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The Great Gatsby
Search for Symbolism

A Search for Symbolism in *The Great Gatsby*

Abstract:

Students will work in small groups to trace the context and implications for assigned symbols or colors in *The Great Gatsby*. This activity is best done after the class has completed a reading of the book. This activity allows the students to look more closely at Fitzgerald's language and make connections across the use of symbols/ colors in the text. This lesson can be a nice lead up to a final paper or assessment. Teachers can facilitate this lesson as a part of a blended classroom, or completely in class. Either way, students will have a catalogue of the context and implications for specific symbols throughout the book.

Common Core Standards:

- RL.9-10.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
- RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.
- 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).
- W.11-12.2. 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.
- W.11-12.9. Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Procedure:

1. The teacher will divide students into five groups. Each group will be given a slip of paper with specific directions and a symbol or color. (See attached document)
2. As a group, the students will track the context and implications of the symbol or color through the book.
3. Students are instructed to document evidence, including page numbers, to support their ideas.

4. If the class has a webpage, students can post their group's work as an entry on the class forum.
5. If the class does not have a webpage, the teacher can provide the groups with chart paper and markers. Students should document their findings and conclusions on the chart paper.
6. Once the groups have finished posting their work, students will be invited to visit three different groups' symbols/colors and provide input. Students can be directed to provide an additional use of the symbol/color with a page number, a connection or a question.
7. If students are working online, they can post this work as a response to individual group posts.
8. If students are completing this work on chart paper, the teacher can provide each student with three sticky notes. The students can visit three charts of their choice and provide input.
9. Students can reconvene in their groups and look through the input that they have received. Students should catalogue the additional evidence that is provided by their classmates, reflect on the connections and search for answers to the questions.
10. The class can come back together and discuss the use of symbols and colors throughout the text. As the class has already spent time looking at the catalogue of symbols, this is an opportunity for groups to showcase an understanding of the language and draw conclusions about Fitzgerald's intentions.

Now that we have finished reading *The Great Gatsby*, we will look back and reexamine some of the textual symbols - with the new understanding that we have gained. In your small group, you will trace the context and implications of an assigned symbol in the book. Remember to use evidence from the text, including page numbers, to support your ideas.
Gold vs. Yellow

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Green and the green light

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White

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Grey and the Valley of Ashes

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TJ Eckleberg

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Heat