

Lesson 6: Close Reading: A River of Words, Author's Note



CCS Standards

- **RI.4.1** Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.
- **RI.4.3** Explain events, procedures, ideas, or concepts in a historical, scientific, or technical text, including what happened and why, based on specific information in the text.
- **RI.4.4** Determine the meaning of general academic and domain-specific words or phrases in a text relevant to a *grade 4 topic or subject area*.
- **L.4.4** Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grade 4 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies.
 - a. Use context (e.g., definitions, examples, or restatements in text) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.
 - b. Use common, grade-appropriate Greek and Latin affixes and roots as clues to the meaning of a word (e.g., *telegraph*, *photograph*, *autograph*).
 - c. Consult reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciation and determine or clarify the precise meaning of key words and phrases.



Daily Learning Targets

- I can describe the life of William Carlos Williams and explain what inspired him to write poetry. (RI.4.1, RI.4.3, RI.4.4, L.4.4)
- I can cite evidence from the text to support the answers to my questions. (RI.4.1)

Ongoing Assessment

- Close Read Note-catcher: *A River of Words*, Author's Note (RI.4.1, RI.4.3, RI.4.4, L.4.4)
- What Inspires Poets to Write Poetry? note-catcher (RL.4.5)

Agenda

1. **Opening**
 - A. Engaging the Reader and Reviewing Learning Targets (10 minutes)
2. **Work Time**
 - A. Close Reading: *A River of Words*, Author's Note (40 minutes)
3. **Closing and Assessment**
 - A. Revisiting the Guiding Question: What Inspired William Carlos Williams? (10 minutes)
4. **Homework**
 - A. Accountable Research Reading. Select a prompt and respond in the front of your independent reading journal.
 - B. For ELLs: Complete the Language Dive I Practice in your Unit 2 Homework.

Teaching Notes

Purpose of lesson and alignment to standards:

- In the Opening, students read along silently as the teacher rereads *A River of Words*. Although students do not do a close read of this rich text, it is worth a second read in order to give students a foundational understanding of the life of William Carlos Williams, which in turn will support them as they closely read the Author’s Note (a more complex text) later in the lesson.
- In Work Time A, students participate in a teacher-led close read of the Author’s Note in *A River of Words*. This close read guides students through explaining what inspired William Carlos Williams to write poetry (RI.4.1, RI.4.3, RI.4.4, L.4.4).
- During the close read, students participate in a Language Dive that guides them through the meaning and purpose of a sentence from *A River of Words* (RI.4.1, RI.4.3, L.4.4a). The conversation invites students to unpack complex syntax—or “academic phrases”—as a necessary component of building both literacy and habits of mind. The sentence is compelling because it uses an adverbial clause to provide information about a poet’s writing process. Invite students to discuss each chunk briefly, but slow down to focus on the structure *By stripping away unnecessary details*. Students then apply their understanding of the concepts in this sentence to reflecting on their own writing process. A consistent Language Dive routine is critical in helping all students learn how to decipher compelling sentences and write their own. In addition, Language Dives hasten overall English language development for ELLs.
- The close reading in this lesson is mostly teacher-led, so all students work at the pace the teacher sets with support where necessary. Consider inviting students who need an extension opportunity to be peer coaches.
- The Author’s Note in *A River of Words* is provided in the supporting materials, so each student can have his or her own copy. This is a complex text, so closely reading it will ensure students learn more about William Carlos Williams, in particular his poetry style and how it is unique. This will be important later in shared writing sessions when students learn to extract appropriate information from the book, the Author’s Note, and the timeline in *A River of Words* to use in their writing.
- In this unit, the habit of character focus is on working to become effective learners. The characteristic they practice in this lesson is collaborate, because they will be working together to closely read the Author’s Note from *A River of Words*.
- Students practice their fluency in this lesson by following along and reading silently as the teacher reads *A River of Words* in Opening A and the Author’s Note in Work Time A.
- The research reading that students complete for homework will help build both their vocabulary and knowledge pertaining to poetry and what inspires people to write. By participating in this volume of reading over a span of time, students will develop a wide base of knowledge about the world and the words that help describe and make sense of it.

How it builds on previous work:

- Students previewed *A River of Words* and read the book for the gist in the previous lesson. In this lesson, they complete a close reading of the author’s note.

- In Unit 1 and the first half of Unit 2, students thought about what inspired Jack to write poetry using the What Inspires Poets to Write Poetry? note-catcher. In this lesson, students think about what inspired William Carlos Williams to write, and they use a similar note-catcher as when collecting details about what inspired Jack.
- Throughout Unit 1, students were introduced to various total participation techniques (for example, cold calling, equity sticks, Think-Pair-Share, etc.). When following the directive to “Use a total participation technique, invite responses from the group,” use one of these techniques or another familiar technique to encourage all students to participate.
- Continue to use Goal 1 Conversation Cues to promote productive and equitable conversation.

Areas in which students may need additional support:

- Throughout the close read, students should work with a reading partner. Strategically partner students so they can support each other well as they read this complex text.

Assessment guidance:

- Throughout the teacher-led close read, call on students to share their responses with the whole group in order to build knowledge collectively and clarify any misconceptions. As students are writing, circulate to clarify misunderstandings and use these as teaching points for the whole group.
- Consider using the Speaking and Listening Informal Assessment: Collaborative Discussion Checklist during students’ small group discussions in Work Time A. See Module 1 Appendix.

Down the road:

- In Lessons 7–8, students will work in expert groups to read a short biography about and poems by their selected poet in preparation for writing an essay about what inspired this poet to write.
- Students will continue adding to the Close Read Note-catcher: *A River of Words*, Author’s Note in Lesson 8. In that lesson, students will complete the “What evidence do you see of this in his or her poetry?” box of their Close Read Note-catcher: Expert Group Poet after analyzing poems by their poet. Later in the unit, they will use the note-catcher to analyze an informational essay about William Carlos Williams. Because of this, the “What evidence do you see of this in his or her poetry?”, Focus Statement, and Reflection/Connection parts of the note-catcher should be left blank for now.

In advance:

- Preview the Close Reading Guide: *A River of Words*, Author’s Note in conjunction with the text in order to familiarize yourself with what will be required of students (see supporting materials). Consider providing students with a Language Dive log inside a folder to track Language Dive sentences and structures and collate Language Dive note-catchers.
- Review the Thumb-O-Meter protocol. See Classroom Protocols.
- Post: Learning targets, Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart, Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart, and Discussion Norms anchor chart.

- Work Time A: For students who will benefit from hearing the text read aloud multiple times, consider using a text to speech tool such as Natural Reader (www.naturalreader.com), SpeakIt! for Google Chrome (<https://chrome.google.com/webstore/detail/speakit/pgeolalifpodheeocdmbhehgnkbbak?hl=en-US>) or the Safari reader. Note that to use a web based text to speech to tool such as SpeakIt! or Safari reader, you will need to create an online doc, for example a Google Doc, containing the text.
- Work Time A: Students complete note-catchers using word-processing software—for example, a Google Doc—using Speech to Text facilities activated on devices, or using an app or software such as Dictation.io (<https://dictation.io/speech>).

Supporting English Language Learners

Supports guided in part by CA ELD Standard 4.I.B.6 and 4.I.B.8, and 4.I.C.11

Important points in the lesson itself

- The basic design of this lesson supports ELLs with opportunities to closely read biographical text and collect evidence for a poet’s inspirations. This will serve as practice for the work they will complete as they write informational essays about famous poets later in the unit.
- During Opening A, ELLs may find it challenging to listen to a text for an extended time. Consider having students act out key parts of the biography in the Opening rather than reading aloud the entire book.

Levels of support

For lighter support

- During the Language Dive, challenge students to generate questions about the sentence before asking the prepared questions. (Example: “What questions can we ask about this sentence? Let’s see if we can answer them together.”)

For heavier support

- During Work Time A, distribute a partially filled-in copy of the Close Read Note-catcher: *A River of Words*, Author’s Note. This will provide students with models for the kind of information they should enter, while relieving the volume of writing required. Refer to Close Read Note-catcher: *A River of Words*, Author’s Note (answers, for teacher reference) to determine which sections of the note-catcher to provide for students.

Universal Design for Learning

- **Multiples Means of Representation (MMR):** Provide multiple representations of the text in order to enhance comprehension and remove barriers during the close read (e.g., use a document camera to enlarge the print for some students or provide the book on tape for students who may be at a lower reading level). This way, more students can have access to the text.

- **Multiples Means of Action and Expression (MMAE):** Reading the entire text may be overwhelming to some students. You may want to highlight key areas of the text for students to focus on to reduce the complexity of the task.
- **Multiples Means of Engagement (MME):** This lesson introduces the informative essay prompt so that students can understand how they will use poet biographies for a future task. Build engagement for the informational essay by telling students that they get to become experts about a specific poet. Then they will be able to teach others all about the poet and demonstrate their knowledge.

Vocabulary

Key:

(L): Lesson-Specific Vocabulary

(T): Text-Specific Vocabulary

(W): Vocabulary Used in Writing

- evidence, effective learners, collaborate (L)
- indicate, labor, demand, profession, method, pattern, brief, contribution, object, common, publish, severe, volume, consider (T)

Materials

- ✓ Informative Essay Prompt: What Inspires Poets? (one per student and one to display)
- ✓ *A River of Words* (from Lesson 5; one for teacher read-aloud)
- ✓ Vocabulary log (from Unit 1, Lesson 3; one per student)
- ✓ Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart (begun in Lesson 1; added to during Opening)
- ✓ Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart (example, for teacher reference)
- ✓ Author's Note: *A River of Words* (one per student)
- ✓ Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 2)
- ✓ Discussion Norms anchor chart (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 1)
- ✓ Close Reading Guide: *A River of Words*, Author's Note (for teacher reference)
 - Close Read Note-catcher: *A River of Words*, Author's Note (one per student and one to display)
 - Close Read Note-catcher: *A River of Words*, Author's Note (answers, for teacher reference)
 - Language Dive Note-catcher: *A River of Words*, Author's Note (for ELLs; one per student and one to display)
 - Language Dive Sentence strip chunks (for ELLs; one to display)
- ✓ Module Guiding Questions anchor chart (begun in Unit 1, Lesson 1)
- ✓ What Inspires Poets to Write Poetry? note-catcher (from Unit 1, Lesson 10; one per student and one to display)
- ✓ What Inspires Poets to Write Poetry? note-catcher (from Unit 1, Lesson 10; example, for teacher reference)

Opening

A. Engaging the Reader and Reviewing Learning Targets (10 minutes)

- Distribute and display the **Informative Essay Prompt: What Inspires Poets?** and tell students that in this half of the unit, they will be reading for a purpose—to write an essay about a poet. Reassure students that although an essay may sound like a lot of writing, it will be broken up over several lessons and they will work on it bit by bit.
- Invite students to follow along, reading silently in their heads as you read the directions aloud.
- Underline the question in the directions:
 - “What inspired your expert group poet to write poetry, and where can you see evidence of this in his or her poetry?”
- Point out that they thought and wrote about this question in relation to Jack when reading *Love That Dog*.
- Tell students that before they can begin writing their essays, they will need to research and learn more about different poets and what inspired them. Remind students that in the previous lesson they started learning more about William Carlos Williams. Tell them that he is the poet they will be practicing writing about as a class, and that in the next lesson they will get to choose which poet they want to learn more about.
- Invite students to move to sit with their reading partner from Lesson 5.
- Display **A River of Words**. Remind students that they read this text together in Lesson 5. Reread the text straight through without stopping as students follow along and read silently.
- Remind students that in the previous lesson, they found the gist of *A River of Words*.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
 - “What kind of book is A River of Words?” (an informational text; a biography)**
 - “What did you learn about William Carlos Williams in A River of Words?” (Responses will vary.)**
- Tell students that today they will read one of the text features they explored yesterday to learn a bit more about William Carlos Williams: the Author’s Note at the back of the book. Remind them that this will prepare them to read and learn about their selected poet later in the unit.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
 - “When exploring the text in the previous lesson, we saw the Author’s Note. What is an Author’s Note?” (An Author’s Note contains things readers should know about a book. For example, if a book is fiction but based on a real event, the author may explain that in the Author’s Note.)**
- Direct students’ attention to the learning targets and read them aloud:
 - “I can describe the life of William Carlos Williams and explain what inspired him to write poetry.”**
 - “I can cite evidence from the text to support the answers to my questions.”**
- Point out the first target and tell students that they will find this information in the Author’s Note of *A River of Words*.

- Circle the word *evidence* in the second learning target and tell students that evidence is proof in the text that answers a question or supports our thinking.
- Add *evidence* to the Academic Word Wall and invite students to add it to their **vocabulary logs**.
- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
“How do you think answering questions about a text can help you to better understand a text?” (Answering questions about a text helps you read it more closely and think about it more deeply.)
- Focus students to the **Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart**. Remind them that *effective learners* are people who develop the mindsets and skills for success in college, career, and life.
- Read aloud the new habit of character recorded:
 - “I collaborate. This means I can work well with others to accomplish a task or goal.”
- Invite students to turn and talk with their reading partner, and cold call students to share out:
“Using the anchor chart as a guide, what does collaborate mean in your own words?”
“What does collaboration look like? What might you see when people are collaborating?”
See Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart (example, for teacher reference).
“What does collaboration sound like? What might you hear when people are collaborating?”
See Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart (example, for teacher reference).
- As students share out, capture their responses in the appropriate column on the Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart.
- Add *collaborate* to the Academic Word Wall. Invite students to add translations of the words in their home languages in a different color next to the target vocabulary.
- Tell students that they are going to collaborate and work together as they closely read the Author’s Note from *A River of Words*.

Meeting Students’ Needs

- Build excitement about the informational essay by explaining that students will become experts on a specific poet. They will then be able to teach others all about that poet. (MME)
- Along with the prompt, consider sharing a model of a completed informational essay. This way, students will have a visual example of what will be expected of them. (MMR)
- For ELLs: Invite students to turn to an elbow partner and share how they thought and wrote about the essay prompt question in relation to Jack when reading *Love That Dog*.
- For ELLs: If possible, display an Author’s Note of a book in a different language. Invite bilingual students to interpret the note and encourage students to notice similarities and differences between the texts (e.g., placement in the book, content of the note, etc.).

- For ELLs: Point to the phrase *cite evidence from the text* in the second learning target and explain that words *cite* and *evidence* are often used together.
 - "What do you think it means to *cite evidence*?" (to give examples)
 - "Where will the evidence you cite come from?" (from the text; from the Author's Note)
 - "Can you say the second learning target in your own words?" (Responses will vary, but may include: I can use examples from the Author's Note to support answers to my questions.)

Work Time

A. Close Reading: *A River of Words*, Author's Note (40 minutes)

- Distribute the **Close Read Note-catcher: *A River of Words*, Author's Note**. Point out that this note-catcher is very similar to the note-catcher they used when thinking about what inspired Jack in *Love That Dog*, and tell students they will use this same kind of note-catcher when reading about their selected poets later in the unit.
- Distribute the **Author's Note: *A River of Words*** and tell students they will now closely read an excerpt from **A River of Words**, and they will work with this excerpt over the next several lessons.
- Direct students' attention to the **Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart** and quickly review it.
- Tell students you are going to guide them through this close read. Some of the questions will be discussed as a whole group, and others will be discussed with their triad.
- Direct students' attention to the **Discussion Norms anchor chart** and remind them to think about these norms as they work through the close read.
- Focus students on the Working to Become Effective Learners anchor chart and remind them specifically of the collaboration criteria. Remind students that because they will be working in triads, they will need to be very conscious of working effectively with others.
- Guide students through **Close Reading Guide: *A River of Words*, Author's Note (for teacher reference)**. Refer to the guide for how to integrate the **Language Dive note-catcher** and **sentence strip chunks**, as well as to **Close Read Note-catcher: *A River of Words*, Author's Note (answers, for teacher reference)** as necessary.
- Invite students to turn and talk to their partner, and then use equity sticks to select students to share out:

"How did the strategies on the Close Readers Do These Things anchor chart help you to better understand the text?" (Responses will vary.)

Meeting Students' Needs

- For students who may need additional support with reading: Pre-highlight key sections in their texts. This will help students focus on smaller sections rather than scanning the whole text. (MMR, MMAE)

- Provide differentiated mentors by purposefully pre-selecting triads. Consider meeting with the mentors in advance to encourage them to share their thought process with their partner. (MMAE)
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with expressive language: During the close read, display sentence frames for turn-and-talks. Examples:
 - “This helps me understand _____.”
 - “The author means _____.”
 - “The gist of the sentence is _____.” (MMR)
- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with reading: During the close read, display the text on a document camera or as an enlarged copy to help direct students to the appropriate sentences on each page. (MMR)
- For students who may need additional support with reading: Consider providing a book on tape to help facilitate comprehension. (MMR)

Closing and Assessment

A. Revisiting the Guiding Question: What Inspired William Carlos Williams? (10 minutes)

- Using a total participation technique, invite responses from the group:
 - “*What new information did you learn about William Carlos Williams after reading the Author’s Note?*” (Responses will vary, but may include: *William Carlos Williams was a doctor who wrote poetry in his free time; William Carlos Williams developed his own style of poetry.*)
- Direct students’ attention to the **Module Guiding Questions anchor chart** and reread the guiding question:
 - “What inspires writers to write poetry?”
- Tell students that now that they have learned more about William Carlos Williams’s life, it will be easier to infer what inspired him to write poetry.
- Invite students to turn and talk with an elbow partner:
 - “*After reading a biography of William Carlos Williams, what could you infer about what inspired him as a writer?*” (everyday things and people)
- Direct students’ attention to the **What Inspires Poets to Write Poetry? note-catcher**. Remind them that they used this chart throughout Unit 1 and the first half of this unit after learning about what inspired Jack and other poets to write poetry.
- If necessary, clarify the meanings of the headings of each column, and review a row on the anchor chart with students.
- Invite students to turn and talk with an elbow partner, and cold call students to share out:
 - “*What inspired William Carlos Williams to write poetry?*” (everyday objects and the lives of common people)
- Refer to **What Inspires Poets to Write Poetry? note-catcher (example, for teacher reference)** as necessary.

- Invite students to turn and talk with an elbow partner, and cold call students to share out:

“Where can you see evidence of this in his poetry?” (His poem “The Red Wheelbarrow” is about the beauty and importance of a wheelbarrow.)
- As students share out, capture their responses in the “Where can you see evidence of this in the poem?” column. Refer to What Inspires Poets to Write Poetry? anchor chart (example, for teacher reference) as necessary.
- Tell students they are now going to use the Thumb-O-Meter protocol to reflect on their progress toward the learning targets. Remind them that they used this protocol in the first half of the unit and review as necessary. Refer to the Classroom Protocols document for the full version of the protocol.
- Guide students through the Thumb-O-Meter protocol using the learning targets. Scan student responses and make a note of students who may need more support with this moving forward. Repeat, inviting students to self-assess against how well they collaborated in this lesson.

Meeting Students' Needs

- Consider scaffolding your questioning before having students make inferences. Examples:
 - “What were some important events in William Carlos Williams’s life?”
 - “What was important to William Carlos Williams?” (MMR)
- For ELLs: Some students may not be familiar with making inferences. Ask:

“What does it mean to infer or to make an inference?” (to form an opinion based on evidence; when you can make a really good guess, but you do not know for sure)

Homework

- A. Accountable Research Reading. Select a prompt and respond in the front of your independent reading journal.**
- B. For ELLs: Complete the Language Dive 1 Practice worksheet in your Unit 2 Homework.**

Meeting Students' Needs

- For ELLs and students who may need additional support with reading and writing: Refer to the suggested homework support in Lesson 1. (MMAE, MMR)