

9.2.1.9

Lesson 9 Agenda/Overview

Standards: RL.9-10.4, L.9-10.5.a,b

Text: "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain"

- Introduction to Lesson Agenda
- Homework Accountability
- Masterful Reading
- Reading and Discussion
- Quick Write
- Closing

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**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).

**L.9-10.5** 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.

**b.** Analyze nuances in the meaning of words with similar denotations.

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9.2 Common Core Learning Standards Tool

L.9-10.5.a,b



**nuances** - slight differences

**denotations** - literal meanings of words (House and home have the same meaning or denotation (a place to live), but have nuanced connotation (an inanimate structure versus a warm, inviting space).)

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## 9.2.1.9

9.2 Common Core Learning Standards Tool  
L.9-10.5.a,b



*In pairs, discuss the meaning of figurative language.*

Figurative language includes words that don't mean what they seem to mean, or that words are used to make the reader feel a certain way. (simile, metaphor, personification)

**What are the big ideas of this standard?**

This standard asks for particular attention to word choice, particularly for words that are not meant literally or those that have only slightly different meanings.

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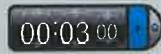
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Talk in pairs about how you applied the focus standard (RL.9-10.4) to your Accountable Independent Reading (AIR) text.



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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 —" Include specific details from the text in your responses.



This is the lesson assessment and the focus for today's reading. Keep this assessment in mind as you analyze the text in the evidence-based discussion. Throughout the discussion, you will stop and take notes about what has been discussed in preparation for this Quick Write assessment.

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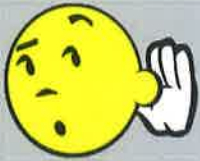
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9.2.1.9



You will listen to "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain," twice. For the first reading, listen, reading silently, and record your initial reactions and questions. You will then discuss these initial reactions and questions in pairs before listening a second time.

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**stanza** - an arrangement of lines within a poem

**line break** - the end of a line in a poem



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



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Who is this poem about? How do you know?

The poem is about the speaker; the speaker of the poem refers to him/herself as "I" in line 1.

What event is the speaker describing?

The speaker is describing a "Funeral" (1) "Service" (6).

How can your understanding of the event help you to make meaning of mourners (2)?

*Mourners* is a word for people who are at a funeral. The familiar word *mourn* supports the understanding that these people are grieving over a death at a funeral.

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### 9.2.1.9

**What are the "Mourners" doing?**

The "Mourners" are walking "to and fro" (2); they are pacing (*treading*), walking back (*to*) and forth (*fro*) heavily, stomping.

*treading* - stepping, walking, or trampling so as to press, crush, or injure something

Based on its use in the first stanza, what is the definition of *sense*? Use evidence from the text to support your response.

- A definition of sense could be sight, smell, touch, hearing, or taste, using the phrase "treading – treading –" (3) as evidence that the speaker is using the sense of hearing or sight when describing the movement of the mourners (2). The repetitive sound of the treading is getting through to the speaker's mind (*senses*).
- *Sense* (4) may also be defined as having good understanding or good judgment as in "common sense" or "that makes sense," using the evidence of the speaker's reference to his/her "Brain" (1). The "treading – treading –" is making the speaker feel as if understanding or logic judgment is "breaking through" (4) to the speaker.

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The definition of sense in the poem is nuanced. Either definition can offer relevant exploration into the speaker's mental state, or the sensations he/she is describing (L.9-10.5).

You will continue further analysis of the speaker's state of mind, and how it is revealed through what he/she hears and experiences, in later lessons.

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



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9.2.1.9

What is happening to the speaker's mind?

His/Her mind is going numb.

What is causing the speaker to feel this way?

The repeated "beating – beating –" of the "Drum"  
in the "Service."

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



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What does the speaker hear in Stanzas 3 and 4?

The speaker hears the mourners "lift a Box" (9) and "creak across my Soul" (10) with "Boots of Lead" (11). The speaker also hears a "Bell" (13).

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9.2.1.9



Read aloud the fifth stanza of "I felt a Funeral, in my Brain" with your partner.

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What happens to the "Plank in Reason"?

It breaks.

What happens to the speaker when the plank breaks? How does this connect to the idea of the funeral?

He/She drops down and down. He/She is being buried. He/She is falling into the ground.

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What is the definition of *plank*?

Recall your vocabulary work with this word from "The Tell-Tale Heart" to define a *plank* as "a long, flat piece of timber, thicker than a board."

What does this *plank* support?

This plank supports "Reason" (17).

**Reason** - the mental powers concerned with forming conclusions, judgments, or inferences; sound judgment, normal or sound powers of mind; sanity

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9.2.1.9

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 —"



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

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Respond briefly in writing to the following prompt: **What might the "Box" (9) contain? What evidence from the poem supports your thinking?**

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.

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Standard RL.9-10.5 is the new focus standard to guide your Accountable Independent Reading.

RL.9-10.5 asks students to "analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it (e.g. parallel plots), and manipulate time (e.g., pacing, flashbacks) create such effects as mystery, tension, or surprise." Students who read "I Felt a Funeral, in My Brain," might write the following: "Dickinson orders the feelings in her mind like a funeral that progresses from one phase to another. Treating her thoughts like a series of events makes the impact of the narrator's thoughts seem real."

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