

COMMON CORE FOCUS

RL 4 Determine the figurative meaning of words as they are used in a text; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. **RL 6** Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of world literature. **RI 4** Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. **RI 6** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text.

Teach

Part 1: The Writer's Background

Using Background Point out to students that a literary work does not contain a fixed meaning. Instead, it is open to interpretation. Often, students can add information about an author and his or her cultural and historical period to their own personal experience and cultural context in order to create their own interpretation.

Background, Beliefs, and Values Caution students against making unwarranted connections between a writer's life and his or her work. The inferences and conclusions they draw should be supportable with examples from the text. For example, have students pick out details from "To Da-duh, in Memoriam" that support Marshall's description of the rivalrous relationship she had with her grandmother. **Possible answer:** Marshall writes: "Da-duh watched me a long time before she spoke . . . , 'All right, now, tell me if you've got anything this tall in that place you're from.'"

 **BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT—Transparency**
Analysis Frame: Literary Nonfiction
pp. D21, D48

Text Analysis Workshop

Essential Course of Study 

COMMON CORE

Included in this workshop:
RL 4 Determine the figurative meaning of words as they are used in a text; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. **RL 6** Analyze a particular point of view or cultural experience reflected in a work of world literature. **RI 4** Analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone. **RI 6** Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text.

History, Culture, and the Author

Behind every work of literature is a writer—the individual responsible for crafting the words on the page. A writer's words may entertain, inform, or inspire, but they may also reveal glimpses into his or her background, beliefs, or times. Perhaps the writer endured the horrors of a war you've only read about, or grew up in a family very different from your own. Learning more about writers and the forces that shaped their lives can help you discover unexpected layers of meaning in the literature you read.

Part 1: The Writer's Background

"Write what you know" is often the first piece of advice that writers receive. Whether they intentionally follow it or not, many writers produce works that are influenced by personal factors in their lives, such as heritage, national identity, customs, and values. For example, consider the following excerpt from Paule Marshall's short story "To Da-duh, in Memoriam." On one level, the work is a poignant story about family. But by reading the background and asking yourself a few questions, you can discover just how personal the story is.

from To Da-duh, in Memoriam

Short story by Paule Marshall

BACKGROUND Paule Marshall was born in Brooklyn, New York, but her family came from the island of Barbados. Her story draws on her memories of a childhood visit to her grandmother (nicknamed Da-duh). "Ours was a complex relationship," she has written, "close, affectionate yet rivalrous." Marshall has said that the rivalry between the grandmother and the granddaughter in the story is supposed to represent a struggle between cultures, old and new.



. . . She stopped before an incredibly tall royal palm which rose cleanly out of the ground, and drawing the eye up with it, soared high above the trees around it into the sky. It appeared to be touching the blue dome of sky, to be flaunting its dark crown of fronds right in the blinding white face of the late morning sun.

5 Da-duh watched me a long time before she spoke, and then she said, very quietly, "All right, now, tell me if you've got anything this tall in that place you're from."

I almost wished, seeing her face, that I could have said no. "Yes," I said. "We've got buildings hundreds of times this tall in New York."

QUESTIONS TO ASK

What beliefs and values are reflected in the writing?
Through the interaction between the characters, Marshall conveys a respect for the old (the palm tree) and an acknowledgment of the new (skyscrapers).

What aspects of the author's background are evident?
Though Marshall was born in New York, she too visited her grandmother in Barbados as a child.

What does the background reveal about the author's motivation for writing this story?
Marshall is communicating her understanding of cultural conflicts.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR STRUGGLING READERS

Note Taking For students who need help with note taking, hand out the note-taking copy master. Review these definitions and have students record ideas:

- *heritage*, "ideas, traditions, and customs passed down by a previous generation"
- *national identity*, "characteristics that identify someone as being from a specific nation"

- *customs*, "accepted practices of people in a particular group or region"
- *values*, "standards or qualities viewed as worthwhile or desirable"

 **RESOURCE MANAGER—Copy Master**
Note Taking p. 9

MODEL 1: ANALYZING A POEM

Read this poem “cold” first, noticing what images it calls to mind.

Women

Poem by Alice Walker



They were women then
My mama's generation
Husky of voice—Stout of
Step
5 With fists as well as
Hands
How they battered down
Doors
And ironed
10 Starched white
Shirts
How they led
Armies
Headragged Generals
15 Across mined
Fields
Booby-trapped
Kitchens
To discover books
20 Desks
A place for us
How they knew what we
Must know
Without knowing a page
25 Of it
Themselves.

Close Read

1. “Women” is full of images that suggest physical force. One is boxed. Find two more images.
2. What one word would you use to describe the women in the poem? Explain your choice.
3. Reread lines 19–26. What do you think the women did for their children?

MODEL 2: THE WRITER'S BACKGROUND

Now read this background information about Alice Walker. How does learning about the poet change or enhance your understanding of her poem?

BACKGROUND Alice Walker was born in Eatonton, Georgia, in 1944, a time of legal segregation and organized violence against African Americans. The eighth child in a family of sharecroppers, she grew up in a black community that nurtured and protected its children. Her mother and aunts were strong women
5 who maintained their independence despite racism and poverty and fought for a better future for the young. Inspired by these role models, Walker became a civil rights activist and writer.

Close Read

1. In line 14 of the poem, the speaker describes the women as generals. What might she see as the enemy they were fighting?
2. Using information from the background and the poem, explain why Walker may admire women of her mother's generation.

MODEL 1: ANALYZING A POEM

Close Read

1. **Possible answer:** Other images that suggest physical force include “battered down doors” (lines 7–8), “led armies” (lines 12–13), “headragged generals across mined fields” (lines 14–16), and “booby-trapped kitchens” (lines 17–18).
2. Adjectives to describe the women in the poem may include courageous, determined, powerful, tough, independent, or intimidating. Students should give reasons for their choice.
3. **Possible answer:** The women fought to get an education for their children, something that they themselves never had.

MODEL 2: THE WRITER'S BACKGROUND

Close Read

1. **Possible answer:** Based on the background material, the women might have been fighting racism and poverty.
2. **Possible answer:** Walker seems to admire the almost intimidating strength and independence of the women of “my mama's generation” (line 2), whom the speaker describes as “husky of voice—stout of step” (lines 3–4). The background informs readers that Walker grew up in a community that “nurtured and protected its children” (line 4); it also says that Walker's mother and aunts “fought for a better future for the young” (line 6). In the poem, the women are described as doing all these things—from routine tasks like ironing to fighting for their children's future.

FOR STRUGGLING READERS

Analysis Support: Interpreting the Poem

Have students discuss the poem without looking at Walker's background. Help them draw conclusions about the speaker and the speaker's voice, the subject of the poem and any key statements, the use of language and imagery, and the feelings evoked by reading the poem. Ask them what is important to Alice Walker, based on her poem.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/PRE-AP

Analyze Themes A central theme in Walker's writing is her belief that not enough credit has been given to African-American women who have been repressed. Ask students to discuss where they see this theme revealed in the poem.

Online Remediation



Are your students struggling with text analysis skills? Consider assigning them one or more **Level Up Online Tutorials** as remediation before beginning this unit. Log in to thinkcentral.com to view a list of the skills addressed by **Level Up**.

Part 2: Historical and Cultural Influences

Context Have students imagine that they are writing a short story or a poem at this very moment in history. Have them brainstorm words and phrases that they would use to characterize their moment in order to capture it in a story or poem.

Analysis Questions Discuss how to determine the level of importance readers should give to historical and cultural connections when interpreting literature. Suggest asking questions such as these:

- What historical events does the work cover?
- In what ways did history affect the writer's outlook?
- In what ways did history affect the style, language, and content of the work?
- Did the writer change historical events? In what way and for what reasons?

CHECK UNDERSTANDING

Have students give examples of historical and cultural context.

Part 2: Historical and Cultural Influences

The historical and cultural setting of a work may also influence a writer's use of language, including **figurative language** and **diction**. To fully understand some works of literature, you need a sense of their **historical** and **cultural context**—the social and cultural conditions that influenced their creation. What was happening at the time a work was written, both in the writer's hometown and in the world at large? What issues or social problems were people grappling with? By uncovering answers to questions like these, you can often gain deeper insights into literature.

When John Steinbeck's novel *The Grapes of Wrath* was published in 1939, the Great Depression had been going on for ten long years. The novel presents a sympathetic portrayal of farmers who are forced to leave their land. Notice how reading the background and asking some questions can help you understand Steinbeck's work as social commentary on the harsh injustices of the time.

from *The Grapes of Wrath*

Novel by John Steinbeck

BACKGROUND During the Great Depression, life was especially difficult for farmers on the Great Plains, where a severe drought turned the land to desert. High winds brought terrible dust storms that killed crops and livestock and blotted out the sun for days. Some farmers gave up, abandoning their land. Others struggled to hold on, relying on government aid—"relief"—in the form of food, money, and jobs. Many were evicted when they couldn't pay their mortgages or when wealthy landowners replaced sharecroppers with mechanical tractors. Many farmers fled to California in search of promising jobs, only to find backbreaking, low-paying work.



This is an exchange between landowners and sharecroppers they are about to evict:

But if we go, where'll we go? How'll we go? We got no money.

We're sorry, said the owner men. The bank, the fifty-thousand-acre owner can't be responsible. You're on land that isn't yours. Once over the line maybe you can pick cotton in the fall. Maybe you can go on relief. Why don't you go on west to California? There's work there, and it never gets cold. Why, you can reach out anywhere and pick an orange. Why, there's always some kind of crop to work in. Why don't you go there? And the owner men started their cars and rolled away.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

How does the conflict reflect the struggles of the times?
The sharecroppers' conflict—being evicted from their land—was one that many poor farmers experienced during the Great Depression.

How are the characters portrayed?
The pleas of the sharecroppers make them seem desperate. Expressions like "rolled away" make the landowners seem indifferent.

How does your knowledge of history help you understand what you are reading?
Steinbeck knew that the reality of life in California did not measure up to the promise of "reach[ing] out anywhere and pick[ing] an orange." Therefore, the portrayal of California as a paradise becomes ironic.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR STRUGGLING READERS

Note Taking For students who need help, hand out the note-taking copy master for page 936. As you discuss, have students jot down key ideas and questions that will help them apply historical and cultural influences to literary analysis. Assist them as needed.

R RESOURCE MANAGER—Copy Master
Note Taking p. 10

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Language: Skill Words List the literary

terms shown in italics below. Have students provide examples of each from the Steinbeck model.

- *conflict*, "a struggle between opposing forces, such as between characters" (*The sharecroppers were in conflict with the wealthy landowners who were evicting them.*)
- *characters*, "individuals who play a part in a literary work" (*The sharecroppers are characters in the model.*)

MODEL 1: ANALYZING FICTION

This excerpt is from a short story that is set several years after the California gold rush of the mid-1800s. As you read it, consider what you already know about that time.

from *The Californian's Tale*
Short story by Mark Twain

Now and then, half an hour apart, one came across solitary log cabins of the earliest mining days, built by the first gold miners. . . . In some few cases these cabins were still occupied; and when this was so, you could depend upon it that the occupant was the very pioneer who had built the cabin; and . . .

5 that he was there because he had once had his opportunity to go home to the States rich, and had not done it; had rather lost his wealth, and had then in his humiliation resolved to sever all communication with his home relatives and friends, and be to them thenceforth as one dead. Round about California in that day were scattered a host of these living dead men—pride-smitten

10 poor fellows, grizzled and old at forty, whose secret thoughts were made all of regrets and longings—regrets for their wasted lives, and longings to be out of the struggle and done with it all.

[It was a lonesome land!] Not a sound in all those peaceful expanses of grass and woods but the drowsy hum of insects; no glimpse of man or beast;

15 nothing to keep up your spirits and make you glad to be alive.

MODEL 2: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

The following background explains how the promise of gold lured thousands to California in 1848. As you read, consider how this information enhances your understanding of the “wasted lives” of the men in Twain’s story.

BACKGROUND On a winter morning in 1848, workers discovered gold east of Sacramento, setting off an epidemic of “gold fever.” Thousands of young men left their homes and traveled west in the hope that they would strike it rich. The first to arrive found that there was plenty of gold to go around—but

5 not much else. Prices for food and other supplies shot sky-high in the rough frontier towns. Newly rich miners let their fortunes slip away, confident they could get more. By mid-1849, however, gold became much harder to find. Soon, many gave up and left, turning the “boom” towns into ghost towns.

By the time Samuel Clemens went west in the early 1860s, the wild

10 hopes of the gold rush years had turned to bitter disillusionment. After a few unsuccessful months of working as a miner, Clemens gave up and began a new career as the writer Mark Twain.”

Close Read

1. What do you learn about the men who live in the cabins? Cite details that help you understand their situation.
2. Identify four phrases or details that suggest a sense of desolation and hopelessness.

Close Read

1. Reread the boxed details in Twain’s story. What information in the background helps you understand the narrator’s description of the land and its inhabitants?
2. In your opinion, is Twain’s tone toward the miners sympathetic? Explain.

MODEL 1: ANALYZING FICTION**Close Read**

1. **Possible answer:** The men living in the cabins have been there since the earliest mining days. Many had the chance to go home rich but instead stayed and lost their wealth. Humiliated, they broke all ties with family members and stayed in California. Soon, these “pride-smitten poor fellows” (lines 9–10) became “living dead men” (line 9), who spent their days consumed with “regrets for their wasted lives” (line 11) and wishing they were done with the struggle of life.
2. **Possible answers:** Details that suggest **desolation:** “solitary log cabins” (line 1), “It was a lonesome land” (line 13), “Not a sound in all those peaceful expanses . . . of insects” (lines 13–14), and “no glimpse of man or beast” (line 14); **hopelessness:** “in his humiliation resolved . . . thenceforth as one dead” (lines 6–8), “living dead men” (line 9), “regrets for their wasted lives” (line 11), “longings to be out of the struggle and done with it all” (lines 11–12), and “nothing to . . . make you glad to be alive” (line 15).

MODEL 2: HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT**Close Read**

1. **Possible answer:** “Let their fortunes slip away” (line 6) explains why those in the story have lost their wealth. The background says the gold supply dwindled (lines 7–8) helping readers understand why there were so many disillusioned miners left in the camps, but so few other people.
2. **Possible answer:** Twain’s tone toward the miners is sympathetic. He describes them as “pride-smitten poor fellows” (lines 9–10), but he also acknowledges that the “lonesome land” (line 13) offers “nothing to keep up your spirits and make you glad to be alive” (line 15). Clemens himself had tried and failed at mining, which perhaps made him more understanding of the miners’ situation.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**FOR STRUGGLING READERS**

Analysis Support: Personal Experience Ask students whether Model 2 is necessary to understand Model 1. Point out that Model 1 can stand alone; it is clear from its text that many people were not successful during the gold rush. However, the background information, with its suggestion of Twain’s own gold rush experiences, helps readers understand the timing and scope of the mining situation and the author’s sympathetic tone in the story.

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Vocabulary: Cognates List these words from “The Californian’s Tale”:

- *solitary* (line 1), “alone”
- *occupant* (line 4), “person living in it”
- *opportunity* (line 5), “chance”

Have students define the Spanish cognates, then use Word Questioning to understand the English words.



BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT—Transparency

Word Questioning p. Eg

Part 3: Analyze the Text

Approaching the Selections Organize the class into two groups. Have one group read the background information and the excerpt; have the second group read only the excerpt. After reviewing students' answers to the Close Read questions, discuss whether students who did not have the benefit of the background information had difficulty analyzing, interpreting, and connecting with the literature.

Communism and Chinese Literature Provide this additional background information and have students discuss it in relationship to the excerpt. How might these circumstances have influenced Zhang Jie?

- Communism has kept tight control over Chinese literature. Following the 1949 revolution, literature, like society in general, focused on great social transformations. Instead of developing believable conflicts and characters, writers were reduced to illustrating Communist Party doctrine.
- The Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), during which Zhang Jie was sent away to be re-educated, was the time to do away with the “four olds”: ideas, culture, customs, and habits. It was more suppressive to writers than ever before. Every piece of literature that did not celebrate Mao Zedong’s teachings was burned. In bookstores, the writings of Mao replaced classic works of prose and poetry.

Part 3: Analyze the Text

Zhang Jie is one of the most acclaimed writers from the People’s Republic of China. Her story “Love Must Not Be Forgotten” takes place during the 1970s, when Communist ideals affected how people viewed the institution of marriage. Read this background about China during that time and about the life of Zhang Jie. Then use the information in the background to help you analyze an excerpt from her story.

BACKGROUND

A Writer in the People’s Republic

For the Greater Good In 1949, Mao Zedong and his Communist forces took control of China. In 1966, Mao felt that new blood was needed to keep the ideals of communism alive, so he implemented the Cultural Revolution. For the next several years, groups of young radicals removed and replaced older Communist Party leaders, who were executed or imprisoned.

Despite sweeping political changes, many Chinese customs were slow to change. For example, centuries-old traditions dictated that marriages be arranged by couples’ families when the couples were still young children. New laws enacted by the Communists allowed individuals to choose their own marriage partners. However, marrying for love was still frowned upon, because Communist teachings encouraged individuals to suppress personal desires for the greater social good.

The Fight Against Injustice Both personal hardships and the harsh political climate in Communist China helped shape the life of the writer Zhang Jie. She has written, “These circumstances made me sensitive to all injustice and inequality. . . . I determined to fight injustice all my life.” Born in 1937, Zhang Jie grew up in poverty during the war-torn years before communism. She dreamed of studying literature at the great university in Beijing and of



Zhang Jie

becoming a writer. Zhang Jie’s dreams were put on hold when the government assigned her to a subject considered more useful to the nation: economics.

After graduation, Zhang Jie worked as a statistician. She married a colleague and gave birth to their daughter in 1963. Then came the Cultural Revolution, when millions of educated white-collar workers were sent to harsh work camps to be “re-educated” in Communist thought. Despite her loyalty to communism, Zhang Jie was sent thousands of miles away to a labor camp, where she spent four years tending pigs and slogging through rice paddies.

A Writer at Last Zhang Jie was 40 when she finally was able to publish her first story, which won a major award. Soon she was one of the most popular writers in China—and one of the most controversial. “Love Must Not Be Forgotten” raised a storm of protest from party officials, who thought the story undermined traditional attitudes toward marriage.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR STRUGGLING READERS

Analysis Support Have students organize the background information in a Main Idea and Details chart. Ask them to write a short paragraph summarizing what they learned.

Main Idea	Details
Cultural Revolution	1. help communism 2. customs slow to change

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/PRE-AP

Hypothesize Plot Based on the background information, ask students what they expect the story to be about. Why do they think the story was controversial? Have students share their thoughts with the class.

from

LOVE MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN

Short story by Zhang Jie

I am thirty, the same age as our People's Republic. For a republic thirty is still young. But a girl of thirty is virtually on the shelf.

Actually, I have a bona fide suitor. Have you seen the Greek sculptor Myron's Discobolus? Qiao Lin is the image of that discus thrower. Even the padded
5 clothes he wears in winter fail to hide his fine physique. Bronzed, with clear-cut features, a broad forehead and large eyes, his appearance alone attracts most girls to him.

But I can't make up my mind to marry him. I'm not clear what attracts me to him, or him to me.

10 I know people are gossiping behind my back, "Who does she think she is, to be so choosy?"

To them, I'm a nobody playing hard to get. They take offense at such preposterous behavior.

Of course, I shouldn't be captious.¹ In a society where commercial production
15 still exists, marriage like most other transactions is still a form of barter.

I have known Qiao Lin for nearly two years, yet still cannot fathom whether he keeps so quiet from aversion to talking or from having nothing to say. When, by way of a small intelligence test, I demand his opinion of this or that, he says
20 "good" or "bad" like a child in kindergarten.

Once I asked, "Qiao Lin, why do you love me?" He thought the question over seriously for what seemed an age. I could see from his normally smooth but now wrinkled forehead that the little grey cells in his handsome head were hard at work cogitating. I felt ashamed to have put him on the spot.

Finally he raised his clear childlike eyes to tell me, "Because you're good!"

25 Loneliness flooded my heart. "Thank you, Qiao Lin!" I couldn't help wondering, if we were to marry, whether we could discharge our duties to each other as husband and wife. Maybe, because law and morality would have bound us together. But how tragic simply to comply with law and morality! Was there no stronger bond to link us?

30 When such thoughts cross my mind, I have the strange sensation that instead of being a girl contemplating marriage I am an elderly social scientist.

Perhaps I worry too much. We can live like most married couples, bringing up children together, strictly true to each other according to the law. . . . Although
35 living in the seventies of the twentieth century, people still consider marriage the way they did millennia ago, as a means of continuing the race, a form of barter or a business transaction in which love and marriage can be separated.

1. **captious**: overly critical.

Close Read

1. Which details in the background help you understand why Zhang Jie chose to write about a woman who questions social values?

2. What values do you think Zhang Jie and her narrator share? Support your answer.

3. Reread the boxed text. How was marriage viewed in China during the 1970s? Does the narrator support this view? Explain.

4. What aspects of this story might Communist Party officials have considered controversial? Support your answer, using details from both texts.

Close Read

1. **Possible answer:** Zhang Jie's words "These circumstances made me . . . determined to fight injustice all my life" (lines 27–30 in the background) help readers understand her motivation. The story narrator is not fighting any injustice but questions the institution of marriage as it is defined in China. Readers learn that the author and her narrator are women who won't simply accept laws without question.

2. **Possible answer:** Zhang Jie and her narrator share the value of making one's own decisions rather than simply following outside rules. Zhang Jie questioned traditional attitudes (lines 55–58 in the background), and her narrator questioned marrying just to "comply with law and morality" (line 28).

3. **Possible answer:** In China during the 1970s, marriage was a way of continuing the race, a "business transaction" in which emotions did not play a role. The narrator questions this belief in lines 28–29. Still, she admonishes herself for "worry[ing] too much" (line 32) and tries to talk herself into believing traditional views of marriage.

4. **Possible answer:** According to the background information, party officials viewed Zhang Jie's story as controversial because it "undermined traditional attitudes toward marriage" (lines 57–58 in the background). Perhaps the officials objected to the narrator questioning traditional views. Or they may have thought that the narrator valued her own personal desires over the greater social good, or that she shouldn't explore whether she loves her suitor.

TEXT ANALYSIS WORKSHOP 939

Assess and Reteach

Assess

Have students apply the Analysis Questions from pages 934 and 936 to "Love Must Not Be Forgotten." Then, invite students to tell how each background piece in the lesson helped their literary analysis.

Reteach

For students who cannot apply the workshop skills to Zhang Jie's story, review the note-taking copy masters for this lesson. Have volunteers define terms and concepts, then find examples in the Part 3 materials.

FOR STRUGGLING READERS

Vocabulary Support Preteach the vocabulary from the selection by listing the following words on the board:

- *republic* (line 1), "country"
- *bona fide* (line 3), "real, authentic"
- *physique* (line 5), "bodily shape"
- *preposterous* (line 13), "ridiculous"
- *fathom* (line 16), "understand"
- *aversion* (line 17), "discomfort with"

- *cogitating* (line 23), "thinking"
- *contemplating* (line 31), "considering"

Then have students read the context for each word and suggest a synonym to replace it.