

STAGE 1: IDENTIFY DESIRED RESULTS

What overarching understanding(s) are desired?

1. The American Dream is a pervasive element of the American cultural identity.
2. The American Dream represents a social, economic, and literary ideal that suggests that position, wealth, and power can be attained by anyone through hard work.

What are the overarching, essential questions?

1. What is meant by the American Dream?
2. Is the American Dream still a viable element today?
3. Is the American Dream a destructive or empowering force, or a combination of both?

What will students understand as a result as of this unit?

- While the American Dream rests on the need for a common set of beliefs or ideologies, its presence today is diverse, multi-faceted, and paradoxical
- Fitzgerald's cynicism strips the American Dream of its illusions, while still emphasizing the importance of man's realistic pursuit of the dream.

What questions will guide this unit?

- How do the characters embody or fail to embody the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby*?
- Which characters in *Gatsby* would still perceive the dream as viable at the close of the novel?
- Is the American Dream a destructive or empowering force, or a combination of both in *Gatsby*?  
Specifically, how are the characters empowered or destroyed by the American Dream?
- As a teenager today, how are you affected by the American Dream? (Are you part of it, victimized by it, or redefining it?)

What key knowledge and skills will students acquire as a result of this unit?

Students will know:

1. Characteristics of postwar “Lost Generation” writers
2. The effect of the Jazz Age on American society
3. Class distinctions – old money vs. nouveau riche in America in the 1920’s
4. The American Dream and its presence in contemporary American literature

Students will be able to:

1. Analyze key symbols and symbol patterns
2. Describe and analyze narrative structure of *Gatsby*
3. Analyze contrasting elements in the novel
4. Describe their own place in the American Dream

Stage 2: Determining Acceptable Evidence

What evidence will show that students understand the thematic implications of the American Dream?

Performance Task(s)/Project(s):

1. Students will produce a 1920's style newspaper as a group project which shows understanding of social, political, economic, moral, and cultural issues of the day while reflecting the American Dream. Incorporate events from the novel where appropriate.
2. Select a passage from *Gatsby* that emphasizes the American Dream and rewrite it as a parody reflecting society as we move into the new millennium.
3. Have a graded seminar discussion to explore the following questions:
  - symbols of the American Dream as presented in the novel
  - parallel symbols in today's society
  - definition of success that these symbols imply
  - impact of the definition of success on society as a whole today and in the novel
4. Write a documented literary essay.

Quiz(zes), Test(s), Prompt(s):

1. AP multiple choice passages from Novel Approach *Gatsby* unit
2. reading check quizzes
3. timed writing prompts
4. novel test

Other Evidence: (observations, work samples, dialogues, etc.)

- reading/dialectical journal
- open-ended freewrites (related pictorials &/or music)
- stems/quotes for reflective response
- class discussion
- exit responses
- one-pager
- group work observation

Student Self-Assessment:

- self and peer evaluation of performance task
- exit responses – Know, Want to know, Learned today
- self-selected pieces for class portfolio

Stage 3: Plan Learning Experiences and Activities
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Prior to start of unit

- find or draw a picture representing your materialistic dream that you want now

Block 1

- read “Invictus” and “Richard Cory”  
guide questions –
  - How do we get what we want?
  - How will we handle getting what we want?
  - Does getting what we want make us happy?
  - What are the intangible parts of our dreams?
- on a 4 x 6 card list the tangible and intangible parts of your dream and then on the back define what you think is the basic definition of the American Dream
- alternative idea if starting the concept of the American Dream at the beginning of the year – cover textbooks and create a cover design that reflects the student’s concept of the American Dream
- introduce unit understandings and essential questions
- introduce the period of the 1920’s – Lost Generation writers, post WWI cynicism, Jazz Age, class structure (old money vs. nouveau riche), and the American Dream
- assign the first third of *Gatsby*, Chapters 1-3 and reading/dialectical journal

Block 2

- assign the performance task newspaper and divide into groups; use the remainder of the period to begin research of key figures, events, and movements of the 1920’s; to give students a head start, provide students access to *The Timetables of History*

Block 3

- reading check quiz over chapters 1-3 plus a multiple choice passage from Novel Approach *Gatsby* unit
- discuss characters; create charts noting initial impressions of characters to post in the class and revise as we continue the novel
- discuss narrative structure and Nick’s role as narrator
- exit responses to ads and products that use *Gatsby* as a motif
- assign chapters 4-6 and continue journal

Block 4

- provide a portion of the period every other class to work with group on newspaper performance task
- as a postcard exit, describe how *Gatsby* achieves his dream
- using passage at the end of Chapter 3 which begins with “I began to like New York...” and ends with “Imagining that I too, was hurrying toward gaiety and sharing their intimate excitement, I wished them well,” to orally discuss literary analysis of diction, detail, tone, point of

view, organization, &/or syntax; follow up with a brief written analysis of the following passage from Nick in chapter 2:

“Yet high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life.”

analysis will be topic sentence and 1-2 Schaffer chunks

#### Block 5

- reading check quiz over chapters 4-6 plus a multiple choice passage from Novel Approach *Gatsby* unit
- using Daisy and Jordan as embodiment of “Lost Generation” cynicism, debate how the cynicism differs from masculine to feminine perspectives; specific ideas for consideration should include at least the references to Daisy’s cynical view as expressed in Chapter 1 pages 21-22 and her appalled reaction to West Egg in Chapter 6 page 103
- reevaluate characters for class chart
- begin evaluation of the use of symbols in the novel and possible parallel modern symbols
- journal response to a teacher selected quotation from the novel, criticism, or Fitzgerald’s essays

Suggestions:

- “So we drove on toward death through the cooling twilight.” (143)
- “‘Self-control!’ repeated Tom incredulously. ‘I suppose the latest thing is to sit back and let Mr. Nobody from Nowhere make love to your wife. Well, if that’s the idea you can count me out....Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions and next they’ll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white.’” (137)
- assign chapters 7-9 and continue journal

#### Block 6

- provide performance task work time; provide specific guidelines for journalistic writing and newspaper formatting
- using the quotation from Nick “They were careless people. . . .” (180-81 or 187-88), write a formal 40 minutetimed writing that relates it to the Far Side cartoon in the Jane Schaffer packet
- using the same quotation, create a one-pager that applies this to a person, famous or personally known;  
Qualities of One-Pager
  - person’s picture and name in the center
  - surround with pictorial and quote representations of how this quotation fits the personpresent briefly in class next period for peer feedback

#### Block 7

- reading check quiz over Chapters 7-9 using the quotation “That’s the whole burden of this novel—the loss of those illusions that give such color to the world so that you don’t care whether things are true or false as long as they partake of the magical glory.” (xv Brucoli quoting a Fitzgerald essay); give 15-20 minutes to write a response that shows understanding of the novel as a whole
- present One-Pager for peer feedback and discussion
- finish character charts
- seminar style discussion of the symbols (graded)
  - guide questions
  - 1 – symbols of the American Dream in the novel
  - 2 – parallel symbols of the Dream in today’s society
  - 3 – definition of success that these symbols imply
  - 4 – impact of the definition of success on society as a whole today and in the novel

Reminder: Final newspaper performance task due next class.

#### Block 8

- groups present newspaper products briefly
  - all members will complete a self and peer evaluation form
- options
- assign documented literary essay
    - suggested prompt to complement AP argumentative open question
    - F. Scott Fitzgerald, in 1922, stated the following as his intention as he started work on *Gatsby*:

“I want to write something NEW—something extraordinary and beautiful and simple + intricately patterned.”

Often what appears to be on the surface a work that is simply enjoyable reading is upon further examination “intricately patterned.” Argue whether or not Fitzgerald achieved his purpose using specific textual evidence from the novel and criticism.

#### suggested quotation

“An author ought to write for the youth of his generation, the critics of the next, and the schoolmasters of ever afterward.” (Fitzgerald quoted by Brucoli ix)

- or give a traditional objective/essay test

## *The Great Gatsby* Unit Cover Page

Unit Title : *The Great Gatsby* and the American Dream

Grade Level(s): English 3 AP Language and Composition; English 3 G/T AP Language and Composition

Subject/Topic Area(s): American literature

Key Words: American Dream, 1920's society

Designed By: Diane Kreger, Pat Grego, Cheryl Vinson

Time Frame: 8 blocks/days

School District: Irving ISD School(s): Irving HS, MacArthur HS, Nimitz HS

### **Link to Content Standards:**

II: Writing in Context: Interpretation and Evaluation

The student will interpret and evaluate both fiction and nonfiction writings according to their historical, social, and cultural context, focusing on writing by American authors.

III: Response to Writing: Analysis, Synthesis, Evaluation

The student will respond to writing selections by analysis (structure, tone, Diction, point of view, syntax, voice, purpose), synthesis (comparison/contrast to other works), and evaluation (effectiveness).

IV: Writing Based on Research

The student will write documented essays and complete products, using both primary and secondary sources, on topics related to American literature and/or correlating historical periods.

VII: Writing Style

The student will develop an effective writing style, focusing on diction (vocabulary, word choice), syntax (sentence structure), and voice.

VIII: Proofreading

The student will proofread his/her writing for errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, and form.

X: AP Test Preparation

The student will develop and practice procedures for answering objective and free response items such as those on the Advanced Placement Examination in English Language and Composition.

XI: Responding to Literature

The student will read literature, paying special attention to literary elements as well as relating the literature to his/her own life.

**Brief Summary of Unit (beginning with unit goals):** In this unit students will culminate the year's study of American literature and the American Dream. Students will look at the Dream in the context of a period of cynicism that has influenced modern society. Students will also use this as a unit to evaluate their own place within the Dream and the American Dream's place as we move into a new century. In connection with the analytical study of the novel, students will also demonstrate clear understanding and analysis of the time period by producing a 1920's newspaper as the final performance task.

This unit design packet includes:

- completed 3-part design template
  - completed Blueprint for performance task(s)
  - with related scoring rubric(s)
  - directions to students & teachers
  - materials & resources listed
  - suggested accommodations
  - suggested extensions
- Status:  initial draft     field tested     reviewed     anchored