

Lesson Seed 9. The Sociological Approach

Advanced / Gifted and Talented (GT) English Language Arts

Grade: 7 GT **Unit Title:** The Sociological Approach to Literature: The Concept of Perspectives **Length:** 2 Days

Lesson Overview	
<p>Students will apply the sociological approach to literary criticism in order to determine what the text reveals about the society in which it was created and whether the author seems to criticize or affirm that social context. Students will locate textual evidence from the play to draw conclusions about what life was like for different members of Elizabethan society, determining what Shakespeare’s play reveals about his social context. They will then confirm or refine their inferences about Elizabethan society by conducting research on social norms during Shakespeare’s time. As a culmination, students will use their analyses of the play and their research into the Elizabethan era to determine whether Shakespeare’s play generally criticizes or affirms the norms of the society in which it was produced.</p>	
Teacher Planning, Preparation, and Materials	
<p>INTRODUCTION:</p> <p>This lesson models instructional approaches for differentiating the CCSS for advanced/gifted and talented students. Gifted and talented students are defined in Maryland law as having outstanding talent and performing, or showing the potential for performing, at remarkably high levels when compared with their peers (§8-201). State regulations require local school systems to provide different services beyond the regular program in order to develop gifted and talented students’ potential. Appropriately differentiated programs and services will accelerate, enrich, and extend instructional content, strategies, and products to apply learning (COMAR 13A.04.07 §03).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Differentiate the Content, Process, and Product for Advanced / Gifted and Talented (GT) Learners 	
<p>Content refers to the key concepts of the curriculum; what students should know, understand, and be able to do.</p>	
<p>Content Differentiation for GT learners</p> <p>The goal is an optimal match: Each student is challenged at a level just beyond the comfort zone. Pre-assess students’ readiness to determine the appropriate starting point. Implement strategies for acceleration: Use more complex texts and materials, above grade-level standards, compacting; or move grade level content to an earlier grade. Implement strategies for enrichment/extension: Use overarching concepts, interdisciplinary connections, the study of differing perspectives, and exploration of patterns/relationships.</p>	<p>Content Differentiation in this Lesson:</p> <p><i>Through the analysis of popular song lyrics, students’ readiness is pre-assessed at the beginning of the lesson. Students who need enrichment/extension may use a wider range of informational texts appropriate to their ability.</i></p>
<p>Process refers to how students make sense of information. The teacher designs instructional activities that make learning meaningful to students based on their readiness levels, interests, or learning styles.</p>	
<p>Process Differentiation for GT Learners</p> <p>Instructional processes incorporate flexible pacing and opportunities to engage in advanced problem-solving characteristic of professionals in the field. Activities focus on the higher level of each continuum: from simple to complex; from more practice to less repetition; and from dependent to independent. Activities deepen understanding</p>	<p>Process Differentiation in this Lesson:</p> <p><i>Through authentic inquiry, research, and collaboration, students analyze The Taming of the Shrew through a sociological lens. Students are independently responsible for finding research and textual evidence.</i></p>



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through authentic **inquiry, research, and creative production.**

Products are culminating experiences that cause students to rethink, use, and extend what they have learned over a period of time.

Product Differentiation for GT Learners

Differentiated products or performance tasks require students to apply learning meaningfully to complex, **authentic tasks** that model the real-world application of knowledge characteristic of professionals in the field. Products have an authentic purpose and audience, and students participate in **goal-setting, planning, and self-monitoring.**

Product Differentiation in this Lesson:

Using the sociological approach, students assume the role of a character in the play, working in jigsaw groups to share ideas. In groups, students plan, set goals, and self-monitor. At the end of the lesson, students compose a written analysis using textual evidence to support a claim, applying knowledge in a meaningful way.

- Apply the CCSS triangle for text complexity and the Maryland Qualitative and Reader and Task tools to determine appropriate placement. *Using the sociological approach to literary criticism is an above grade level task, inclusive of a variety of informational text and thorough analysis.*
- Plan with UDL in mind: This lesson applies the Universal Design for Learning Guidelines to remove barriers for advanced/gifted and talented students. In particular, the lesson addresses
 - I. Multiple Means of Representation
 - 3.1 activate or supply background knowledge
 - 3.2 Highlight patterns, critical features, big ideas, and relationships
 - 3.4 Maximize transfer and generalization
 - II. Multiple Means of Action and Expression
 - 5.2 Use multiple tools for construction and composition
 - 6.3 Facilitate managing information and resources
 - 6.4 Enhance capacity for monitoring progress
 - III. Multiple Means of Engagement
 - 7.1 Optimize individual choice and autonomy
 - 7.2 Optimize relevance, value, and authenticity
 - 8.2 Vary demand and resources to optimize challenge
 - 9.1 Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation
 - 9.3 Develop self-assessment and reflection

For more information about how UDL addresses the needs of gifted learners, go to http://www.udlcenter.org/screening_room/udlcenter/guidelines

- Consider the need for Accessible Instructional Materials (AIM) and/or for captioned/described video when selecting texts, novels, video and/or other media for this unit. See “Sources for Accessible Media” for suggestions on Maryland Learning Links: <http://marylandlearninglinks.org>.

IMPORTANT NOTE: No text model or website referenced in this unit has undergone a review. Before using any of these materials, local school systems should conduct a formal approval review of these materials to determine their appropriateness. Teacher should always adhere to any Acceptable Use Policy enforced by their local school system.



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Essential Question

How does the sociological approach help us understand the time period in which a work was written?

Unit Standards Applicable to This Lesson

Reading Literature

RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

RL.9-10.10 By the end of grade 9, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 9-10 text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

Reading Informational Text

RI.8.2 Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to supporting ideas; provide an objective summary of the text.

RI.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

Writing

W.9-10.1 Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

W.9-10.4 Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Speaking and Listening

SL.9-10.1.d Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

SL.9-10.1.a Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

Language

L.9-10-1 Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

L.9-10.4 Determine or clarify the meaning of unknown and multiple-meaning words and phrases based on grades 9-10 reading and content, choosing flexibly from a range of strategies. (C) Consult general and specialized reference materials (e.g., dictionaries, glossaries, thesauruses), both print and digital, to find the pronunciations of a word or determine or clarify its precise meaning in context or in a dictionary.

Lesson Procedure

Day One

1. Ask students what the following words have in common in terms of meaning: society, social, socialite, associate (as in colleague or acquaintance), sociology. Consider presenting words with pictorial representation. Provide dictionaries and thesauri for reference. If students have online access, encourage them to use a resource like www.visualthesarus.com to determine that the etymology of these words is *socius*, meaning companion. **(L.9-10.4)**
2. Explain that a literary critic, a reader who closely examines a text to find deeper meaning, may use



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different approaches or tools to “dig deeply,” just as a gardener might use a shovel, rake, or Garden Weasel™, depending on the nature of the job. Sometimes a literary critic might choose to use a “sociological approach.” Ask students to reflect on the discussion of words containing the root “socio” to predict what aspect(s) of a text a critic using a “sociological approach” might analyze. Ask students to brainstorm the aspects of a society that a critic (or sociologist) might examine. If necessary, provide examples (manners, work, etc.) to get things started. [Possible answers: government, school, families, religion, clothing] **(SL.9-10.1)**

3. Have students read “The Sociological Approach to Literary Criticism” (see Resource Sheet 1) and add to/correct their list of aspects of society that a critic might examine. Then, informally assess understanding by asking students to summarize the reading by responding to the following prompt: You are a literary critic using the sociological approach to analyze a text. What are you doing? Why? Have students share answers with a peer. **(RI.8.2)**
4. Introduce students to using the sociological approach to analyze a text by playing a popular song/video rich with social significance (e.g., Taylor Swift’s “Mean” video, The Beatles’ “Money Can’t Buy Me Love” song, Bon Jovi’s “Living on a Prayer” song) while displaying the lyrics. Encourage students to utilize Aaron Copland’s Three Planes of Listening as they read and listen to the song. Instead of a song, you might choose a poem (e.g., Alice Walker’s “Women,” Pat Mora’s “Fences,” or Elmaz Abinader’s “The Gentry”) or a portion of the play (e.g., Lucentio’s opening monologue Act 1.Scene 1.1-24). Ask students to review the sociological approach questions (below) and select one that can be answered by this text.
 - a. Who has the power in this society and who does not? Why? Provide textual evidence.
 - b. What are the official and unofficial rules (conventions, mores) of this society? What happens when a rule is broken? Provide textual evidence.
 - c. How should women behave in this society? How should men behave? Provide textual evidence.
 - d. What is valued in this society? (love, money, power, order, honesty, etc.) Provide textual evidence.
 - e. How does money affect individual’s lives in this society? Provide textual evidence.
 - f. How do opposing groups (e.g., parents and children, the rich and the poor, men and women) relate in this society? Provide textual evidence.
5. Have students compose answers independently and then share with a partner. Have students collaborate with their partner to answer these questions:
 - a. What else does this text tell the reader about the society the artist lived in?
 - b. Does the artist seem to affirm or criticize his/her society? Explain. **(RL.9-10.1)**
6. Explain that students will be using the sociological approach to answer the big questions: What does *The Taming of the Shrew* tell the reader about Elizabethan society? What aspects of his society does Shakespeare seem to affirm or criticize?
7. Organize a “jig-saw” activity by assigning each student one of four guises: father (like Baptista), grown daughter (like Kate), poor servant (like Grumio), or rich man (like Hortensio). Then, group fathers together, daughters together, etc. Ask students to answer the following questions from the point-of-view of their assigned persona, citing textual evidence from the play to support their responses. **(RL.9-10.1)**
 - a. From your role in Elizabethan society, who has the power in your society and who doesn’t? Why? Provide textual evidence.
 - b. From your point of view, what are the official and unofficial rules (conventions, mores) of your society? What happens when a rule is broken? Provide textual evidence.
 - c. From your point of view in society, how should women behave? How should men behave? Provide textual evidence.
 - d. As you see it, what is valued in your society? (love, money, power, order, honesty, etc.) Provide textual evidence.
 - e. How does money affect individual’s lives in your society? Provide textual evidence.
 - f. How do opposing groups (e.g., parents and children, the rich and the poor, men and women)



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relate in this society? Provide textual evidence.

8. Next, assign groups that contain a father, a grown daughter, a poor servant, and a rich man. Ask students to discuss their responses to the questions and record points of agreement and disagreement and debate/defend points of disagreement. **(SL.9-10.1.a,d)**
9. With the whole group, ask students to use the contents of their small group discussions to answer this question: What does *The Taming of the Shrew* tell us (the modern reader) about Elizabethan society? Record responses. Then, ask students to share points of disagreement. Ask students how their assigned roles differed from each other. [Possible responses: gender, wealth, age, status.] Ask students what the points of disagreement tell us about the society in which Shakespeare lived. [Possible responses: Rules, behavior, expectations, etc. changed depending on gender, wealth, status, age. Society was not egalitarian. The privileged are more likely to support the status quo.] **(SL.9-10.a,d)**

Day Two

1. Explain that students will now confirm or refine the inferences they have made about Elizabethan society by researching aspects of the time period using nonfiction sources. During their research, students should also look for ways in which the world of *The Taming of the Shrew* conflicts with the Elizabethan world as described in nonfiction sources. This research will inform their answer to the big question “What aspects of his society does Shakespeare seem to affirm or criticize?” Ask students to reform their groups from activity #7 and to divide the questions below between them. Students should use print or electronic resources such as www.elizabethan.org or a database such as netTrekker or DestinyQuest to answer these questions:
 - a. Who has the power in this society and who doesn't? Why?
 - b. How should women behave in this society? How should men behave?
 - c. What is valued in this society? (love, money, power, order, honesty, etc.)
 - d. How do opposing groups (e.g., parents and children, the rich and the poor, men and women) relate in this society?
2. After independent research, group members should share their observations and discuss the following questions:
 - a. What aspects of Elizabethan society that we learned about in our research does the author either a.) not question, or b.) affirm or hold up for admiration?
 - b. What aspects of Elizabethan society that we learned about in our research does the author seem to hold up for criticism? **(RI.9-10.1, SL.9-10.a,d)**
3. Coming back together as a whole group, ask students to share their observations about the aspects of Elizabethan society that Shakespeare affirms and criticizes. Select two or three observations that caused disagreement or discussion among students during the jigsaw discussion and the research. Explain that students will now be participating in a four corners discussion. Ask students to imagine that they are William Shakespeare. The four corners of the room represent whether you (Shakespeare) fully approve, somewhat approve, somewhat disapprove, or fully disapprove of this aspect of Elizabethan society. Read the first observation and ask students to move into the corner that corresponds to how they think Shakespeare viewed this aspect of Elizabethan society. Then, ask students to work together to generate a valid reason with textual evidence that supports their opinion. Allow students to move to different corners if they find the reasons or evidence of peers persuasive. Repeat this procedure with other observations. **(RL.9-10.1, SL.9-10.a,d)**
4. Assess learning by asking students to respond to the following prompt: Overall, does Shakespeare seem to affirm or criticize the society represented in *The Taming of the Shrew*? Develop your response with logical reasoning and relevant textual evidence. **(W.9-10.1, W.9-10.4, L.9-10.1)**



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Resource Sheet 1

The Sociological Approach to Literary Criticism

A person who examines a text closely, looking for deeper meaning and insights, is called a literary critic. There are several different approaches a literary critic can take when closely examining a text. One approach is called the sociological approach. According to X. J. Kennedy and Dana Gioia's *Literature: An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry, and Drama*, when using the sociological approach, a critic "examines literature in the cultural, economic, and political context in which it is written or received." What does this mean? Let's break it down.

The critic might look at the society – or context – in which the text was written *or* s/he might look at the society in which the text is read or seen or heard. The critic might be asking, "What can the society that the author lived in tell me about his/her work?" or the critic might instead be asking, "What does this text mean to *our* society?"

What aspects of society might the critic examine? S/he might look at the culture of the society, including standards of behavior, etiquette, the relations between opposing groups (e.g., parents and children, the rich and the poor, men and women, religious beliefs, taboos, and moral values. The critic might also look at the economy and politics of the society, including its system of government, the rights of individuals, how wealth is distributed, and who holds the power.

To discover what a text can tell us about the society in which it was written, ask:

- Who has the power in this society and who doesn't? Why?
- What are the official and unofficial rules (conventions, mores) of this society? What happens when a rule is broken?
- How are women supposed to behave in this society? How are men supposed to behave? How do men and women relate?
- What is valued in this society? (love, money, power, order, honesty, etc.)
- How does money affect individual's lives in this society?
- How do opposing groups (e.g., parents and children, the rich and the poor, men and women) relate in this society?
- What type of government does this society have? How is the ruler chosen? What rights do individuals have?
- How is wealth distributed in this society?

To discover what a text can tell us about *our* society, ask:

- What aspects of this society would most readers find unacceptable? What ideas have changed?
- What aspects of this society would be admirable to most readers? What has changed?
- Why does our society value this text? What "speaks to us?"
- How do we view the characters, plot, and themes differently than an audience in another time and place?

To discover whether the author is affirming or criticizing his/her own society, ask:

- Does the author seem to think the way his society works is acceptable or problematic?
- What values, virtues, character traits, and actions does the author either a.) not question or b.) seem to hold up for admiration?
- What values, virtues, character traits, and actions does the author seem to hold up for criticism?



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Perspectives Length: 2 Days

RESOURCES

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