

Critical Concepts 8.4B Literary Lesson Plans

Skill Focus: CC 8.4B – Determine the meaning of words or phrases in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings, and analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts

Vocabulary Word Bank: figurative, connotative, rhyme, repetition, stanza, verse, alliteration, assonance, tone

December Lesson Objectives

- SWBAT determine figurative and connotative meanings of words in a text using prefixes, roots, suffixes, and context clues.
- SWBAT identify repetition, alliteration, and assonance in prose.
- SWBAT analyze how sound devices and word choice impact tone and meaning in a passage.

Literary Texts Suggestions for December (text selections are suggestion only, teachers can change the text to fit their classroom needs, if choosing another text it should come from the Educational Epiphany Curriculum)

- *The Captain's Tollgate (excerpt)* – Frank R. Stockton
- *The Pit (excerpt)* – Frank Norris
- *Uncle Tom's Cabin (excerpt)* – Harriet Beecher Stowe

Graphic Organizer: Citing Evidence Refer to your Educational Epiphany Critical Concepts Binder: Graphic Organizers Tab: CC 8.4 (pages 97-104 in the Graphic Organizers Tab)

I Do (Teacher Model – 15 mins)

Text: *The Captain's Tollgate* – description of the tollgate and its keeper

Teacher Think-Aloud :

"As I read the description of the tollgate, I notice the phrase '*stood like a sentinel on the road.*' The tollgate is being compared figuratively to a guard. Literally, it's just a gate for collecting tolls. But connotatively, 'sentinel' suggests protection, watchfulness, and authority. Let's also think about sound devices. The author uses alliteration here with the repeated s sound in '*stood... sentinel.*' That soft repetition slows down the line, almost like the steady, watchful presence of the tollgate. Together, the figurative comparison and sound device establish a tone of seriousness and importance."

Sample Student Response:

- Word/Phrase: “stood like a sentinel”
- Figurative/Connotative Meaning: Tollgate compared to a guard, suggests authority and vigilance
- Sound Device: Alliteration of s in “stood” and “sentinel”
- Impact: Creates a serious tone, shows the tollgate is more than ordinary—it represents control and order

We Do (Guided Practice – 20 mins)

Text: *The Pit* – Frank Norris (excerpt describing the Chicago Board of Trade and the frenzy of the market)

Teacher Think-Aloud:

“Listen to this passage: ‘*They shouted, shouted, shouted, until the air quivered with noise.*’ This is repetition. Why repeat the word *shouted* three times? It creates the effect of constant, overwhelming sound.

Let’s also look at the word ‘*quivered.*’ Literally, it means to shake. But connotatively, it suggests something fragile or about to break. When the air itself ‘quivers,’ it feels like the atmosphere is overloaded with tension. So the repetition and word choice together create a chaotic, almost explosive tone.”

Sample Class Organizer Response:

- Word/Phrase: “They shouted, shouted, shouted”
- Figurative/Connotative Meaning: Emphasizes frenzy, overwhelming volume and chaos of the market
- Sound Device: Repetition
- Impact: Creates an intense, chaotic tone, mirroring the energy of the trading pit

You Do with Partner (Collaborative Practice – 30 mins)

Text: *Uncle Tom’s Cabin* – Harriet Beecher Stowe (excerpt where Eliza runs away with her child)

Steps:

1. Partners reread the excerpt of Eliza fleeing.
2. Pairs select a phrase with strong connotative meaning.
3. Identify any repetition, alliteration, or assonance.
4. Analyze how it shapes tone and meaning in the organizer.

Teacher Questions While Circulating:

- “What feeling do these words carry beyond their dictionary meaning?”
- “How does repetition add to the urgency here?”
- “What mood is Stowe building with her word choice?”

Sample Partner Response:

- Word/Phrase: “She flew across the river, her child pressed to her bosom”

- Figurative/Connotative Meaning: 'Flew' suggests speed, desperation, and near-superhuman strength; not literal flying but intense urgency
- Sound Device: Alliteration of *f* in "flew" and "across" (softened sound that suggests motion)
- Impact: Creates a frantic, desperate tone, showing a mother's determination and fear

You Do Independently

Task:

Students return to their excerpt (teacher may assign or let them choose among the three texts). They select one word/phrase, determine its figurative/connotative meaning, identify sound devices, and analyze the impact on tone/meaning.

Teacher Think-Aloud (if scaffolding is needed):

"If I pick the phrase '*the tollgate stood silent*,' I know it's not just about sound. The silence connotes watchfulness, mystery, maybe even judgment. If I notice the repeated *s* sound, that's alliteration too. That combination affects the tone—it feels still, tense, and almost ominous."

Sample Independent Response (Organizer):

- Word/Phrase: "the tollgate stood silent"
- Figurative/Connotative Meaning: Silence suggests mystery, judgment, or hidden power
- Sound Device: Alliteration of *s* in 'stood' and 'silent'
- Impact: Creates a tone of tension and quiet power, foreshadowing something significant to come