Lesson 10 Agenda/Overview

Standards: RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.4, W.9-10.9.a, L.9-10.5
Text: "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain"

- Introduction to Lesson Agenda
- Review of Quick Write
- Homework Accountability
- Masterful Reading
- Reading and Discussion
- Gallery Walk
- Quick Write
- Closing

RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped or refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL.9-10.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).

W.9-10.9 Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

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]").

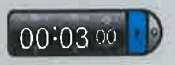
L.9-10.5 Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

How do the following phrases contribute to the overall meaning of the poem?:

"I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,"
"My mind was going numb –,"
"And creak across my Soul,"
"Wrecked, solitary, here –,"
"And I dropped down, and down –"

The funeral in the poem is imaginary (in the speaker's brain), yet felt. Dickinson is using an extended metaphor (L.9-10.5), and in today's work with RL.9-10.2, you will begin to consider the figurative meanings of the funeral.

Talk in pairs about how you applied the focus standard (RL.9-10.5) to your Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) text.



Work in pairs to discuss your response to the homework from the previous lesson: What might the "Box" (9) contain? What evidence from the poem supports your thinking?

Consider the following questions in your discussion:

The box contains the dead body, a part of the speaker's brain, mind or soul, or the speaker him/herself.

What action is occurring in stanza 3?

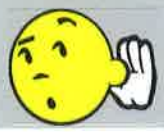
The mourners are "lift[ing] a Box (9) and carrying it across the speaker's "soul" (10).

What might the "Box" (9) represent? How does the "Box" relate to the metaphor established in the first stanza of the poem?

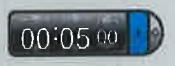
The "Box" (9) is a coffin or casket. Some part of the speaker is being buried.

Determine a central idea in "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain." How does this idea emerge and develop stanza by stanza over the course of the poem?

This is the lesson assessment and the focus for today's reading. Annotate throughout the lesson for evidence of emerging central ideas, using the code CI, just as you did in "The Tell-Tale Heart." This focused annotation supports your engagement with W.9-10.9.a, which concerns the use of textual evidence in writing.



Read aloud the third and fourth stanzas of "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain" with your partner and answer the questions that follow.



To what is the speaker comparing "space" (12) and "the heavens" (13)?

The speaker is comparing space and the Heavens to a bell. "Toll" in line 12 is the steady ringing that a bell makes.

How does the speaker describe his/her "Being" in stanza 3?

The speaker describes him/herself as "Being, but an Ear" (14).

How does this description refine your understanding of what the speaker is experiencing? Consider the sensory aspects of the poem, as well as the literal and figurative language and structure that combine to reveal a central idea of the speaker's descent into madness.

The speaker's sense of hearing is his/her strongest sense. He/She hears the "toll" or "Bell" of "Space" and "the Heavens."

What is the relationship of the speaker to "Silence"?

The speaker and silence are "some strange Race."

What does the speaker mean by *Race*?

The speaker uses the word Race to show that he/she and silence are from the same culture or group; they are the same; they are both "strange."

Review your Quick Write from Lesson 9, noting your explanation of how line 16 "Wrecked, solitary, here --" contributes to the meaning of the poem. What might the location of "here" be in the line "Wrecked, solitary, here --" (16)? What makes you think so?

"Here" is the speaker's "Brain" (1). "Here" (16) is the speaker's "Soul" (10) or "Being" (14). The speaker is alone inside him/herself.

Review your Quick Write from Lesson 9, noting your explanation of how line 18 contributes to the meaning of the poem. Reread stanza 5 aloud in pairs and discuss the questions that follow.

What action occurs in lines 17–19?

After the "Plank in Reason" (17) breaks the speaker falls, dropping and plunging down.

What do the breaking of the "Plank in Reason" (17) and the plunge suggest about the speaker?

This break in the speaker's "Reason"(17) or thinking indicates that he/she's gone crazy or left behind the ability to think or feel normally; he/she is out of control, falling.

The word "dropped" and the repetition of "down" should help you understand that to "plunge" (19) means to fall.

What might the speaker be "Finished knowing" in the last line of the poem?

The speaker might be finished knowing reality or logical, sensible thoughts. He/She might also be finished knowing sounds or silence.

Each group will travel to a chart paper/poster and answer the question written there. The groups will then rotate clockwise, so each group sees each poster. When your group travels to the next poster, you should write something that either

- builds upon something someone else has written,
- provides evidence for something someone else has written, or
- contradicts and provides counter-evidence for something someone else has written.

Keep your text with you and refer to it as you travel. Discuss the answer before recording it on the poster, using textual evidence to support their response. Write fewer than 10 words and write extremely neatly on self-stick notes to ensure legibility by their peers.

Poster 1: What happens to the speaker over the course of the poem?

The speaker begins by feeling a funeral in his/her brain, but then his/her brain begins to go numb (8). He/She is buried in the "Box" and he/she hears the bell of the heavens and space. He/She feels alone and broken, and he/she begins to lose his/her mind. He/She falls into madness and then stops understanding reality. He/She stops knowing.

Poster 2: What ideas do you notice repeating throughout the poem?

Repeating ideas may include sound ("beating," "creak," "toll"), solitude and silence ("numb," "silence," "solitary"), feeling ("felt," "numb," "wrecked"), sense or reason ("Sense," "Reason," "finished knowing"), and madness ("felt a funeral," "my mind was going numb," "wrecked," "a Plank in Reason, broke," "I dropped down, and down –," "and Finished knowing – then –").

Poster 3: What is the purpose of the funeral metaphor?

The "Funeral" is a metaphor that represents the speaker's break from "sense" (4) and "reason" (17), the end of "knowing" (20), and the descent into madness. The speaker uses the "Funeral" metaphor to describe the death of his/her mind. The different parts of the funeral represent how he/she feels as he/she gradually loses his/her mind. In stanza 1, he/she begins to feel the funeral. In stanza 2, the music/drumbeat of the funeral represents his/her mind going numb. In stanzas 3 and 4, as he/she is buried, the speaker hears the bells of heaven and then silence when he/she is completely alone in the "Box" or coffin. As he/she drops down in the coffin, the speaker finally goes mad.

Determine a central idea in "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain." How does this idea emerge and develop stanza by stanza over the course of the poem?

Quickwrite...

Use the Short Response Checklist and Rubric to guide your written response.

Homework

Recall your work with standard RL.9-10.5 in the beginning of the unit, with "The Tell-Tale Heart." Structural choices include the ordering of events, repetition, punctuation, and especially in Dickinson's case, capitalization. Annotate your copy of "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," noting Dickinson's structural choices, using the code SC, just as you did for "The Tell-Tale Heart."

Continue reading your Accountable Independent Reading text through the lens of the assigned focus standard (RL.9-10.5) and prepare for a 3–5 minute discussion of your text based on that standard.