Unit 1

Title: “The Book of the Dead”

Suggested Time: Four, 45-minute periods

Common Core ELA Standards: RL.9-10.1, RL.9-10.2, RL.9-10.3, RL.9-10.5, RL9-10.6, RL9-10.10; W9-10.1, W9-10.2, W9-10.4, W9-10.9; L9-10.1, L9-10.2, L9-10.4, L9-10.5

Teacher Instructions

**Preparing for Teaching**

1. Read the Big Ideas and Key Understandings and the Synopsis. Please do **not** read this to the students. This is a description for teachers about the big ideas and key understanding that students should take away **after** completing this task.

Big Ideas and Key Understandings

This story explores the complex relationship between children and parents, focusing on the impact of guilt and deception on the relationship itself and those involved.

Synopsis

The story centers on a young Haitian-artist, Annie, and her reverence for her father, whom she believes was a Haitian political prisoner during the Duvalier-era.

1. Read the entire selection, keeping in mind the Big Ideas and Key Understandings.
2. Re-read the text while noting the stopping points for the Text Dependent Questions and teaching Tier II/academic vocabulary.

**During Teaching**

1. Students read the entire selection independently.
2. Teacher reads the text aloud while students follow along or students take turns reading aloud to each other. Depending on the text length and student need, the teacher may choose to read the full text or a passage aloud. For a particularly complex text, the teacher may choose to reverse the order of steps 1 and 2.
3. Students and teacher re-read the text while stopping to respond to and discuss the questions, continually returning to the text. A variety of methods can be used to structure the reading and discussion (i.e., whole class discussion, think-pair-share, independent written response, group work, etc.)

Text Dependent Questions

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| **Text-dependent Questions** | **Evidence-based Answers** |
| Describe the opening events of the story. What is ironic, or unusual, about this situation? What might this indicate about the characters’ relationship? Use specific details from the text. | The reader learns that the narrator is a daughter sitting with a policeman and hotel manager; the father is missing. The narrator says, “They are waiting for me to explain what has become of him, my father.” This is ironic because it is usually the child that is missing in this situation. This may indicate the daughter has to take care of her father- who behaves in a child-like manner. |
| Based on the narrator’s description of the statue, what can the reader infer about the father’s character? Cite specific evidence (including specific words) in your response. | The statue is described as “...naked, crouching on the floor…,” inferring that the father is vulnerable. The statue is also described as having “…downcast eyes…,” suggesting that he is humble. The narrator comments that she has “never tried to tell my father’s story…before…,” leading the reader to think that his life story is worth telling. |
| How does the physical description of the father differ from the description of the narrator’s statue? What does this reveal about the relationship between the narrator and her father? | The narrator sees her father much differently than the reality of his appearance. She sculpts him into a hero, but the physical descriptions of him show him as “sixty-four, five feet eight inches, two hundred and twenty pounds…” It also states that he has “had partial dentures for ten years…” The reader can infer that the narrator holds her father in high esteem, almost to the point of worship. |
| Authors sometimes use dialogue to reveal details that will shape the theme. In this story, the differences in the characters are vital to the theme that will emerge. How does the author begin to develop a contrast between the narrator and Gabrielle Fonteneau? Cite specific evidence in your response. | The narrator describes Gabrielle as being “in a place…with waterfalls, and palm trees and citronella candles to keep the mosquitoes away…”which implies a lovely place. She realizes she is in the same place, but “I can’t appreciate it.” It is likely she cannot appreciate it because she has had an entirely different life than Gabrielle. There is also the reality of her circumstances: her father is missing as is her statue, the one she is supposed to be delivering to the very woman she is talking to. There could be some anxiety on her part rather than peacefulness. |
| How does the author use the telephone conversation between Gabrielle and the narrator to show the differences in the characters? Cite specific evidence to support your answer. | The author begins to show the differences between the two characters through the dialogue, starting with their states of being. Gabrielle seems peaceful and confident, while the narrator seems weak and unconfident. Gabrielle seems to dominate the conversation, describing why she likes the sculpture and her father. The narrator seems limited to simple interjections like “Fort Dimanche.” She even states that she is “drifting away” from the conversation. While a commonality between the fathers is revealed, the reader quickly realizes how different their lives have been. Gabrielle’s father “was described as a lawyer.” We know that Annie’s father was a barber. We learn of the violence endured by Gabrielle’s father, yet, “there was no hint in that photograph of what happened to the father.” We know, however, that the narrator’s father’s experience has a profound impact on him. |
| How are the narrator’s feelings towards her father beginning to change? Cite specific evidence to support your answer. | The narrator wonders whether or not he might be mentally ill. She has seen this vulnerability in him before, referring back to when he had chicken pox and what would have happened if her were “eradicated from my life.” This in unpleasant change from the hero she has cast him as previously. |
| Describe the narrator’s reaction to what her father has done. Does she show her true emotions? What does this reveal about her character? Cite specific evidence to support your answer. | She is very angry. She claims she wants to “beat the craziness out of his head.” She does not understand why he would destroy the statue. However, she does not show her anger. She says: “It is a true testament to my upbringing that I am not yelling at him.” She has been raised to have the utmost respect for her parents, and she holds true to these values even in this tense situation. |
| The narrator tells her father that he is a “harsh critic.” What does she mean by this? What does this reveal about her thoughts of why the father disposed of the statue? | The narrator assumes that her father is self-conscious about both his physical appearance and the past that led to that appearance. When she says he is a “harsh critic,” she assumes the statue reminds him of that painful past, which she believes to be his time as a prisoner. |
| The author is again using dialogue to reveal details and shape the theme. How do the revelations about the ancient Egyptians contribute to the story and shape the theme? Cite specific evidence in your response. | Annie and her father are having a conversation about the judgment of the dead. The father says that, “when a heart of someone is put on a scale, if it is heavy, it cannot enter the other world.” Someone with a heavy heart feels guilt. The author is beginning to show the guilt of the father for his past and how that has affected him and his family, specifically causing him to throw the sculpture in the lake. This will support the emerging theme of the effect of guilt and deception on a person and their relationships. |
| The father says, “Your father was the hunter. He was not the prey.” What do this confession and the way it is made reveal about the father. Cite specific evidence to support your answer. | The father confesses to his daughter that he was a prison guard who abused inmates; he was the “hunter” not the “prey” as she had always believed. The father’s confession reveals his profound guilt. He uses the proverb, “One day for the hunter and one day for the prey” to tell his daughter the truth, suggesting he was struggling to directly tell her about his past. The narrator says that “Each word is hard won as it leaves my father’s mouth,” suggesting even the proverb as a confession is immensely difficult for the father. He feels an enormous sense of guilt for what he has done and for deceiving his daughter. |
| Based on the dialogue and the narrator’s descriptions, how does Annie’s reaction to her father’s revelation affect her and change how she sees him? Cite specific evidence to support your response. | She is puzzled by her father’s confession; she doesn’t quite know how to handle this new information. She asks her mother, “How do you love him?” She says she would sculpt him as a “praying mantis…waiting to strike.” This changes the way she views her father. She had him on a pedestal, now he has been knocked down. Her admiration has been deflated, at the very least. The effect of the deception on Annie is that she now has to reconcile the father she thought she knew with the reality of who he is. |
| The narrator’s father says, “we always thought… that children could raise their parents higher.” How does the foil created with Gabrielle and Annie illustrate the contrast between these two women and their relationships with their parents? Cite specific evidence to support your response. | Gabrielle is a successful actress, while Annie is a struggling artist. The father says “look at what this girl has done for her parents,” indicating the lifestyle the Fonteneau’s have been afforded because of their daughter. Perhaps, it is the effect that her father’s guilt has had on him and his family that has held Annie back from becoming more successful. The father has battled nightmares throughout his life; the guilt he feels has consumed him and not allowed him to be a proper support for Annie. Where it is clear Gabrielle’s parents have supported and cared for her, Annie and her mother have had to care for her father, allowing little time for Annie to develop her own potential. |
| What differences between the fathers are revealed through dialogue? What does this reveal about how they view their approach to life and life’s situations? Cite specific evidence to support your answer. | Gabrielle’s father seems at peace. He is able and willing to go back to Haiti, despite everything that has happened to him. He says, “We go back every year to beautiful place overlooking the ocean.” He and his wife are happy and jovial. He teases her; “When did you ever climb a coconut tree?” he quips. The narrator’s father, on the other hand, is silent, reduced to lying about where he lived and why he hasn’t returned. It is clear that Mr. Founteneau has no guilt over what has happened; he has been able to find peace and enjoy life while Annie’s father is still haunted by the past. |
| The author uses dialogue to further develop the characters in the story. What similarities do both fathers share when it comes to the role of art in their lives? What do both daughters share in regards to the sculpture? | Gabrielle says, “My father goes home when he sees a piece of art.” This suggests that art is therapeutic for him, just as the Egyptian art exhibits have been for Annie’s father. Both daughters have a deep love for their fathers and a genuine desire to “understand” them. Annie sculpted her father to try to understand his past; Gabrielle wanted the sculpture so that her father would “know we understand what happened to him.” |
| How does the narrator’s reasoning for not sculpting again illustrate the change in the relationship that has taken place between the narrator and her father?Cite specific evidence to support your response. | The narrator confesses that she has “lost her subject… the father I loved as well as pitied.” The father’s revelation profoundly changes the narrator. She sculpted her father because she admired him and pitied his past- when she thought he was a victim. We have seen her perception of her father change dramatically because of what has been revealed throughout the story. She cannot overcome the deception of her father and it has forever altered her, her work, and the relationship she has with her father. |
| The narrator says that, “Perhaps the last person my father hurt had dreamed this into his future…” What is meant by this? What does this tell the reader about the narrator’s relationship with her father and about parent-child relationships in general? Cite specific evidence to support your claim? | The narrator says that the last person her father hurt has dreamed this moment into the father’s future: “his daughter seeing those marks-….giving him the chance to either lie or tell the truth.” The father has been haunted by his past; it has affected his daily life, including his relationship with his daughter. Parents typically feel the most guilt towards their children; this is the ultimate confession for the father. He knows that his daughter will never regard him in the way she had before. |
| The story ends with a proverb about scars. What scars, literal and figurative, are being carried by the narrator and her father? How has this affected them and their relationship? Cite specific evidence to support your answer. | The proverb states that, “Those who give the blows may try to forget, but those who carry the scars must remember.” The narrator is developing figurative scars from the reality of her father’s past, which she will carry for the rest of her life. She has been scarred by her father’s actions throughout her life: his nightmares and childlike ways. The father is carrying his literal scars, but also the figurative scars of having confessed to his daughter and how she will now see him. |

Tier II/Academic Vocabulary

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|  | **These words require less time to learn**  (They are concrete or describe an object/event/  process/characteristic that is familiar to students) | **These words require more time to learn**  (They are abstract, have multiple meanings, are a part  of a word family, or are likely to appear again in future texts) |
| **Meaning can be learned from context** | chartreuse\*  crouching  interjects\*  syndicated\*  densely  staccato\*  objections  contemplating\*  stagnant  terrace  coyly | minimalist  senility  vulnerability\*  eradicated\*  mesmerized\*  testament\*  critic |
| **Meaning needs to be provided** | gaudy  inherited  maneuver  cul-de-sac  proverb  \*words are defined for the student in this text edition | revolutionary  mourn |

Culminating Writing Task

* Prompt

*“The Book of the Dead” explores the complex relationship between parents and children and the impact of guilt and deception on that relationship. How do the father’s past and his confession to his daughter impact the relationship between him and the narrator*? *What does this contribute to the over-arching theme of this story? Write a well-developed, complex multi-paragraph response. Cite specific evidence from the text in your response.*

Teacher Instructions

1. Students identify their writing task from the prompt provided.
2. Students complete an evidence chart as a pre-writing activity. Teachers should remind students to use any relevant notes they compiled while reading and answering the text-dependent questions.

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| ***Evidence***  ***Quote or paraphrase*** | ***Elaboration / explanation of how this evidence supports ideas or argument*** |
| “…it was my favorite of all my attempted representations of him… the way I imagined him in prison.” | Annie obviously admires her father. In fact, she worships him. Many children have this view of their parents, which only makes the relationship more complex. When guilt and deception are introduced into the relationship, as it usually is, it alters the people involved. |
| “When a heart of someone is put on a scale. If it is heavy, it cannot enter the other world.” | Annie and her father are talking about the Egyptian weighing spell. A heavy heart is full of guilt. It is clear that the father has a very heavy heart for what happened long ago and it has had a profound impact on his life and his relationship with Annie. He is still haunted by what he has done through his nightmares. |
| “I want to hit my father, beat the craziness out of his head.”  “It is a testament to my upbringing that I am not yelling at him.”  “But I don’t know when I will be able to work again. I have lost my subject, the father I loved as well as pitied.” | Annie is angry over the statue being thrown in the lake- but she doesn’t show her anger. She says this is a testament to her upbringing and her still-intact admiration for her father. She is seeking to understand him and his actions. Providing parents with the benefit of the doubt is typical of children. They want to believe in the very best of their parents, which can lead to heartbreak. Annie is devastated that she can no longer look at her father as she has in the past. Since he was her only subject, she has lost her will to work as an artist. |
| “Your father was the hunter. He was not the prey.”  “Each word is hard won as it leaves my father’s mouth.” | The father’s confession reveals his guilt. He cannot directly verbalize his truth; he must do so through a proverb. This reinforces the guilt. Parents struggle to deliver difficult or uncomfortable truths to their children; they often seek ways around those truths in order to make the situation less unpleasant. |
| “We always thought… that children could raise their parents higher.” | Annie’s father seems to admire what Gabrielle has done for her parents. Gabrielle’s life has been far different than Annie’s, due in large part to the condition of their respective parents. Annie’s father doesn’t acknowledge that, in all likelihood, it is his condition that has prevented Annie from being more successful. Children’s circumstances, for better or worse, can be determined by the condition of their parents. |
| “Those who give the blows may try to forget, but those who carry the scars must remember.” | This is the final, most powerful illumination of the theme. Scars can be literal and figurative; both the narrator and her father carry “scars.” All children carry scars from their parents, some more than others.  Guilt and deception, inevitable to a certain degree, has a profound impact on children, sometimes altering the course of their lives. |

1. Once students have completed the evidence chart, they should look back at the writing prompt in order to remind themselves what kind of response they are writing (i.e. expository, analytical, argumentative) and think about the evidence they found. (Depending on the grade level, teachers may want to review students’ evidence charts in some way to ensure accuracy.) From here, students should develop a specific thesis statement. This could be done independently, with a partner, small group, or the entire class. Consider directing students to the following sites to learn more about thesis statements: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/ OR http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/ thesis\_statement.shtml.
2. Students compose a rough draft. With regard to grade level and student ability, teachers should decide how much scaffolding they will provide during this process (i.e. modeling, showing example pieces, sharing work as students go).
3. Students complete final draft.

* Sample Answer

In “The Book of the Dead,” the narrator, Annie, and her father have a deeply complex relationship that works to shape a theme around the effects of guilt and deception on a parent-child relationship. In the beginning, it is obvious that Annie admires her father. He is her only subject; regarding the sculpture she made of him, she says, “…it was my favorite of all my attempted representations of him… the way I imagined him in prison.” Her admiration borders on worship; so many children hold their parents in a similar esteem. When that perception is shattered it is a life-changing event. From the outset the author seeks to illuminate this concept through the development of the characters and their relationship. Often times it is guilt that drives parents to lie to their children; the author attends to this through the relationship between Annie and her father. Annie’s father, and Egyptian art-enthusiast, has a conversation with her about the ancient Egyptian weighing spell. He says, “You remember the judgment of the dead” … “when a heart of someone is put on a scale. If it is heavy, it cannot enter the other world.” This reference to guilt shows the reader that the father harbors extreme guilt for who he was in his past.

Despite shortcomings and faults, children inevitably give their parents the benefit of the doubt. They fight to keep them on the pedestal upon which they have been placed. Even though Annie is furious over her sculpture, claiming that she wants to “beat the craziness out of his head.” She doesn’t show her anger, however, proving her deep love and respect for her father and her desperate need to believe he is the person she has sculpted. This further underscores the thematic attention to the effects of guilt and deception on parent-child relationships.

One of the central issues in this text is the father’s deception. When he finally reveals his truth to his daughter he uses a proverb to do so: “Your father was the hunter. He was not the prey”. The use of the proverb, instead of a direct confession, reveals the fathers’ guilt for both his past and his deception. Even the words of the proverb are “hard won,” according to the narrator. This suggests that that father is struggling mightily with this revelation. Parents constantly struggle with admitting deception and how to shield their children from the devastation. This instinct proves accurate; as the story reinforces the profound impact deceit has on children.

Parents have grand dreams for their children. Usually, they want their children to achieve more than they have. Many parents work their entire live(s) to make this possible. The author speaks to this when Annie’s father says, “We always thought… that children could raise their parents higher.” What the father fails to acknowledge is that it his past actions-driven by guilt- that prevent his daughter from reaching her full potential. This is yet another complexity of this unique relationship and another reason why guilt and deception are so harmful.

The author closes the story with a proverb: “Those who give the blows may try to forget, but those who carry the scars must remember.” This is the most powerful illumination of the theme. The literal scars may belong solely to the father, but the figurative scars are shared. The father is scarred by the fact his daughter will never look at him in the same way. The daughter is scarred by the fact that her father’s reality is far different from what she has always known. The father’s guilt and his deception have both previously impacted and changed the narrator’s life. It is difficult for both parents and children to live with this truth. The author uses the relationship between the narrator and her father to cause the reader to delve deeply into the complex theme.

Additional Tasks

* *This story is about the complex relationship of children and parents. Think about your own relationship with your parents/guardians. In what ways does this story accurately portray this relationship? Use your own experiences and evidence from the text to support your arguments.*

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**“The Book of the Dead”**

1. Describe the opening events of the story. What is ironic, or unusual, about this situation? What might this indicate about the characters’ relationship? Use specific details from the text.
2. Based on the narrator’s description of the statue, what can the reader infer about the father’s character? Cite specific evidence (including specific words) in your response.
3. How does the physical description of the father differ from the description of the narrator’s statue? What does this reveal about the relationship between the narrator and her father?
4. Authors sometimes use dialogue to reveal details that will shape the theme. In this story, the differences in the characters are vital to the theme that will emerge. How does the author begin to develop a contrast between the narrator and Gabrielle Fonteneau? Cite specific evidence in your response.
5. How does the author use the telephone conversation between Gabrielle and the narrator to show the differences in the characters? Cite specific evidence to support your answer.
6. How are the narrator’s feelings towards her father beginning to change? Cite specific evidence to support your answer.
7. Describe the narrator’s reaction to what her father has done. Does she show her true emotions? What does this reveal about her character? Cite specific evidence to support your answer.
8. The narrator tells her father that he is a “harsh critic.” What does she mean by this? What does this reveal about her thoughts of why the father disposed of the statue?
9. The author is again using dialogue to reveal details and shape the theme. How do the revelations about the ancient Egyptians contribute to the story and shape the theme? Cite specific evidence in your response.
10. The father says, “Your father was the hunter. He was not the prey.” What do this confession and the way it is made reveal about the father. Cite specific evidence to support your answer.
11. Based on the dialogue and the narrator’s descriptions, how does Annie’s reaction to her father’s revelation affect her and change how she sees him? Cite specific evidence to support your response.
12. The narrator’s father says, “we always thought… that children could raise their parents higher.” How does the foil created with Gabrielle and Annie illustrate the contrast between these two women and their relationships with their parents? Cite specific evidence to support your response.
13. What differences between the fathers are revealed through dialogue? What does this reveal about how they view their approach to life and life’s situations? Cite specific evidence to support your answer.
14. The author uses dialogue to further develop the characters in the story. What similarities do both fathers share when it comes to the role of art in their lives? What do both daughters share in regards to the sculpture?
15. How does the narrator’s reasoning for not sculpting again illustrate the change in the relationship that has taken place between the narrator and her father?Cite specific evidence to support your response.
16. The narrator says that, “Perhaps the last person my father hurt had dreamed this into his future…” What is meant by this? What does this tell the reader about the narrator’s relationship with her father and about parent-child relationships in general? Cite specific evidence to support your claim?
17. The story ends with a proverb about scars. What scars, literal and figurative, are being carried by the narrator and her father? How has this affected them and their relationship? Cite specific evidence to support your answer.