

| Lesson Guidance 3 | |
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| Grade | 10 |
| Unit | 4 |
| Selected Text(s) | <i>Sula</i> by Toni Morrison Chapter 1919 pages 7-16 Sula Chapter 1919 Sula Guided Notebook |
| Duration | Approx 1 day |

Plan with guidance from the [ELA Instructional Expectations Guide](#)

Learning Goal(s)

What should students understand about today's selected text?

Students will discuss the pros and cons of war and track the diction the author uses to convey a character's mental state after war. Students will analyze the function of diction in this chapter and write a paragraph from a character's perspective.

CCSS Alignment

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.3

Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.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).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.9-10.5

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.3

Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1

Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own



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| | clearly and persuasively. |
| End of lesson task <i>Formative assessment</i> | Using 1st person POV, write a paragraph from Shadrack's perspective about what it must have been like to walk out onto the street after being in the hospital for a year. |
| Knowledge Check <i>What do students need to know in order to access the text?</i> | <p>Background knowledge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Shadrack: name of a Biblical figure who walks into a fire without being harmed; also a minor character in the novel <i>Sula</i>● Events of World War I● Shell Shock: psychological disturbance caused by prolonged exposure to active warfare, especially being under bombardment● Post-traumatic Stress Disorder: A disorder in which a person has difficulty recovering after experiencing or witnessing a terrifying event● coping mechanisms: a strategy a person relies on to manage stress <p>Key terms (<i>domain specific terms to analyze the text</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● diction: specific words and phrases<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Abstract, Concrete, Formal, Informal, Colloquial, Slang● allusion: an expression designed to call something to mind without mentioning it explicitly; an indirect or passing reference● connotation: an idea or feeling that a word invokes in addition to its literal or primary meaning <p>Vocabulary Words (<i>words found in the text</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● fastidious: very attentive to and concerned about accuracy and detail● exhilarated: very happy, animated, or elated● repugnance: intense disgust● equilibrium: a state of physical balance; a calm state of mind● private: a soldier of the lowest military rank● Obscene: offensive or disgusting● Subsequent: coming after something in time; following |

Core Instruction

Text-centered questions and ways students will engage with the text

Opening Activity:

- In your opinion, when should a country go to war with someone else? Can war be entirely avoided or is it a necessary part of life and living among other people?
- On a T-chart, list at least 3 possible benefits of war and at least 3 possible downfalls of war. Discuss.

ELD Tasks and Scaffolds

Content Knowledge:

Read aloud for students the definition and history of the word shell-shock at [First World War.com - Encyclopedia - Shell Shock](http://FirstWorldWar.com-Encyclopedia-ShellShock). Explain that we will be introduced to a character named Shadrack in today's



reading. In the novel *Sula*, Toni Morrison makes several Biblical allusions or references. Shadrack is the name of a Biblical figure who walks into a fire without being harmed. In *Sula* Chapter 1919, Shadrack is a character who fought in WWI and is returning from the war profoundly shell shocked and traumatized by what he's seen and experienced. Toni Morrison uses specific **diction** or descriptive words to describe Shadrack's mental state after the war. The words chosen by the writer have a significant impact on the message.

Read aloud to students pages 7-8 (middle), pausing to track for understanding and defining vocabulary words as they appear. Demonstrate to students the specific diction that Morrison uses to Describe Shadrack. In discussing the shellfire, shouts and explosions all around Shadrack during the word, Morrison narrates to us that Shadrack is "blasted and permanently astonished" and "ravaged" by witnessing the "dirty gray explosions" and a "head [disappearing]" as "the body of a headless soldier ran on" with the "drip and slide of brain tissue." The specific words and phrases (or diction) that Morrison uses convey to us the horrors of war and the gravity of Shadrack's trauma.

Except for World War II, nothing ever interfered with the celebration of National Suicide Day. It had taken place every January third since 1920, although Shadrack, its founder, was for many years the only celebrant. **Blasted** and **permanently astonished** by the events of 1917, he had returned to Medallion handsome but **ravaged**, and even the most fastidious people in the town sometimes caught themselves dreaming of what he must have been like a few years back before he went off to war. A young man of hardly twenty, his head full of nothing and his mouth recalling the taste of lipstick, Shadrack had found himself in December, 1917, running with his comrades across a field in France. It was his first encounter with the enemy and he didn't know whether his company was running toward them or away. For several days they had been marching, keeping close to a stream that was frozen at its edges. At one point they crossed it, and no sooner had he stepped foot on the other side than the day was adangle with **shouts** and **explosions**. **Shellfire** was all around him, and though he knew that this was something called it, he could not muster up the proper feeling--the feeling that would accommodate it. He expected to be **terrified or exhilarated**--to feel something very strong. In fact, he felt only the bite of a nail in his boot, which **pierced** the ball of his foot whenever he came down on it. The day was **cold** enough to make his breath visible, and he wondered for a moment at the purity and whiteness of his own breath among the **dirty, gray explosions** surrounding him. He ran, bayonet fixed, deep in the great sweep of men flying across this field. **Wincing** at the pain in his foot, he turned his head a little to the right and saw the face of a soldier near him fly off. Before he could register **shock**, the rest of the soldier's **head disappeared** under the inverted soup bowl of his helmet. But stubbornly, taking no direction from the brain, **the body** of the headless soldier **ran on**, with energy and grace, ignoring altogether the **drip and slide of brain tissue** down its back.

Shared Reading:

Students will read the rest of Chapter 1919 (from pages 8-16) independently or aloud as a class, continuing to track Morrison's use of diction as Shadrack returns from the war and attempts to reintegrate into society.

- Have students brainstorm a list of diction Morrison uses to create an impact. Remember that diction is not entire sentences; diction is specific words or phrases an author uses to create an impact.
 - **Note:** *Students may need clarification about the multiple meanings of the word "private" as it is used on pages 9-10. Shadrack is being referred to as a private or a soldier but mistakenly thinks he is being called a secret.*

Teach the definition of the vocabulary words **as they appear in the text**.



ELD Tasks and Scaffolds

Independent Reading & Analysis:

Students can use the [Sula Chapter 1919](#) document as focus passages for the following questions:

- Why does the author use specific diction to describe Shadrack's food? What type of words draw your attention?
- Are there words with strong connotations that indicate strong emotions? Give examples. How does the diction convey Shadrack's feelings?
- Is the language general and abstract or specific and concrete? Give an example.
 - *Abstract diction is words and phrases used to describe qualities that cannot be perceived with our five senses.*
 - *Concrete diction consists of specific words that describe physical qualities or conditions. Relies on words that invoke a specific effect in order to bring the reader into the event being described.*
- Is the language formal, informal, colloquial, or slang? Give an example.
 - *Formal diction involves choosing descriptive, precise words that are polite and proper.*
 - *Informal diction is the relaxed, conversational language that we use every day.*
 - *Colloquial diction is the use of informal, local expressions which may be different in different regions or communities.*
 - *Slang is the use of words that are newly coined, or even impolite.*

Student Discourse:

After this chapter, it is likely that many students will feel confused by the concept of "National Suicide Day" as defined and instituted by Shadrack. Ask students to brainstorm what "National Suicide Day" is and why Shadrack created it.

- It is important for students to understand that Shadrack created "National Suicide Day" as a **coping mechanism** to control his fears. Shadrack does not kill himself or others; instituting "National Suicide Day" is his method of attempting to control death, having witnessed much horror in World War I. Every January 3rd, Shadrack marches through town ringing a cowbell and carrying a hangman's rope. He shouts that people should kill themselves or each other if they want to.

Discuss whether Shadrack's coping mechanisms are healthy or not. As a class, brainstorm a list of healthy coping mechanisms.

Formative Assessment:

Using 1st person POV, write a paragraph from Shadrack's perspective about what it must have been like to walk out onto the street after being in the hospital for a year.

ELD Tasks and Scaffolds

Optional Extension Activity:

- Students may want to begin tracking evidence on the [Sula Guided Notebook](#) to make note of National Suicide Day as a symbol and Shadrack as a character.
- List the benefits and the disadvantages to coping strategies. What are some other ways Shadrack could have dealt with his fears? Does stress or joy require more coping skills? What does coping




provide to the person? Does it actually lessen the fear?

Fluency, Comprehension and Writing Supports

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| Fluency | Fluency Protocols |
| Sentence Comprehension | Juicy Sentence protocol with sample sentence |
| Writing | Pattan Writing Scope and Sequence Quality of Writing: II: Content: C: Select content to achieve purpose D: Write using domain specific vocabulary |

Additional Supports

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| ELD Practices | See in Lesson Guidance: ELD Interacting with the text |
|  ELD ELA Tasks an... | ELD Tasks and Scaffolds |
| SpEd Practice | Practices to promote Tier 1 access |
| MTSS Practices | Practices to promote Tier 1 access |
| Enrichment Practices | Practices to promote Tier 1 access |