Show Me a Hero, and I Will Write You a Tragedy – F. Scott Fitzgerald - Part 1

The goal of Part 1 of this three-part exemplar lesson is to give secondary students an opportunity to explore targeted passages of complex text by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Through repeated readings of a targeted section from *The Great Gatsby*, the effective use of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led), students recognize common themes that emerge during an era of irresponsibility and self-absorption. The lesson culminates with a one-page objective summation of the emerging theme and motivations of residents of East Egg and West Egg.

**Subject(s):** English Language Arts

**Grade Level(s):** 11, 12

**Intended Audience:** Educators

**Instructional Time:** 3 Hour(s)

**Resource supports reading in content area:** Yes

**Keywords:** F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*, Jazz Age, common themes, textual evidence, text-dependent questioning, close reading, collaborative discussions, conclusion, objective summation

**Instructional Component Type(s):** Lesson Plan, Worksheet, Assessment, Formative Assessment

**Resource Collection:** CPALMS Lesson Plan Development Initiative

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**ATTACHMENTS**

ccerpt Chp1Gatsby.pdf

YNotes_WestEastEgg.pdf

KEY_YNotes_WestEastEgg.pdf

Analysis of Critical IdeaGatsby.pdf

Rubric_summationGatsby.pdf

KEY_Analysis of Critical IdeasGatsby.pdf

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**LESSON CONTENT**

**Learning Objectives:** What should students know and be able to do as a result of this lesson?

- Using an excerpt from F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*, the student will cite strong textual evidence of central ideas that emerge in Fitzgerald’s work.
- Using an excerpt from F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*, the student will recognize common themes that emerge during an era when many Americans threw themselves into the pursuit of fun, excitement, social status, and money.
- Using the targeted excerpt from chapter 1 of *The Great Gatsby*, the students will advance their small table discussions by posing and responding to text-dependent questions that compel closer reading and analysis of the story.
- Using an excerpt from F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel, *The Great Gatsby*, the student will convey complex ideas by providing an evidentiary summation of the emerging theme.

**Prior Knowledge:** What prior knowledge should students have for this lesson?

- Knowledge of the opulent and glitzy era of the 1920s.
- Experience working in collaborative groups and developing text-dependent questions.
- Experience developing a theme statement. The lesson requires students to write a one-page objective summation of the motivations and goals of residents living in...
East Egg and West Egg, New York.

Students should be able to:

- locate and cite strong textual evidence
- recognize common themes
- advance table discussions by posing and responding to text-dependent questions
- write an evidentiary summation.

**Guiding Questions: What are the guiding questions for this lesson?**

- What is the physical description of West Egg and East Egg?
- What can you discern about the motivations and goals of the residents from each area?
- What is influencing the characters?
- What do the actions and words of the narrator say about his role in society?
- What opinion do the residents or peers hold of Gatsby?

**Teaching Phase: How will the teacher present the concept or skill to students?**

The “Hook” and Activation of Prior Knowledge

1. To help students become immersed in the works of F. Scott Fitzgerald, display the quote below on an overhead projector, a SmartBoard, a Promethean Board, or a document camera.

   “Mostly, we authors repeat ourselves - that's the truth. We have two or three great and moving experiences in our lives - experiences so great and so moving that it doesn't seem at the time that anyone else has been so caught up and pounded and dazzled and astonished and beaten and broken and rescued and illuminated and rewarded and humbled in just that way ever before. Then we learn our trade, well or less well, and we tell our two or three stories - each time in a new disguise - maybe ten times, maybe a hundred, as long as people will listen.”

   --from "One Hundred False Starts," Saturday Evening Post (4 March 1933)

2. In table groups, reflect on Fitzgerald's main message.

3. If necessary, ask a few questions to make sure the students understand Fitzgerald's point.
   - What is the significance of the title of the article, "One Hundred False Starts"?
   - The second sentence contains 57 words. Why does Fitzgerald string together so many descriptive verbs?
   - What does Fitzgerald mean when he writes "...and we tell our two or three stories - each time in a new disguise"?

4. Share a few comments from the table groups.

5. Distribute copies of the excerpt from *The Great Gatsby*. Use any procedure - jump-in reading, shared-reading groups, student volunteers-- to read the selection in its entirety.

6. The teacher will model, if necessary, locating textual evidence for the Y-chart. NOTE: Encourage students to use text-coding, highlighting, or marginal notes to locate relevant details while reading.

7. Distinguish between conclusions and summation. Conclusions make a general inference based on evidence in the text in order to form an opinion. On the other hand, a summary is a way of paraphrasing to illustrate the main idea.

Example of a conclusion based on the excerpt:

**Conclusion:** Not only is there a distinct difference in the appearance of the houses and the people of East Egg and West Egg, there is also a great financial and social divide.

Example of a summary of the excerpt:

**Summary:** The excerpt begins by describing the physical attributes that distinguish East Egg and West Egg, develops the idea that each area has exclusive characteristics of entitlement and power, and ends by exposing the differences between the Buchanans, Gatsby and the narrator.

**Guided Practice: What activities or exercises will the students complete with teacher guidance?**

**Teacher Actions during the activity**

1. The teacher serves as facilitator during guided practice. Move from table group to table group clarifying ideas, advancing the table discussions, and assisting with locating relevant textual evidence.

2. If necessary, provide explicit assistance to students in developing text-dependent questions. Provide examples if necessary:
   - Why is the narrator fascinated with the allure of East Egg?
   - What is driving the narrator?
   - What is the relationship between the narrator and the Buchanans?
   - What is influencing Tom Buchanan?
   - Where are the narrator's true feelings and thoughts revealed?
   - Who is living the American dream?

3. Provide teacher guidance, if necessary, to complete the Y-chart. (Refer to Y-chart key)

4. Finally, provide assistance as needed in formulating a conclusion for the Y-chart.

**Student Actions during the activity**

1. Have students establish a clear purpose for rereading the excerpt.

2. Students will reread the selection for descriptions of West Egg and East Egg by alternately reading sections aloud, or they can read independently at their table group.

3. Students develop additional text-dependent questions for closer analysis and discussion.
4. In table groups complete the Y-chart by citing relevant textual evidence with line numbers.

5. In small table groups, draw a conclusion about the residents of East and West Egg. Write the conclusion on the bottom of the Y-chart.

**Independent Practice: What activities or exercises will students complete to reinforce the concepts and skills developed in the lesson?**

**Teacher Actions during the activity**

1. The teacher serves as facilitator during independent practice as students grapple with the concepts. Move from table group to table group clarifying ideas, advancing the table discussions, and assisting with locating relevant textual evidence.

2. Provide teacher guidance, as needed, to complete the Analysis of Critical Ideas worksheet. See the KEY.

3. Facilitate, as needed, with the development of a theme statement. REMEMBER: Good theme statements apply to people in general, not just to the specific characters in the text.

Provide examples if necessary:

- It is important to stand up for your beliefs.
- Prejudice is a destructive force in our society.
- Growing up means taking responsibility for yourself.
- Faith gives you the strength to persevere.

4. Developing an emerging theme statement: identify the **TOPIC**.

**TOPIC** is the subject of the story. The topic is simply what the story is about.

- **TOPIC** of the excerpt from The Great Gatsby: Social values, status, inherited wealth, self-made man, determination, selfishness, selflessness

5. Examples of emerging theme statements include:

**THEME** is the main message of a work of literature that provides an insight about life or human nature. It is the SO WHAT?

- **Stated theme** - the author expresses the idea directly.

  Lines 6-7: “but their physical resemblance must be a source of perpetual confusion to the gulls that fly overhead. To the wingless a more arresting phenomenon is their dissimilarity in every particular except shape and size.”

- **Implied theme** - the author reveals the message gradually through literary techniques such as plot, character, setting, point of view, or symbolism.

  - **Implied THEME**: Social status returns each to his or her own place.
  - **Implied THEME**: Inherited wealth gives you unlimited power.
  - **Implied THEME**: A self-made man is deserving of respect.
  - **Implied THEME**: Power and selfishness determine social status.
  - **Implied THEME**: Selflessness and adversity make you a victim of the rich.

**Student Actions during the activity**

1. Return to the excerpt for a third, closer reading.

2. Distribute the worksheet, Analysis of Critical Ideas, as students continue to craft their own text-dependent questions. Through repeated readings of targeted sections and the effective use of collaborative discussions, students cement their understanding of the excerpt.

3. In small table groups, craft a theme statement by first identifying the topic. Next, write a theme statement. REMEMBER: Good theme statements apply to people in general, not just to the specific characters in the text.

**Closure: How will the teacher assist students in organizing the knowledge gained in the lesson?**

**Lesson Review Activity**

1. Using textual evidence recorded on the completed Y-chart and completed Analysis of Critical Ideas chart, create a working theme statement based on the descriptive details Fitzgerald uses to contrast the society of Nick and Gatsby in West Egg to that of the Buchanans in East Egg.

2. Write a one-page objective summation of the motivations and goals of residents of each area. Cite line numbers to support the claims.

**Summative Assessment**

Using textual evidence recorded on the Y-chart and the completed Analysis of Critical Ideas, create a working theme statement based on the descriptive details Fitzgerald uses to contrast the society of Nick and Gatsby in West Egg to that of the Buchanans in East Egg. Write a one-page objective summation of the motivations and goals of the residents of each area. (See summation rubric)

**Formative Assessment**

While reading the excerpt from The Great Gatsby, use the Y-chart to identify examples of descriptive details that distinguish East Egg and West Egg. The worksheet, Analysis of Critical Ideas, will be used to structure the table discussions as students craft their own text-dependent questions.

**Feedback to Students**

While students are working in table groups with the Y-chart and Analysis of Critical Ideas chart, provide corrective feedback by:

- modeling the technique for students by thinking aloud and explaining your thought process for several examples
- asking clarifying questions such as:
  - What is the physical description of West Egg and East Egg?
  - What is the impact of Fitzgerald's word choice (for example, line 1: strangest communities; or line 4: the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western hemisphere) in distinguishing the two areas?
  - What is foreshadowed in line 6 -- a source of perpetual confusion and lines 6-7 -- To the wingless a more arresting phenomenon is their dissimilarity in every hemisphere) in distinguishing the two areas?
Encourage students to paraphrase confusing phrases or sentences to achieve a deeper understanding. For example, lines 8-9: I lived at West Egg, the - well, the less fashionable of the two, though this is a most superficial tag to express the bizarre and not a little sinister contrast between them.

Paraphrased: I lived at West Egg, really the less stylish of the two areas. But this description is a very trivial way to say the weird and creepy difference between them.

Providing encouragement
Locating relevant textual evidence
Assisting in formulating a conclusion and emerging theme statement.

ACCOMMODATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

Accommodations:
Strategies
- Teachers may need to further scaffold the activities to address individual students’ needs depending on specific learners’ needs. Use audio tapes of the selection for ease in rereading and deeper analysis.
- Encourage visual learners to draw a picture or diagram that shows the setting of both East Egg and West Egg.
- Provide dictionaries for second language learners to aid with unfamiliar vocabulary and other confusing terms.

Assign students to groups or allow them to choose their own. Students can read the selection together, alternately reading sections aloud, or they can read independently and meet to cooperatively discuss the assignment.

Extensions:
Strategies
1. Create a 100 Word List

Directions: Think about the excerpt you have been reading. Now write 100 descriptive words for the story. Do not repeat words, however, you may use synonyms.
- 16 sight words
- 16 touch words
- 16 smelling words
- 16 taste words
- 16 hearing words
- 10 verbs
- 9 concrete words
- 1 abstraction

2. Color Imagery

Directions: Analyze the story in terms of colors and images. Identify a pattern or progression of colors for East Egg and other colors for West Egg. Create a watercolor, colored pencil, or pastel illustration of a favorite image from the excerpt.

3. Across the Curriculum

Directions: Investigate the social transformations that took place in the 1920s and 1930s, the principal political and economic factors that led to the Great Depression, and the legacy of the Depression in American society.

Suggested Technology: Computer for Presenter, LCD Projector, Overhead Projector

Special Materials Needed:

Materials List:
- Copy of the excerpted passage from Chapter 1 of The Great Gatsby.
- Y-chart for each student.
- Analysis of Critical Ideas for each student.
- Y-chart KEY with possible answers.
- Analysis of Critical Ideas KEY with possible answers.
- 8-Point RUBRIC for objective summation.

Additional Information/Instructions

By Author/Submitter
This is the first lesson in a three-part unit. The other resources have been attached as related resources.

- 43806 - Show Me a Hero, and I Will Write You a Tragedy – F. Scott Fitzgerald - Part 2
- 43807 - Show Me a Hero, and I Will Write You a Tragedy – F. Scott Fitzgerald - Part 3
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LAFS.1112.RL.1.1:</td>
<td>Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.</td>
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<td>LAFS.1112.RL.1.2:</td>
<td>Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.</td>
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| LAFS.1112.SL.1.1: | Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others’ ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.                                                                                             
   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. |
   b. Work with peers to promote civil, democratic discussions and decision-making, set clear goals and deadlines, and establish individual roles as needed.                                                                                                    |
   c. Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify, or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives. |
   d. Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims, and evidence made on all sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task. |
| LAFS.1112.W.1.2: | Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.                                                                                                                                                      |
   a. Introduce a topic; organize complex ideas, concepts, and information so that each new element builds on that which precedes it to create a unified whole; include formatting (e.g., headings), graphics (e.g., figures, tables), and multimedia when useful to aiding comprehension. |
   b. Develop the topic thoroughly by selecting the most significant and relevant facts, extended definitions, concrete details, quotations, or other information and examples appropriate to the audience’s knowledge of the topic. |
   c. Use appropriate and varied transitions and syntax to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships among complex ideas and concepts.                                                                 |
   d. Use precise language, domain-specific vocabulary, and techniques such as metaphor, simile, and analogy to manage the complexity of the topic.                                                                                                                                                     |
   e. Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms and conventions of the discipline in which they are writing.                                                                                                                                                |
   f. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the information or explanation presented (e.g., articulating implications or the significance of the topic).                                                                          |