, knocking on the door frame” to “and trundled off to sit among his friends”). In this passage, Hundert confronts Sedgewick Bell about cheating in the “Mr. Julius Caesar” competition and describes the time leading up to Sedgewick’s graduation. Students analyze how the characters of Sedgewick and Hundert develop, and consider the impact of figurative language and word choice on the meaning and tone of the text. Student learning is assessed via a Quick Write at the end of the lesson: How does Hundert’s description of a significant interaction in this passage develop the character of either Sedgewick or Hundert?

For homework, students continue reading their Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) texts through the lens of a new focus standard (RL.9-10.2 or RI.9-10.2). Students also reread pages 171–175 of “The Palace Thief” and use the Central Ideas Tracking Tool to trace the development of the central idea of identity. Additionally, students read pages 175–182 of “The Palace Thief,” box unfamiliar words, and look up their definitions.

Standards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessed Standard(s)</th>
<th>Addressed Standard(s)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>W.9-10.9.a Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.</td>
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<td>a. Apply grades 9–10 Reading standards to literature (e.g., “Analyze how an author draws on and transforms source material in a specific work [e.g., how Shakespeare treats a theme or topic from Ovid or the Bible or how a later author draws on a play by Shakespeare]”).</td>
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<tr>
<td>L.9-10.4.a Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9–10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.</td>
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<td>a. Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence, paragraph, or text; a word’s</td>
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position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

| L.9-10.5.a | Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.  
| a. | Interpret figures of speech (e.g., euphemism, oxymoron) in context and analyze their role in the text. |

### 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 Hundert’s description of a significant interaction in this passage develop the character of either Sedgewick or Hundert?

**High Performance Response(s)**

A High Performance Response should:

- Describe a significant interaction in pages 171–175 (e.g., the interview after the cheating incident, Hundert’s phone conversation with the senator, Sedgewick’s graduation).
- Analyze how Hundert’s description of this interaction develops the character of either Sedgewick or Hundert (e.g., Hundert’s description of his phone conversation with Senator Bell develops Hundert’s weakness and inability to stand up for himself. The senator puts Hundert on the defensive when, during his phone conversation with Hundert, he threatens, “My son has told me a great deal about you, Mr. Hundert. If I were you, I’d remember that” and dismisses Hundert’s suggestion that the situation is “complex” (p. 173). Hundert concludes his description of the interaction by noting, “And thus young Sedgewick Bell and I began an uneasy compact that lasted out his days at St. Benedict’s” (pp. 173–174). The phrase “uneasy compact” indicates that Hundert is intimidated by the senator into accepting the senator and Sedgewick’s “code of morals” (p. 172) in exchange for their silence about Hundert’s manipulation of the “Mr. Julius Caesar” competition. Hundert accepts that he is unable to instill in Sedgewick the “high ideals” he values (p. 163) and that he, himself, “lacked the character” (p. 173) to live by his own “code of morals” (p. 172).

### Vocabulary

**Vocabulary to provide directly (will not include extended instruction)**

- labyrinthine (adj.) – of related to or resembling an intricate combination of paths or passages in which it is difficult to find one’s way or to reach the exit
- williness (n.) – quality of being full of clever tricks
- precociously (n.) – quality of being unusually advanced or mature in development, especially mental development
- audacity (n.) – boldness or daring, especially with confident or arrogant disregard for personal safety, conventional thought, or other restrictions
- omission (n.) – act of not including or doing something
- morals (n.) – patterns of conduct usually accepted or established as consistent with principles of personal and social ethics
- abominations (n.) – objects or actions that cause disgust or hatred
- amiably (adv.) – pleasantly
- tendrils (n.) – thin and curly objects
- trundled (v.) – walked slowly and heavily

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

- code (n.) – set of ideas or rules about how to behave
- waned (v.) – became smaller or less; decreased in size, amount, length or quality

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

- marshal (v.) – arrange or prepare (something, such as your thoughts or ideas) in a clear, effective, or organized way
- stride (n.) – a long step
- strut (n.) – a proud and confident walk
- feebleness (n.) – the state of being very weak

**Lesson Agenda/Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student-Facing Agenda</th>
<th>Standards &amp; Text:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Standards &amp; Text:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Standards: RL.9-10.3, W.9-10.9.a, L.9-10.4.a, L.9-10.5.a</td>
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<td>- Text: “The Palace Thief” from <em>The Palace Thief</em> by Ethan Canin, pages 171–175</td>
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<td><strong>Learning Sequence:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Introduction of Lesson Agenda</td>
<td>1. 5%</td>
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<td>2. Homework Accountability</td>
<td>2. 10%</td>
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Learning Sequence

### How to Use the Learning Sequence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Type of Text &amp; Interpretation of the Symbol</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Percentage indicates the percentage of lesson time each activity should take.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no symbol</td>
<td>Plain text indicates teacher action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bold text</strong></td>
<td>Indicates questions for the teacher to ask students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Italicized text</em></td>
<td>Indicates a vocabulary word.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶</td>
<td>Indicates student action(s).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✎</td>
<td>Indicates possible student response(s) to teacher questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>🔔</td>
<td>Indicates instructional notes for the teacher.</td>
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</table>

### Activity 1: Introduction of Lesson Agenda 5%

Begin by reviewing the agenda and the assessed standard for this lesson: RL.9-10.3. In this lesson, students analyze how the characters of Sedgewick and Hundert develop. Students also consider the impact of figurative language and word choice on the meaning and tone of the text.

- Students look at the agenda.

### Activity 2: Homework Accountability 10%

Instruct students to form pairs and share their notes on the Central Ideas Tracking Tool.

- Students share text evidence related to the central idea of expectations.
- See the Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool for sample student responses.
Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student pairs to share and discuss the vocabulary words they identified in the previous lesson’s homework.

- Students may identify the following words: *labyrinthine, wiliness, precociousness, audacity, omission, morals, abominations, amiably, tendrils, and trundled.*

1. **Differentiation Consideration:** Students may also identify the following words: *marshal, stride, strut, and feebleness.*

1. Definitions are provided in the Vocabulary box in this lesson.

**Activity 3: Masterful Reading**

Have students listen to a masterful reading of pages 171–175 of “The Palace Thief” (from “‘Well, young man,’ I said, knocking on the door frame” to “and trundled off to sit among his friends”), focusing on how the interactions between Hundert and Sedgewick develop both characters.

1. **Consider pausing several times during the masterful reading to allow students time to write down initial reactions and questions.**
   - Students follow along, reading silently.

1. **Differentiation Consideration:** Consider posting or projecting the following guiding question to support students in their reading throughout this lesson:

   How does Hundert describe his interactions with Sedgewick after the cheating incident?

**Activity 4: Reading and Discussion**

Instruct students to form small groups. Post or project each set of questions below for students to discuss. Instruct students to annotate for central ideas throughout the reading and discussion, using the code CI.

1. This annotation exercise supports students’ engagement with W.9-10.9.a, which addresses the use of textual evidence in writing.

Instruct student groups to read pages 171–173 (from “‘Well, young man,’ I said, knocking on the door frame” to “I decided to speak to Senator Bell again”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.
How does Hundert’s description of Sedgwick’s behavior in their conversation after the competition (p. 171) develop Sedgwick’s character?

Student responses may include:

- Hundert suggests that Sedgwick’s father is a negative influence when he blames Sedgwick’s behavior on “the bitter education he must have received at home” (p. 171).
- Hundert describes Sedgwick as possessing “labyrinthine wiliness” and “precociousness” (p. 171), suggesting Sedgwick is sly and acts older than he is.
- Hundert reports that Sedgwick acknowledges Hundert’s subtle allegation of cheating with a “feline smile” (p. 171), suggesting that Sedgwick’s actions were well thought-out, and that he is almost proud of his cheating.

What does Hundert’s description of his failure to follow his own “code of morals” (p. 172) suggest about the characters of Hundert and Sedgwick?

Student responses should include:

- Hundert’s description demonstrates weakness in his character. While he knows right from wrong, he is too weak to act according to this knowledge. He compares himself to a “soldier” simply following the orders of “his captain,” referring to his decision to follow Mr. Woodbridge’s directions to ignore Sedgwick’s cheating (p. 172). Hundert also says he allowed “Sedgwick Bell to sweep [him] summarily into” his code of morals, meaning that Sedgwick influenced his behavior and led him to act against his own principles (p. 172).
- Hundert’s description suggests that Sedgwick uses his power and “boorishness” (p. 155) to manipulating weaker people. Hundert describes looking out the window in order to avoid “the dark, accusatory gaze of Sedgwick Bell” (p. 172), suggesting that Sedgwick intimidates Hundert.

Differentiation Consideration: If students struggle, consider asking the following scaffolding question:

Based on your understanding of the word morals, what might a “code of morals” be (p. 172) in this context?

Since morals refers to “patterns of conduct usually accepted or established as consistent with principles of personal and social ethics,” Hundert’s reference to a code of morals might be a set of ideas or rules about how to behave according to those patterns.

Consider drawing students’ attention to the application of L.9-10.4.a through the process of using context to make meaning of unknown words.
As Hundert describes his decision not to report Sedgewick, what does Hundert’s use of figurative language suggest about how he views himself?

- Student responses may include:
  - Hundert compares himself to a criminal, emphasizing the guilt he feels for his role in Sedgewick’s cheating. He says he did not turn in Sedgewick because it would be like “one criminal turning in another” (p. 172). This explanation suggests that while Hundert recognizes Sedgewick’s guilt, he feels equally guilty. His view of himself as someone who lives by a strict “code of morals” changes and he now views himself as someone who breaks the rules of that code.
  - Hundert describes his struggle to come to a decision as a “battle” (p. 172), suggesting that he is in conflict with himself and that he views his decision as part of a larger contest between opposing ideas of right and wrong. Hundert’s figurative language suggests that he sees himself as someone fighting for important ideas.

① Consider drawing students’ attention to the application of L.9-10.5.a through the process of interpreting figures of speech and analyzing their role in the text.

① Introduce the term identity. Provide students with the following definition: identity means “who someone is; the characteristics, beliefs, etc., that make a particular person or group unique. Identity is a central idea of this text and will be considered again when the students read excerpts from The Joy Luck Club and Friday Night Lights in 10.1.3.

① Differentiation Consideration: If students struggle, consider asking the following scaffolding question:

How does Hundert’s description of his struggle about whether or not to turn in Sedgewick clarify the meaning of the word waned (p. 172)?

- Although Hundert states that he repeatedly thought about reporting Sedgewick to the honor committee, he never did, so the impulse must have weakened or gone away. Therefore waned must mean “decreased in strength, intensity.”

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

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.

Instruct student groups to read pages 173–175 (from “Less than a week after I had begun to marshal my resolve” to “and trundled off to sit among his friends”) and answer the following questions before sharing out with the class.
What does Hundert’s reflection, “no sooner had I resolved to confront the senator than it became perfectly clear to me that I lacked the character to do so” (p. 173), suggest about his character?

- This reflection represents a moment in which Hundert realizes that he is too weak to confront others who attempt to manipulate him, even if not confronting them means compromising his own moral code and identity.

How does Hundert’s conversation with the senator on page 173 impact Hundert’s view of Sedgewick on page 174?

- After his conversation with the Senator, Hundert describes Sedgewick as a “dismal” student whose quiz results are “abominations” (p. 174), and who cheats on his essays. Hundert’s descriptions reflect his anger toward the Bells and his recognition that his efforts to “mold” Sedgewick (p. 163) are pointless.

How does Hundert use figurative language on page 174 to establish a connection between Sedgewick and St. Benedict’s?

- Hundert uses a metaphor to compare Sedgewick’s “moral rot” to ivy climbing a brick wall. Just as the ivy climbs “among the posts and timbers” of a building and cause decay, Sedgewick’s “moral rot” causes the “glory days of St. Benedict’s” to wane. The comparison suggests that Sedgewick’s moral rot is a symbol of the school’s moral decline.

Consider drawing students’ attention to the application of L.9-10.5.a through the process of interpreting figures of speech and analyzing their role in the text.

How does Hundert’s description of how Sedgewick walks on pages 174 and 175 contribute to the development of Sedgewick’s character?

- Student responses should include:
  
  - On page 174, Hundert explains how Sedgewick has gained popularity among his classmates at St. Benedict’s and reports, “His stride had become a strut,” suggesting Sedgewick’s popularity made him overconfident.
  
  - On page 175, Hundert reports that after receiving his diploma at graduation, Sedgewick “trundled off to sit among his friends.” Trundle suggests an almost clumsy movement that reflects Hundert’s description of Sedgewick’s “boorish character” (p. 174) and his unwillingness to take graduation seriously (p. 175).

Lead a brief whole-class discussion of student responses.
Activity 5: Quick Write

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

How does Hundert’s description of a significant interaction in this passage develop the character of either Sedgewick or Hundert?

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 6: Closing

Display and distribute the homework assignment. For homework, instruct students to continue to read their AIR texts through the lens of a new focus standard, RL.9-10.2 or RI.9-10.2, and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of their texts based on one of these new standards.

Introduce standards RL.9-10.2 and RI.9-10.2 as focus standards to guide students’ AIR, and model what applying these focus standards looks like. For example, RL.9-10.2 and RI.9-10.2 ask students to “determine a theme or 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.” Students who read “The Palace Thief” might identify “expectations” as a central idea. Hundert’s explanation that he wants to “give to [his] boys the more important vision that [his] classical studies had given to [him]” (p. 168) is a detail that shapes and refines the idea that Hundert’s expectations of his role as a teacher are an important part of the story. Students who read “The Palace Thief” might summarize the events of the “Mr. Julius Caesar” competition by writing, “The ‘Mr. Julius Caesar’ competition is an event during which students display their knowledge of Roman history. In the story, Hundert gives Sedgewick a better grade than he deserves so he qualifies for the competition. Hundert realizes that Sedgewick is cheating during the competition and must decide how to respond to this discovery.”
In addition, instruct students to reread pages 171–175 of “The Palace Thief” (from “‘Well, young man,’ I said, knocking on the door frame” to “...trundled off to sit among his friends”), and use the Central Ideas Tracking Tool to trace the development of the central idea of identity.

Also for homework, instruct students to read pages 175–182 of “The Palace Thief” (from “It came as a surprise, then, when I learned in the Richmond Gazette” to “...and by the end of that month he had asked me to retire”). Direct students to box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Instruct them to choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.

Students follow along.

Homework

Continue reading your Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) text through the lens of the new focus standard (RL.9-10.2 or RI.9-10.2) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.

Reread pages 171–175 of “The Palace Thief” (from “‘Well, young man,’ I said, knocking on the door frame” to “...and trundled off to sit among his friends”), and use the Central Ideas Tracking Tool to trace the development the central idea of identity.

Also, read pages 175–182 of “The Palace Thief” (from “It came as a surprise, then, when I learned in the Richmond Gazette” to “...and by the end of that month he had asked me to retire”) and box any unfamiliar words and look up their definitions. Choose the definition that makes the most sense in context, and write a brief definition above or near the word in the text.
### Model Central Ideas Tracking Tool

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<th>Name:</th>
<th>Class:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
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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:** “The Palace Thief” by Ethan Canin

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<tr>
<th>Page #</th>
<th>Central Ideas</th>
<th>Notes and Connections</th>
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<td>Page 172</td>
<td>Expectations (Sedgewick’s expectation of Hundert)</td>
<td>Sedgewick is not surprised that Hundert does not follow his “code of morals” and does not report Sedgewick’s cheating. Hundert says Sedgewick “knew ... of course, that I would not pursue the matter.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 173</td>
<td>Expectations (Hundert’s expectations of himself)</td>
<td>Hundert begins to “marshal [his] resolve” because he expects himself to do his “duty” by confronting Senator Bell.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Page 173</td>
<td>Expectations (Sedgewicks’s expectations of Hundert)</td>
<td>When Hundert realizes that he “lacked the character” to confront Senator Bell, he also realizes that his weakness “had long been clear to Sedgwick Bell” as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Page 174</td>
<td>Expectations (Hundert’s expectations of Sedgewick)</td>
<td>After the conversation with Senator Bell, Hundert no longer expects Sedgewick to be anything other than a “dismal student” who “could be counted on to blink and stutter as if called upon from sleep.”</td>
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