

Lesson Exemplar for English Language Learners/Multilingual Language Learners

Grade 9 Module 1, Unit 2, Lesson 1: A Work of Art Is Good if It Has Arisen Out of Necessity

Diane August
American Institutes for Research

Diane Staehr Fenner
Sydney Snyder
DSF Consulting

January 2018

Center for **ENGLISH**
LANGUAGE Learners

at American Institutes for Research ■

1000 Thomas Jefferson Street NW
Washington, DC 20007-3835
202-403-5000 | TTY 877-334-3499
www.air.org

Copyright © 2018 New York State Education Department. All rights reserved.

OFFICE of BILINGUAL EDUCATION
and WORLD LANGUAGES

55 Hanson Place – Suite 594
Brooklyn, NY 11217
718-722-2445
www.nysed.gov/bilingual-ed



New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity



www.air.org

Contents

	Page
Teacher Guide	1
Grade 9, Module 1, Unit 2: Lesson 1 A Work of Art Is Good if It Has Arisen Out of Necessity	2
Overview	2
1. Introduction of Unit and Lesson Agenda	4
2. Homework Accountability	6
3. Read-Aloud of Rilke’s Letter One	7
4. Close Reading and Evidence-Based Discussion	9
5. Text-Dependent Questions (TDQs) and Activities	14
6. Quick Write	16
7. Closing (Homework)	18
Teacher Assessment	20
Assessment Questions for Grade 9, “From Rainer Maria Rilke’s Letters to a Young Poet”	21
Paris	21
Explanatory Writing Rubric Grades 9	26
Student Assessment	27
From Rainer Maria Rilke’s Letters to a Young Poet	28
Paris	28

Teacher Guide

Grade 9, Module 1, Unit 2: Lesson 1

A Work of Art Is Good if It Has Arisen Out of Necessity

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/grade-9-ela-module-1-unit-2-lesson-1>

Overview

In this unit, students continue to practice and refine routines such as close reading, annotation, identification of evidence, and participation in collaborative discussions. Students study the authors' use of language to create meaning and build characters. They also build vocabulary, write routinely, and, at the end of the unit, develop an essay that synthesizes ideas in the two texts.

Students read excerpts from two texts (nonfiction and fiction), Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet* and Mitchell's *Black Swan Green*. These two texts are juxtaposed, allowing for a study of key ideas and characters across texts. In the Rilke letters, students consider, through nonfiction, how the narrator introduces and develops the central tenets of his advice to the young poet. In *Black Swan Green*, students return to some of the broad ideas they investigated in Unit 1 because Jason, the young narrator, is trying to fit in but is dealing with very different challenges. As students read and talk about these texts, they dive deeply into a study of academic language and examine how both authors use this language to develop or describe their characters and their dilemmas.

This is the first lesson in Unit 2. As noted in the introduction, AIR provides scaffolding differentiated for ELL students at the entering (EN), emerging (EM), transitioning (TR), and expanding (EX) levels of English language proficiency in this prototype. We indicate the level(s) for which the scaffolds are appropriate in brackets following the scaffold recommendations (e.g., “[EN]”). Where “[ALL]” is indicated, it means that the scaffold is intended for all levels of students. Scaffolds are gradually reduced as the student becomes more proficient in English.

The following table displays the Public Consulting Group lesson components as well as the additional supports and new activities (scaffolds and routines) AIR has provided to support ELLs/MLLs.

A Work of Art Is Good if It Has Arisen Out of Necessity

Public Consulting Group Lesson Component	AIR Additional Supports	AIR New Activities
Introduction of Unit and Lesson Agenda		
Review of agenda and standards	Familiarize ELLs/MLLs with meaning of <i>genre</i> and features of fiction and nonfiction and letters. Convert standards into student-friendly language; provide the RI standard to students to make comparisons between RL and RI standards more apparent.	

Public Consulting Group Lesson Component	AIR Additional Supports	AIR New Activities
Homework Accountability		
Students work in pairs to discuss previous lesson's homework assignment.	Provide guidance to ELLs/MLLs to help them locate and select text at their independent reading levels in English or in their home language. Provide sentence frames to help ELLs/MLLs engage in discussion.	
Read Aloud of Rilke's Letter One		
Students listen to text read aloud.	Divide the sentences into smaller sections and ask students to answer questions to gauge their level of comprehension.	Enhance background knowledge; develop vocabulary.
Close Reading and Evidence-Based Discussion		
Students work in small groups to discuss questions related to the text.	Divide text into smaller sections and ask supplementary questions to develop ELLs/MLLs' understanding of key words and phrases. Provide text in German to build English-proficient student's awareness of difficulty of reading in a second language.	Engage students in scaffolded close readings.
Text-Dependent Questions and Activities		
Students work in small groups to discuss questions related to the text.	Students have been prepared through scaffolding in the previous activity. Provide glossed vocabulary and supplementary questions.	
Quick Write		
Students respond briefly to a writing prompt.	Rewrite the prompt to make it more comprehensible and provide students with a graphic organizer to support them in introducing the text and citing evidence from it. Provide sentence starters or frames for ELLs/MLLs who require additional support. Give students the opportunity to complete this activity in their home language first. Provide students with an easier text selection and model responses for a writing prompt that requires an introduction and evidence.	Provide a graphic organizer to help ELLs/MLLs pull together the information they need to write.

Text

From Rainer Maria Rilke's Letters to a Young Poet:

Paris

February 17, 1903

Dear Sir,

Your letter arrived just a few days ago. I want to thank you for the great confidence you have placed in me. That is all I can do. I cannot discuss your verses; for any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me. Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism: they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings. Things aren't all so tangible and sayable as people would usually have us believe; most experiences are unsayable, they happen in a space that no word has ever entered, and more unsayable than all other things are works of art, those mysterious existences, whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life.

1. Introduction of Unit and Lesson Agenda**Public Consulting Group Teacher and Student Actions**

Teachers briefly introduce the unit and the texts: Letter One from Rainer Maria Rilke's *Letters to a Young Poet*, and "Hangman" and "Solarium," two chapters from *Black Swan Green* by David Mitchell, and share the purpose of this unit: The stated purpose of the unit is "to continue building upon reading standards RI.9-10.1, RI.9-10.3, and RI.9-10.4 and to consider how these standards operate in the context of informational texts."

AIR Additional Supports

In Unit 1, the students focused on fiction. Now they are reading for information using a nonfiction text (Rilke) as well as fiction (Mitchell). Point out the differences between the genres and draw the distinction between the features of poetry, letters (Rilke), and fiction (Mitchell).

In addition, include an essential question to help students focus on the central point of the passage.

AIR Instructions for Teachers

- The introduction might be something like: In this lesson, you will continue close reading, annotating, and learning vocabulary from context. The genre (the form of writing) in this lesson is a nonfiction letter. "Genre" means a category of literature or some other form of art or entertainment. Some examples of different genres in literature are poems, letters, short stories, and dramas. Some examples of genres in music are hip hop and pop music. There are also different genres of video games, such as action and simulation. The genre of nonfiction letters is different from the genre of writing in Unit 1, which was a genre of fiction (not true or real writing) called a short story. In Unit 1, we will read texts that are nonfiction (true or real events) as well as nonfiction. Think about this question during these three lessons: "In Rilke's view, what does it mean to be an artist (in this case, a poet)?"

AIR Instructions for Students

During the next three lessons, think about this question: In Rilke's view, what does it mean to be an artist (poet)?

Public Consulting Group Teacher and Student Actions

Teacher displays the Reading Informational Text (RI) standards and reads them aloud as students follow along; teacher asks students to work with partners to compare the RI standards to the Reading Literature (RL) standards from the previous unit.

AIR Additional Supports

We recommend that the teacher do the following:

- First review the RL standards with students.
- Convert the RI standards into student-friendly language as was done with the RL standards in the previous unit.
- Where RI and RL standards differ, list each RI standard next to its corresponding RL standard for easy comparison.
- Explain the new RI standards to the students.
- Model how to apply each new RI standard to a different level of text.
- Give students the opportunity to work in pairs to compare and contrast the RL and RI standards that differ.
- Debrief students.

The comparison for ELLs/MLLs can be scaffolded but may take a lot of time, and so another option is to just present the informational text standards with student-friendly objectives and review them with students. Include the RL standard and objective for 9-10.3 and ask students to figure out what is different.

In the section that follows, we have prototyped student-accessible objectives.

AIR Instructions for Teachers

- Review and explain the RL standards with students.
- Model how to apply each new RI standard to a different complexity level of text.
- Pair the students to compare and contrast the RL and RI standards that differ.
- Discuss with the class.

AIR Instructions for Students

- In this lesson, you will practice close reading and learning vocabulary from context. You will have a chance to practice meeting these standards with an easier piece of text.
- 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.
- *Student Objective RI. 9-10.1:* I will answer questions about the text by using information that is stated in the text (explicit text-based information) and by drawing inferences from the text (coming up with answers that are not stated in the text).
- RL. 9-10. 3: Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of the text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.
- RI.9-10.3: Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.
- *Student Objective RI.9-10.3:* I will analyze or examine how the author writes about a series of ideas or events. When I analyze how the author writes about a series of ideas or events, I will examine these ideas and events carefully. I will describe the order of main ideas or events and how they author introduces and develops them. I also will analyze connections between the ideas or events in the texts.

- 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.
- *Student Objective RL 9-10.4:* I will determine or figure out the meanings of words and phrases in the text. I will analyze or study carefully how words in the text affect meaning and tone or style.

2. Homework Accountability

Public Consulting Group Teacher and Student Actions

Students to talk with a partner about how they can apply their focus standard to their text. The teacher leads a brief (3- to 5-minute) sharing on the previous lesson's Accountable Independent Reading homework assignment. The teacher selects several students (or student pairs) to explain how they applied their focus standard to their Accountable Independent Reading text.

AIR Additional Supports

So that students can do their homework, provide guidance to all ELLs/MLLs to help them locate text at their independent reading level. Encourage ELLs/MLLs literate in their home language to read text in their home language, especially if the selections deal with the themes of the mainstream English reading selections [EN, EM]. Provide ELLs/MLLs with support so that they can take part in the discussions of their homework. ELLs/MLLs in the Entering and Emerging levels of language development also could be provided the sentence frames that follow to support them as they complete their homework. [EN, EM, TR]

AIR Instructions for Teachers

- Support ELLs/MLLs to locate text in their home language or in English that can be read independently.
- Display the focus standard: *Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.*
- Provide students the following sentence frames to support them as they discuss how they applied their focus standard to their Accountable Independent Reading text. [EN, EM, TR]

AIR Instructions for Students

Use the following sentence frames to discuss how you used your focus standard in analyzing the text. [EN, EM, TR]

1. The title of the text I read was _____.
2. My text's main idea is _____.
3. Explicit evidence from the text means evidence from the text that is stated clearly. Explicit evidence that supports the main idea of the text is _____.
4. In addition to the text's main idea, the text may have a different meaning that is not as obvious. I infer (think or conclude) that the text I read for homework also may mean _____.
5. Evidence from the text that supports my inference (or what I infer) is _____.

3. Read-Aloud of Rilke’s Letter One

Public Consulting Group Teacher and Student Actions

Teacher distributes copies of Letter One from Rilke’s *Letters to a Young Poet* and the page that documents the title and publication date and asks volunteers to answer the following question: *What can the title reveal about the form of this text?*

AIR Additional Supports

Rephrase the question to make its intent clearer:

What does the title reveal (tell us) about the form (kind) of text?

Public Consulting Group Teacher and Student Actions

Teacher reads Letter One aloud, has students follow along with their own texts. Because the letter is relatively short and the language (not the ideas) is less complex than Russel’s St. Lucy’s, ([see this page for the Module-at-a-Glance Calendar](#)) an uninterrupted Read-Aloud is recommended. Teacher allows students to pause and reflect if necessary.

AIR Additional Supports

- For ELLs/MLLs, divide the text in small sections because it is conceptually complex.
- Ask students to answer several questions about the text to see how much they understood without support.

AIR Instructions for Teachers (Pre-assessment)

Ask students to answer the following questions. [ALL]

6. Who is writing this letter?
7. Who is the letter being sent to?
8. What does the author of the letter (Rilke) think about criticizing works of art?
9. What does Rilke mean by “most experiences are unsayable”?

Enhancing Background Knowledge (AIR New 1 Activity for Read-Aloud)

AIR Additional Supports

Provide letter in student’s home language. The model is for Spanish speakers but to the extent practicable should be supplied in all the home languages of students in the classroom.

AIR Instructions for Teachers

Prior to engaging with the text, give all ELLs/MLLs an opportunity to read the text in their home language. Ideally there also would be an audio version of this text.

AIR Instructions for Students

Read the text in your home language.

Spanish Translation of the Text

París, a 17 de febrero de 1903

Muy distinguido señor:

Hace sólo pocos días que me alcanzó su carta, por cuya grande y afectuosa confianza quiero darle las gracias. Sabré apenas hacer algo más. No puedo entrar en minuciosas consideraciones sobre la índole de sus versos, porque me es del todo ajena cualquier intención de crítica. Y es que, para tomar contacto con una obra de arte, nada, en efecto, resulta menos acertado que el lenguaje crítico, en el cual todo se reduce siempre a unos equívocos más o menos felices.

Enhancing Background Knowledge (AIR New Activity 2 for Read Aloud)

AIR Additional Supports Develop student’s background knowledge through shared interactive reading of text.	
AIR Instructions for Teachers There are two sources of background information. The first is historical context—a brief biography of Rilke and information about the letters. It will help ELLs/MLLs understand the context in which the letters are being written and make it easier for them to follow this very subtle text. The second source of background information introduces students to the concept of art criticism and the idea that criticism is not necessarily finding fault with something, but rather evaluating it. It is important for students to understand this difference so they can complete the quick write at the end of this lesson. Use sentence frames for ELLs/MLLs at lower levels of English proficiency. [EN, EM, TR]	
AIR Instructions for Students	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Read the two texts below. The underlined words are defined in the glossary. ▪ Answer the questions that follow. 	
Historical Context	Glossary
Rainer Maria Rilke was a writer who lived from 1875 until 1926. His writings include one novel, several <u>collections</u> of poetry, and several volumes (books) of correspondence (letters). This letter is one of the letters he wrote to <u>Franz Xaver Kappus</u> when Kappus was a 19-year-old officer in the military. Kappus was not sure if he should become a military <u>officer</u> or become a <u>poet</u> . He asked for Rilke’s <u>advice</u> about the quality of his (Kappus’s) poetry and in this letter Rilke is responding to (answering) Kappus.	<i>collection</i> —a group of similar things <i>officer</i> —a person with a high position in the military (captain, general, etc.) <i>poet</i> —a person who writes verse or poems <i>advice</i> —recommendation, opinion
Literary Criticism	Glossary
The purpose of criticizing or <u>critiquing</u> a poem is usually to help the writer improve the poem. The person critiquing the poem, or the reviewer, does not have to like the poem. Liking a poem is personal. The reviewer of the poem needs to point out the parts of the <u>poem</u> that are good and those that are not. The writer may or may not take the suggestions. Other types of art (e.g., painting and music) also can be critiqued.	<i>critique</i> —review and give feedback about something <i>poem</i> —a text written in verses
QUESTIONS	
10. What is the purpose of critiquing a poem? [ALL] The purpose of critiquing a poem is _____ . [EN, EM, TR].	
11. What does the person critiquing the poem do? [ALL] The person critiquing the poem _____ . [EN, EM, TR].	
12. What does the author do with the suggestions? [ALL] The author _____ the suggestions. [EN, EM, TR].	

Building Vocabulary (AIR New Activity 3 for Read Aloud)

AIR Additional Supports Develop student’s background knowledge through shared interactive reading of text.
AIR Instructions for Teachers

- **Focus on Words:** Students are pretaught words that are important for understanding the text, frequent across content areas, and abstract. Words that are essential for understanding paragraph 1 are *criticism*, *misunderstanding*, *tangible*, and *sayable* (as well as *unsayable*). In this passage, the word *tangible* is the only word on the Academic Word List. Use extended instructional techniques to pre-teach these words. Other words are identified for instruction because they are frequent in the text and critical to understanding main ideas, although they tend to be less abstract. Provide students with a glossary for these words (see the example that follows). As students encounter the words during close reading, they rewrite them in their journal. For homework, they are asked to find examples from the text, draw pictures or provide brief definitions, and indicate whether the words are cognates (for students whose home language shares cognates with English). During this component and prior to the close read, read the text aloud (or have students read the text with a partner); briefly elaborate on glossed definitions for words that might need more explication, and use second-language teaching techniques (gestures, pointing to pictures, translation) to clarify word meanings. Also give students opportunities to apply word-learning strategies they have acquired to figure out word meanings they do not know. Last, it is important that students have versions of the text with glossed words underlined.
- **Words for pre-teaching with more elaborated techniques:** *criticism*, *misunderstanding*, *tangible*, and *sayable* (as well as *unsayable*)
- **Words for defining in context or in glossaries:** *space*, *confidence*, *discuss*, *foreign*, *fortunate*, *mysterious*, *existences*, *endure*, *transitory*

AIR Instructions for Students

Vocabulary Development: Your teacher will pre-teach several key words and read the passage aloud to you (or have you read it with a partner) and explain several other words that might be confusing. As you read closely in the next section, you will notice that there are some words that are underlined. These words appear in your glossaries. They have definitions alongside the text. When you come to a glossed word in the text, find it in your glossary, review the definition, and rewrite the word. When you have time after this lesson, complete your glossary. Enter the phrase in the text that includes the target word. Write a word or phrase to help you remember the new word. If you are a Spanish speaker or a speaker of a language that shares cognates with English, indicate whether the word is a cognate.

Word	Rewrite the Word	English Definition	Example From Text	Phrase	Translation	Cognate?

4. Close Reading and Evidence-Based Discussion

Public Consulting Group Teacher and Student Actions

Teacher asks students to do the following:

- Conduct an independent close reading of the first paragraph of the letter and annotate unfamiliar vocabulary (put a box around unfamiliar words and phrases).
- Pay close attention to words that look familiar but may have different meanings than the meanings you know because many words in English have multiple meanings.
- Go over annotations with a partner and note words they can figure out from context.
- Share with the class words they have figured out from context and words they are still confused about.

AIR Additional Supports

- ELLs/MLLs need more direct instruction because most of the vocabulary will be unfamiliar, and for this activity prepare them with some direct instruction of select vocabulary and a glossary (see new activity 3).
- Divide text into phrases or clauses, according to the way they are structured. In the selection, compound sentences are broken down into two or more sentences and phrases. For example, the sentence “Things aren’t all so tangible and sayable as people would usually have us believe; most experiences are unsayable, they happen in a space that no word has ever entered, and more unsayable than all other things are works of art, those mysterious existences, whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life” can be broken down or chunked into six pieces. Examples of how to divide the text follow.
- Ask students to work together to supply the meaning of each section of text. Examples of questions for students follow. Students can then be prompted to paraphrase each chunk with a partner. They then pull all their chunks together and provide the meaning of the sentence.
- We have included the original German text here as an attempt to equalize status in the classroom and make English-proficient peers aware of the challenge that ELLs/MLLs face in reading text cold in another language. We suggest that English-only speakers do a cold read of the German text and then work together to answer the English questions related to vocabulary. ELLs/MLLs read the text in English.

AIR Instructions for Teachers

- Have English speakers read the text in German and then work with a partner to answer questions.
- Have ELLs/MLLs read the text in English as they have already read the text in their home language and then work with a partner to answer questions.

AIR Instructions for English-Speaking Students

- Read the text in German and work with a partner to answer the questions.

Working With German Text

Paris am 17. February 1903

Sehr geehrter Herr,

Ihr Brief hat mich erst vor einigen Tagen erreicht. Ich will Ihnen danken für sein großes und liebes Vertrauen. Ich kann kaum mehr. Ich kann nicht auf die Art Ihrer Verse eingehen; denn mir liegt jede kritische Absicht zu fern. Mit nichts kann man ein Kunst-Werk so wenig berühren als mit kritischen Worten: es kommt dabei immer auf mehr oder minder glückliche Mißverständnisse heraus. Die Dinge sind alle nicht so faßbar und sagbar, als man uns meistens glauben machen möchte; die meisten Ereignisse sind unsagbar, vollziehen sich in einem Raume, den nie ein Wort betreten hat, und unsagbarer als alle sind die Kunst-Werke, geheimnisvolle Existenzen, deren Leben neben dem unseren, das vergeht, dauert.

AIR Instructions for ELLs/MLLs

- Read the text in English and work with a partner to answer the questions.

Paris February 17, 1903

Dear Sir,

Your letter arrived just a few days ago. I want to thank you for the great confidence you have placed in me. That is all I can do. I cannot discuss your verses; for any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me. Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism: they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings. Things aren't all so tangible and sayable as people would usually have us believe; most experiences are unsayable, they happen in a space that no word has ever entered, and more unsayable than all other things are works of art, those mysterious existences, whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life.

Mastering Meaning of Phrases	Glossary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Things aren't all so <u>tangible</u> and <u>sayable</u> as people would usually have us believe</i> I think this means _____. ▪ <i>most <u>experiences</u> are <u>unsayable</u></i> I think this means _____. ▪ <i>they happen in a space that no word has ever entered</i> I think this means _____. ▪ <i>more <u>unsayable</u> than all other things are works of art</i> I think this means _____. ▪ <i>those <u>mysterious existences</u></i> I think this means _____. ▪ <i>whose life <u>endures</u> beside our own small, <u>transitory</u> life</i> I think this means _____. ▪ <i>Things aren't all so <u>tangible</u> and <u>sayable</u> as people would usually have us believe; most <u>experiences</u> are <u>unsayable</u>, they happen in a space that no word has ever entered, and more <u>unsayable</u> than all other things are works of art, those <u>mysterious existences</u>, whose life <u>endures</u> beside our own small, <u>transitory</u> life”</i> I think this sentence means _____ _____. 	<p><i>tangible</i>—able to be sensed by touch</p> <p><i>sayable</i>—something you can say</p> <p><i>experiences</i>—something a person has done or lived through</p> <p><i>mysterious</i>—not known and not able to be explained or made clear</p> <p><i>existences</i>—the state of being alive or real</p> <p><i>endures</i>—continues through time</p> <p><i>transitory</i>—lasting for only a short time; brief</p>

Engaging in Scaffolded Close Reading (AIR New Activity 1 for Close Reading and Evidence-Based Discussion)

AIR Additional Supports for Scaffolded Close Readings

- Partner students and ask a guiding question(s) and supplementary questions that guide students to the answers for the guiding question(s). Ask students to use their glossaries to find the meanings of unknown words and phrases.
- For ELLs/MLLs at the entering and emerging levels, provide sentence frames. For ELLs/MLLs at the transitioning level, provide sentence starters.

- After this close reading, ask students to read the portion of the text again on their own and locate any other words they would like to understand and any additional questions they might have about the text.
- Debrief with the class and have students help each other to define words and clarify passages. The teacher supports students as necessary.

AIR Instructions for Teachers for First Scaffolded Close Reading

- In working with ELLs/MLLs, provide more direct instruction and support to enable students to make sense of text.
- Pair ELLs/MLLs with more proficient partners. For ELLs/MLLs at the entering and emerging levels of proficiency, it helps to pair them with a bilingual partner who is English-proficient.
- First, pose a guiding question(s) about the text that aligns with reading standards.
- Students work together to answer supplementary questions that will lead them to a fuller comprehension of the text and to the answer(s) to the guiding question(s). In partner work, students each read the question to themselves and then work together to answer the question.
- Discuss student responses to the supplementary questions and have students correct their answers.
- Before answering the guiding question in writing, students discuss their answers as a group. After the discussion, students enter their responses.

AIR Instructions for Students for First Scaffolded Close Reading

In this close reading, you will be answering questions about the text. Your teacher will read the guiding question. Read the guiding question to yourself and then work with a partner to answer the supplementary questions. Your teacher will review the answers with the class. Then, you will discuss the guiding question(s) with your teacher and the class. Finally, you will complete the response(s) to the guiding question(s).

Word Bank

discuss	word	confidence
misunderstandings	young	life
poet	verses	sayable

Guiding Question

- Why can't Rilke discuss the verses that the younger poet has sent him?

Text	Glossed Vocabulary (suggestions)
Your letter arrived just a few days ago. I want to thank you for the great confidence you have placed in me. That is all I can do. I cannot discuss your verses; for any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me. Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism: they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings. Things aren't all so tangible and sayable as people would usually have us believe; most experiences are unsayable, they happen in a space that no word has ever entered, and more unsayable than all other things are works of art, those mysterious existences, whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life.	confidence, discuss, foreign, fortunate, mysterious, existence, endure, transitory

Supplementary Questions

13. What letter did Rilke receive a few days ago? [ALL]
 He received a letter from a _____. [EN, EM]
 He received _____. [TR]
14. What does he thank the young poet for? [ALL]
 He thanks the young poet for having _____ in him. [EN, EM]
 He thanks the young poet for _____. [TR]
15. What can't Rilke do? [ALL]
 Rilke cannot _____ the _____. [EN, EM]
 Rilke cannot _____. [TR]
16. What are words of criticism? [ALL]
 Words of criticism are _____. [EN, EM, TR]
17. What do "words of criticism" result in? [ALL]
 They result in more or less fortunate _____. [EN, EM]
 They result in _____. [TR]
18. They result in misunderstandings for two reasons. What is the first reason? [ALL]
 The first reason is that experiences are not tangible and _____. [EN, EM]
 The first reason is _____. [TR]
19. What does it mean for an experience to be unsayable? [ALL]
 It means that they have happened in a space where no has entered. [EN, EM]
 It means that _____. [TR]
 Work with a partner to put this into your own words. [ALL]
20. Works of art are (mysterious) and they endure beside our own _____. Works of art are _____. [TR]

Guiding Question

- Why can't Rilke discuss the verses that the younger poet has sent him?

- Rilke can't discuss the verses because _____. [EN, EM, TR]

AIR Instructions for Teachers for Second Scaffolded Close Reading

After this close reading, we ask students to read the portion of the text on their own and locate any other words they would like to understand and any additional questions they might have about the text. We debrief with the class and have students help each other to define words and clarify passages. The teacher supports students as necessary.

AIR Instructions for Students for Second Scaffolded Close Reading

- Now read the passage once more. Star up to five words you still do not understand and write them in the spaces below.
- Underline sections of the text that still confuse you and prepare questions about these sections. [ELLs/MLLs at the entering and emerging levels of English proficiency can prepare these questions in their home language.]

21. Write up to five words or phrases you still do not know.

— _____
 — _____
 — _____
 — _____
 — _____

22. Write questions for the sections of the text you still do not understand.

— _____
 — _____
 — _____
 — _____
 — _____

5. Text-Dependent Questions (TDQs) and Activities

Public Consulting Group Teacher and Student Actions

Teacher displays chunks of text with associated TDQs for students to discuss in pairs; students record responses in preparation for sharing; teacher leads a brief discussion of students' responses, reminding students to use evidence from the text for their answers.

AIR Additional Supports

- ELLs/MLLs are prepared to do this through all the preceding activities.
- Provide glossed vocabulary to help ELLs/MLLs understand the questions. The words that might be glossed are listed next to the supplementary questions.

AIR Instructions for Teachers

- Display the sections of text for students to discuss in pairs.
- Instruct the students to record their responses to later share with the class.

AIR Instructions for Students

- Your teacher will show you small sections of the text and ask questions about the text.
- Discuss these sections of the text in pairs and answer the questions.
- Use the glossary to help you with unfamiliar vocabulary.

Supplementary Questions

“Your letter arrived just a few days ago. I want to thank you for the great confidence you have placed in me.”

TDQ 1: What might Rilke’s use of the word *confidence* reveal about the contents of the young poet’s initial letter?

To supplement the first TDQ, we suggest providing ELLs/MLLs some initial supplementary questions before they work with TDQ 1.

23. What is the young poet asking Rilke to do? [ALL]

The young poet is asking Rilke to _____. [EN, EM, TR]

24. Why might this action require confidence? [ALL]

This action might require confidence because [the letter is personal] _____. [EN, EM, TR]

Glossed Vocabulary (suggestions)

arrive, confidence,
place in, reveal,
contents

Supplementary Questions

Glossed Vocabulary (suggestions)

<p>“I cannot discuss your verses; for any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me.”</p> <p>TDQ 2: What might Rilke’s use of the word <i>foreign</i> reveal about the relationship he perceives between art and criticism?</p> <p>TDQ 3: What can you infer about the purpose of the young poet’s letter from Rilke’s refusal?</p> <p>To supplement the second and third TDQs, we suggest providing ELLs/MLLs the following supplementary questions:</p> <p>25. <i>Foreign</i> means “strange or unfamiliar.”</p> <p>26. By using the word <i>foreign</i>, Rilke thinks art and criticism are _____ . [ALL]</p> <p>27. <i>Infer</i> means conclude, deduce, or figure out. <i>Refusal</i> means decision not to do something. What can you infer about the purpose of the young poet’s letter from Rilke’s refusal to provide criticism? [ALL] I can infer the purpose of the young poet’s letter is _____ . [EN, EM, TR]</p>	<p>art, criticism, infer, foreign, verses, perceive, refusal</p>
<p>Supplementary Questions</p> <p>“Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism: they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings.”</p> <p>TDQ 4: According to Rilke, what results from criticism?</p> <p>TDQ 5: What is Rilke saying about the power of criticism to influence art? Use evidence from the text to support your response.</p> <p>To supplement the fourth and fifth TDQs, we suggest providing ELLs/MLLs the following supplementary question:</p> <p>28. Why would Rilke refer to misunderstandings as “fortunate”? [ALL] He would refer to misunderstandings as fortunate because _____ . [EN, EM, TR]</p>	<p>Glossed Vocabulary (suggestions) fortunate, influence, response</p>
<p>Supplementary Questions</p> <p>“Things aren’t all so tangible and sayable as people would usually have us believe; most experiences are unsayable, they happen in a space that no word has ever entered, and more unsayable than all other things are works of art, those mysterious existences, whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life.”</p> <p>TDQ 6: What words repeat in this passage? What belief does Rilke challenge through these repetitions?</p> <p>TDQ 7: What “life” does Rilke attribute to works of art? How does the life of art compare to human life? It may be necessary to offer students a definition of the word <i>transitory</i> as meaning “something that doesn’t last very long.”</p> <p>To supplement the sixth and seventh TDQs, we suggest providing ELLs/MLLs the following supplementary questions:</p> <p>29. What does <i>say</i> mean? [ALL] <i>Say</i> means _____ . [EN, EM, TR]</p>	<p>Glossed Vocabulary (suggestions) tangible, mysterious, existence, endure, transitory, challenge</p>

30. The suffix <i>-able</i> means “capable of.” What does <i>sayable</i> mean? (note that <i>sayable</i> is not a real word but that Rilke created it) [ALL] <i>Sayable</i> means _____ . [EN, EM, TR]	
31. What does <i>unsayable</i> mean? [ALL] <i>Unsayable</i> means _____ . [EN, EM, TR]	

6. Quick Write

Public Consulting Group Teacher and Student Actions

Teacher introduces the Quick Write, shares the quick write question, and considers sharing a model response that indicates how to cite evidence from text. Students work together to complete the Quick Write.

AIR Additional Supports

- In preparing ELLs/MLLs to complete the Quick Write, rewrite the prompt to make it more comprehensible and provide students with a graphic organizer to support them in introducing the text and citing evidence from it.
- Provide sentence starters or frames for ELLs/MLLs who require additional support [EN, EM, TR].
- For students who are literate in their home language and are at the entering and emerging level of English proficiency, give them the opportunity to complete this activity in their home language first. Then have them translate it to English with the help of the teacher or a bilingual partner who shares their home language and is more proficient in English.
- Finally, another support would be to provide students with an easier text selection and model responses for a writing prompt that requires an introduction and evidence.

AIR Instructions for Teachers

- Introduce Quick Write.
- Share the Quick Write question with the students.
- Optional: Share a model response.

AIR Instructions for Students

Work independently to write a response to the essay prompt in the space below. Be sure to use evidence from the text to support your thoughts. Use your graphic organizer to help you fill in the spaces.

Writing Prompt

What relationship is Rilke establishing between language and art? How does this support his assertions about the usefulness of criticism? What evidence supports your thinking?

Text

Your letter arrived just a few days ago. I want to thank you for the great confidence you have placed in me. That is all I can do. I cannot discuss your verses; for any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me. Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism: they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings. Things aren't all so tangible and sayable as people would usually have us believe; most experiences are unsayable, they happen in a space that no word has ever entered, and more unsayable than all other things are works of art, those mysterious existences, whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life.

32. Rilke establishes a relationship or connection between words of criticism (language) and verses or poetry (art).

[Introduction—Create sentence frames and starters for the introductory sentences. [EN, EM, TR]

<p>Rilke establishes a _____ or connection between _____ and verses or _____ (art). [EN, EM]</p> <p>Rilke establishes a _____. [TR]</p> <p>33. Rilke believes <u>language</u> should not be used to <u>criticize art</u>.</p> <p>[Evidence—Provide sentence frames and starters that enable students to cite evidence from the text to support their thoughts. [EN, EM, TR]</p> <p>Rilke believes that _____ should not be used to _____. [EN, EM]</p> <p>Rilke believes _____. [TR]</p> <p>34. <u>Language</u> should not be used to criticize <u>art</u> because most experiences and art are not so tangible and <u>sayable</u> as people think.</p> <p>[Evidence—Provide sentence frames that enable students to cite evidence from the text to support their thoughts. [EN, EM, TR]</p> <p>_____ should not be used to _____ art because most _____ and _____ are not so _____ and _____ as people think. [EN, EM]</p> <p>Language should not _____. [TR]</p> <p>35. Therefore, Rilke believes language should not be used to criticize art because it leads to <u>misunderstandings</u> or incorrect understandings.</p> <p>[Evidence—Provide sentence frames that enable students to cite evidence from the text to support their thoughts. EN, EM, TR]</p> <p>Therefore, _____ believes _____ should not be used to _____ because it leads to misunderstandings or _____ understandings. [EN, EM]</p> <p>Therefore _____. [TR]</p>
--

Preparing for the Quick Write (AIR New Activity for the Quick Write)

<p>AIR Additional Supports Give students an opportunity to work with a partner to fill in a graphic organizer that will help them collect their ideas for the Quick Write.</p>	
<p>AIR Instructions for Teachers Include an opportunity for students to complete a graphic organizer with a partner to help them collect the ideas they need to write independently. Through use of this suggested graphic organizer, support students in finding evidence from the text. This graphic organizer can be translated into students' home language and ELLs/MLLs can complete it first in their home language. [EN, EM]</p>	
<p>AIR Instructions for Students</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with a partner to fill in the graphic organizer that follows. It will help you prepare for the quick write. ▪ Refer to the text you have read to find the answer to each “question. ▪ Then review your graphic organizer with your teacher. 	
<p>Writing Prompt: What relationship is Rilke establishing between language and art? How does this support his assertions about the usefulness of criticism? What evidence supports your thinking? [ALL]</p>	
<p>Question or Consideration</p>	<p>My Response</p>

What sentence does the author use to make the connection between language (criticism) and art (poetry)? [ALL]	Sentence from text [ALL]:
	This sentence means [ALL]
Rilke says there are two reasons that there is not a good connection between language (criticism) and art (poetry). The first reason has to do with experiences. The second reason has to do with art.	What is Rilke saying about experiences? [ALL]
	What is Rilke saying about art? [ALL]

7. Closing (Homework)

Public Consulting Group Teacher and Student Actions

Students independently reread the second paragraph and focus their annotation of the text with the following question: *How does Rilke’s approach in the second paragraph compare to his “preface”?* They should be prepared to discuss their annotations in the next lesson.

AIR Additional Supports

As was the case for the first paragraph, ELLs/MLLs will have difficulty making sense of this without additional support. To support ELLs/MLLs, we provide a graphic organizer that includes sentence starters, frames and a glossary. We also recommend giving ELLs/MLLs at all levels of English proficiency access to home language versions of this passage.

AIR Instructions for Teachers

- Instruct students to reread the second paragraph.
- Give students the graphic organizer to help them annotate the text.
- As they annotate the text, ask them to think about this question: *How does Rilke’s approach in the second paragraph compare to his first paragraph or “preface”?*

AIR Instructions for Students

- Reread the second paragraph.
- Look at the chart below. What does Paragraph 2 say about each of these lines from paragraph 1? [ALL]
- As you complete this chart, think about this question: *How does Rilke’s approach in the second paragraph compare to his “preface”?* [ALL]

Look at the chart below.

Rilke’s Ideas From Paragraph 1	Rilke’s Ideas From Paragraph 2 [ALL]	Difference Between Ideas From Paragraphs 1 and 2 [ALL]
I cannot discuss your verses. Any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me. Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism.	Your verses have _____. They do have silent and hidden _____. The poems are not yet _____.	These two ideas are different because the first idea means _____. The second idea means _____. These two ideas are different because the first idea means _____. The second idea means _____.

		These two ideas are different because the first idea means _____. The second idea means _____.
--	--	--

Paragraph 2 Glossary

Word	Definition
preface	introduction
verses	lines in a poem
style	way of doing something
silent	quiet
hidden	not able to be seen
soul	spiritual part of a person, the part of a person that is separate from the body
melody	main part of a piece of music or song
Leopardi	a man's name
kinship	relationship
solitary	existing alone
figure	a well-known person
appear	become noticeable
nevertheless	however, but
independent	able to exist by itself
accompanied	was with, went with
managed	succeeded, was successful
various	several
faults	problems
name	give a name to, specify

Teacher Assessment

Assessment Questions for Grade 9, “From Rainer Maria Rilke’s Letters to a Young Poet”

Instructions

Today you (or I) will re-read a letter that a poet named Rilke wrote to a young poet. The young poet had sent him his poems to read. You will then answer ten questions. The first question in each pair asks you about the passage (story). The second question asks you what details (information) in the story best supports your answer (helps you answer the first question in the pair). Circle the correct answer to each question.

Paris

February 17, 1903

Dear Sir,

Your letter arrived just a few days ago. I want to thank you for the great confidence you have placed in me. That is all I can do. I cannot discuss your verses; for any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me. Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism: they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings. Things aren't all so tangible and sayable as people would usually have us believe; most experiences are unsayable, they happen in a space that no word has ever entered, and more unsayable than all other things are works of art, those mysterious existences, whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life.

Question 1**Part A**

The young poet is asking Rilke to do something. What is it?

- A. to meet in person
- B. to get a job
- C. to look at his poetry**
- D. to teach him to write

Part B

Which detail from the letter **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A. “Your letter arrived just a few days ago.”
- B. “I want to thank you”
- C. “I cannot discuss your verses”**
- D. “most experiences are unsayable”

Question 2**Part A**

Rilke thanks the young poet. What for?

- A. for praising his poetry
- B. for giving him money
- C. for visiting his home
- D. for trusting him**

Part B

Which lines from the letter shows evidence of the answer to Part A?

- A. “I want to thank you for the great confidence you have placed in me.”**
- B. “I cannot discuss your verses; for any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me.”
- C. “Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism...”
- D. “They happen in a space that no word has ever entered...”

Question 3**Part A**

According to the author, what do “words of criticism” lead to?

- A. **confusion**
- B. laughter
- C. shame
- D. hope

Part B

Which phrase from the letter **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A. “any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me”
- B. **“they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings”**
- C. “they happen in a space that no word has ever entered”
- D. “whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life.”

Question 4**Part A**

What is the meaning of the word “unsayable”?

- A. causes frustration
- B. **not easily talked about**
- C. offers happiness
- D. similar to one another

Part B

Which quotation helps clarify the meaning of “unsayable” in Part A?

- A. “any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me”
- B. “they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings”
- C. **“they happen in a space that no word has ever entered”**
- D. “whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life

Question 5**Part A**

What does Rilke mean when he says art will endure?

- A. It lives only for a moment
- B. It will last a long time**
- C. It stays hidden
- D. It is easily copied

Part B

Which detail from the letter **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- A. “Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism”
- B. “Things aren’t all so tangible and sayable”
- C. “more unsayable than all other things are works of art”
- D. “art ...whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life”**

Writing Task

A young poet sends Rilke poems that the young poet wrote to him. This letter is Rilke’s answer to questions the young poet asks Rilke. Write a paragraph explaining how Rilke answers the poet. Use specific details from the article to support your answer.

Sample Response

Rilke received a letter from a young poet asking for advice on the quality of his poetry. In his response Rilke does not give the young poet what he asked for, but his explanation for why he will not is even more valuable. He starts his letter by thanking the young poet for the “great confidence” he has put in him. Rilke then says that he is unable to provide an opinion about the poet’s “verses.” Rilke explains that any critique of poetry results in confusion because art often describes experiences that are not so easily described. This is because the experiences that art tries to capture “happen in a space that no word has ever entered.” Rilke also finds criticism of art difficult because art “endures” in comparison to “our own small, transitory life.” Rilke believes poetry and art are “mysterious” and that makes them “unsayable.” For these reasons, Rilke does not provide the poet with criticism of his poems.

Explanatory Writing Rubric Grades 9

Criteria for Explanatory Writing	Meeting (3) <i>Student exceeds some of the "Meeting" criteria</i>	Developing (2) <i>Student achieves all of the "Meeting" criteria</i>	Emerging (1) <i>Student work does not achieve some of the "Meeting" criteria</i>
Development and Elaboration			
Topic: Introduces a topic to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information (W.9-10.2a)	Credible topic	Unclear topic	No topic
Evidence: Develops the topic with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples (W.9-10.2b)	Cites relevant evidence	Unclear or vague evidence	No or inaccurate evidence
Organization and Focus			
Introduction: Provides an introduction that frames the topic clearly in a thesis statement and provides focus for what is to follow (W.9-10.2)	Well-developed introduction	Underdeveloped or ineffective introduction	No recognizable introduction
Conclusion: Provides a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (W.9-10.2f)	Well-developed conclusion	Underdeveloped or ineffective conclusion	No recognizable conclusion
Language and Clarity			
Vocabulary: Uses precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic (W.9-10.2d)	Clear use of precise language and vocabulary	Ineffective use of language and vocabulary	Use of unclear language and poor vocabulary
Transitions: Uses appropriate and varied transitions to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts (W.9-10.2c)	Sufficient transitions	Occasional transitions	Little or no transitions
Conventions			
Conventions: Demonstrates a command of grammatical English and mechanical conventions. (L.9-10.1-2)	Few distracting errors	Several errors	Numerous errors

Student Assessment

Name	
Date	
Teacher	

From Rainer Maria Rilke's Letters to a Young Poet

Instructions: Today you or your teacher will read (re-read) a letter that a poet named Rilke wrote in response to a young poet. The young poet had sent him his poems to read. You will then answer ten questions. The first question in each pair asks you about the passage (story). The second question asks you what details (information) in the story best supports your answer (helps you answer the first question in the pair). Circle the correct answer to each question.

Paris

February 17, 1903

Dear Sir,

Your letter arrived just a few days ago. I want to thank you for the great confidence you have placed in me. That is all I can do. I cannot discuss your verses; for any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me. Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism: they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings. Things aren't all so tangible and sayable as people would usually have us believe; most experiences are unsayable, they happen in a space that no word has ever entered, and more unsayable than all other things are works of art, those mysterious existences, whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life.

Question 1**Part A**

The young poet is asking Rilke to do something. What is it?

- E. to meet in person
- F. to get a job
- G. to look at his poetry
- H. to teach him to write

Part B

Which detail from the letter **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- E. “Your letter arrived just a few days ago.”
- F. “I want to thank you”
- G. “I cannot discuss your verses”
- H. “most experiences are unsayable”

Question 2**Part A**

Rilke thanks the young poet. What for?

- E. for praising his poetry
- F. for giving him money
- G. for visiting his home
- H. for trusting him

Part B

Which lines from the letter shows evidence of the answer to Part A?

- E. “I want to thank you for the great confidence you have placed in me.”
- F. “I cannot discuss your verses; for any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me.”
- G. “Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism...”
- H. “They happen in a space that no word has ever entered...”

Question 3**Part A**

According to the author, what do “words of criticism” lead to?

- E. confusion
- F. laughter
- G. shame
- H. hope

Part B

Which phrase from the letter **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- E. “any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me”
- F. “they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings”
- G. “they happen in a space that no word has ever entered”
- H. “whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life.”

Question 4**Part A**

What is the meaning of the word “unsayable”?

- E. causes frustration
- F. not easily talked about
- G. offers happiness
- H. similar to one another

Part B

Which quotation helps clarify the meaning of “unsayable” in Part A?

- E. “any attempt at criticism would be foreign to me”
- F. “they always result in more or less fortunate misunderstandings”
- G. “they happen in a space that no word has ever entered”
- H. “whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life

Question 5**Part A**

What does Rilke mean when he says art will endure?

- E. It lives only for a moment
- F. It will last a long time
- G. It stays hidden
- H. It is easily copied

Part B

Which detail from the letter **best** supports the answer to Part A?

- E. “Nothing touches a work of art so little as words of criticism”
- F. “Things aren’t all so tangible and sayable”
- G. “more unsayable than all other things are works of art”
- H. “art ...whose life endures beside our own small, transitory life”
