

AACA Museum-U.S. History and English

**The automobile in the 1920s
and
The symbolism of the automobile in The Great Gatsby**

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English Car Unit

English Knows:

Cars as symbols in the 1920s and now
Cars as symbols of wealth, power and extravagance.
Cars as links to the “American Dream”
Characterization
MLA citations
topic sentence
thesis statement
plot
focus (writing)
evidence (writing)

Vocabulary:

characterization
symbolism
modernism
theme
consumerism
transitions

English Dos

- Compare, contrast and analyze above cars, what they symbolized in the 1920s vs. now
- Compare, contrast and analyze what each car from a novel tells the reader about the characters
- Read *The Great Gatsby*
- Write paragraphs/essays about the similarities and differences between cars as symbols today and in the 1920s
- Vocabulary as we go

Benchmarks:

- Students will create a “want” ad for a car that symbolizes specific characteristics of a person and their status
- Students will identify a symbol and explain what it represents
- Students will discuss symbolism, characterization, and the implications of consumerism in small groups/as a class

Performance Task:

Students will write an essay in which they analyze how the cars in *The Great Gatsby* contribute to the themes of consumerism throughout the novel. The essay must include effective transitions, evidence to support their argument, MLA citations, quality focus and thesis statement.

Standards:

CC.1.3.9-10.A: 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.

CC.1.3.9-10.B: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences and conclusions based on an author's explicit assumptions and beliefs about a subject.

CC.1.3.9-10.J: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

CC.1.3.9-10.K: Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

CC.1.4.9-10.G: Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics.

CC.1.4.9-10.H:

Write with a sharp distinct focus identifying topic, task, and audience.

- Introduce the precise claim.

CC.1.4.9-10.I: Distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims; develop claim(s) fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

CC.1.4.9-10.J: Create organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence; Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims; provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CC.1.4.9-10.K: Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition. • Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic. • Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms of the discipline in which they are writing.

Prior Knowledge:

- Theme
- Grammar and mechanics of writing
- Knowledge of the history of America from 1910-1920
- Requires students to have read or be reading *The Great Gatsby*

Tentative Order:

- Symbolism lesson plan
- Characterization lesson plan
- Consumerism lesson plan

English & History

Content: Compare & Contrast the 1920s to present day

Essential Questions:

- In what ways was the auto industry significant culturally and scientifically during the 1920s and present day.
- How do cars act as a symbol of their time period?

Knows:

Development of technology

Symbolism of cars (wealth, power, poor, hardworking)

mirrors & reflection

general descriptions

pop culture around cars

prohibition

Great Depression-stock market crash

Roaring 20s

impact of the end of WWI

characterization

Jazz Age

Parties of the Jazz Age vs today

Radios

Dos

Analysis

Compare & Contrast

Read

Infer

Interpret

Id main ideas, events & how they relevant

Research

Cite resources

Analyze author's main points

LESSON PLAN:1

Topic: Cars and characterization
Class: 10th grade College Prep English

Essential Questions:

- How do cars act as a symbol of their time period?
- What is characterization?
- How do cars contribute to characterization within a novel and in real life?

Objectives: SWBAT...

- Explain what characterization is
- Analyze what cars reveal about the characterization of people within a novel and in real life

Standards:

- **CC.1.3.9-10.A:** 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.
- **CC.1.3.9-10.B:** Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences and conclusions based on an author's explicit assumptions and beliefs about a subject.
- **CC.1.3.9-10.J:** Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.
- **CC.1.3.9-10.K:** Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

Activating Activity:

At the beginning of class, this picture will be projected at the front of the room for all students to see:



For two minutes, students will brainstorm and list the different aspects of this car's owner based on the actual car itself. Then, discuss as a class.

Teaching Strategies and Game Plan:

1. **Activating Activity**
2. Explain to students that what they have just done is characterize the car's owner based on his/her vehicle. **Characterization** refers to the personality and behavior of a character in a text.

2. Explain to students that what they have just done is characterize the car's owner based on his/her vehicle. **Characterization** refers to the personality and behavior of a character in a text.
3. Hand out **characterization graphic organizer** and go over as a class.
4. Have students choose a car from *The Great Gatsby* with a partner, then come up with a list of **what that car says about that owner's character**.
5. Individually, students will create a **want ad** for their dream car based on the characterization of themselves. This can be a short, in-class project or turned into a long-term project based on the teacher's allotted time frame.
6. **Summarizing Strategy**

Summarizing Strategy:

Students will write a sample multiple choice or true/false question about characterization and then provide the answer.

Differentiation:

This lesson is differentiated by process because they are allowed to choose partners and characters for the in-class characterization component. Additionally, this lesson appeals to Verbal/Linguistic learners because of its analyzing of descriptions within a novel. It also appeals to Spatial learners because of the artistic elements within the lesson.

Assignment, Assessment and Materials Needed:

- **Assignment:** If the ad is turned into a long-term project, then the students will need to work on it for homework
- **Assessment:** The *Great Gatsby* characterization exercise is an informal assessment that examines students' ability to characterize a character in a text. The want-ad is a formal assessment that tests students' ability to apply characterization to multiple situations. Additionally, the summarizing strategy is an informal assessment that examines the students' basic knowledge of characterization (definition, different types, etc.)
- **Materials Needed:** Characterization graphic organizer, project guidelines, art supplies (pencils, paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, etc.)/computer software (Word, Photoshop, etc. – some students may have these on their devices)

CHARACTERIZATION

Characterization is the development of a character's personality and behavior within a text. There are two types: **direct characterization** and **indirect characterization**.

Direct characterization occurs when the author of a text reveals something about the character in a straightforward manner. The author *tells* the reader about the character:

"Now he was a sturdy straw-haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave him the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward. Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body — he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing, and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat. It was a body capable of enormous leverage — a cruel body."

- Description of Tom from *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Indirect characterization occurs when the reader has to infer aspects about the characterization of a character through the description of his/her actions, thoughts and speech. The author *shows* the reader something about the character:

"This idea is that we're Nordics. I am, and you are, and you are, and ——" After an infinitesimal hesitation he included Daisy with a slight nod, and she winked at me again. "— And we've produced all the things that go to make civilization — oh, science and art, and all that. Do you see?"

- Dialogue of Tom from *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

IN CLASS:

With a partner, pick out one of the following car descriptions from *The Great Gatsby*, then use the description to characterize the car's owner. What is the car telling us about the character? What is the car showing us about the character? Feel free to use your devices to look up pictures of the car for assistance if needed.

Jay Gatsby:

At nine o'clock, one morning late in July, Gatsby's gorgeous car lurched up the rocky drive to my door and gave out a burst of melody from its three-noted horn. It was the first time he had called on me, though I had gone to two of his parties, mounted in his hydroplane, and, at his urgent invitation, made frequent use of his beach.

"Good morning, old sport. You're having lunch with me to-day and I thought we'd ride up together."

He was balancing himself on the dashboard of his car with that resourcefulness of movement that is so peculiarly American — that comes, I suppose, with the absence of lifting work or rigid sitting in youth and, even more, with the formless grace of our nervous, sporadic games. This quality was continually breaking through his punctilious manner in the shape of restlessness. He was never

quite still; there was always a tapping foot somewhere or the impatient opening and closing of a hand.

He saw me looking with admiration at his car.

"It's pretty, isn't it, old sport?" He jumped off to give me a better view. "Haven't you ever seen it before?"

I'd seen it. Everybody had seen it. It was a rich cream color, bright with nickel, swollen here and there in its monstrous length with triumphant hat-boxes and supper-boxes and tool-boxes, and terraced with a labyrinth of wind-shields that mirrored a dozen suns. Sitting down behind many layers of glass in a sort of green leather conservatory, we started to town.

Daisy Buchanan:

The largest of the banners and the largest of the lawns belonged to Daisy Fay's house. She was just eighteen, two years older than me, and by far the most popular of all the young girls in Louisville. She dressed in white, and had a little white roadster, and all day long the telephone rang in her house and excited young officers from Camp Taylor demanded the privilege of monopolizing her that night. "Anyways, for an hour!"

When I came opposite her house that morning her white roadster was beside the curb, and she was sitting in it with a lieutenant I had never seen before. They were so engrossed in each other that she didn't see me until I was five feet away.

Nick Carraway:

The practical thing was to find rooms in the city, but it was a warm season, and I had just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees, so when a young man at the office suggested that we take a house together in a commuting town, it sounded like a great idea. He found the house, a weather-beaten cardboard bungalow at eighty a month, but at the last minute the firm ordered him to Washington, and I went out to the country alone. I had a dog — at least I had him for a few days until he ran away — and an old Dodge and a Finnish woman, who made my bed and cooked breakfast and muttered Finnish wisdom to herself over the electric stove.

Tom Buchanan:

There is no confusion like the confusion of a simple mind, and as we drove away Tom was feeling the hot whips of panic. His wife and his mistress, until an hour ago secure and inviolate, were slipping precipitately from his control. Instinct made him step on the accelerator with the double purpose of overtaking Daisy and leaving Wilson behind, and we sped along toward Astoria at fifty miles an hour, until, among the spidery girders of the elevated, we came in sight of the easy-going blue coupe.

ADVERTISEMENT PROJECT

Now that you have experienced characterization first-hand, you will be creating a want-ad for a car based on the characterization of yourself that could go in newspaper or magazine. Remember, characterization is a manifestation of personality and behavior, so you first want to consider your own personality and behaviors before designing your own car. This can be done on by-hand or it can be done on the computer. You will be graded on how much the car demonstrates traits of your own personality and behavior, in addition to the quality of the final product.

Here is a general outline for the creation process:

1. **Brainstorm 8-10 things that characterize you.** Are you practical and like basic things, or are you extravagant and like the finer things in life? Would you be able to work on the car yourself, or would you have to go to a shop to maintain the vehicle? These are all things to consider while thinking about your advertisement.

2. **Design a car that fits your personality traits.** Feel free to use the internet for inspiration.

3. **Decide how you want to create your final product.**

4. **Create a draft advertisement.** Again, feel free to use the internet for inspiration, but do **NOT** copy the format of any advertisement. **THIS IS PLAGIARISM, WHICH WILL RESULT IN A ZERO.**

5. **Create your final product.**

Rubric:

	Exemplary	Above Average	Acceptable	Inadequate
Characterization (15 points)	The car in the advertisement clearly demonstrated personality and behavioral traits of the creator	The car in the advertisement demonstrated personality and behavioral traits of the creator, but could be improved	The car in the advertisement demonstrated some personality and behavioral traits of the creator	The car in the advertisement did not demonstrate personality and behavioral traits of the creator
Final Product (10 points)	The advertisement is clean, includes color, is extremely well-designed and is eye-catching	The advertisement is clean, includes a lot of color, is well-designed and is relatively eye-catching	The advertisement is relatively sloppy, includes some color, is decently designed and eye-catching	The advertisement is sloppy, does not include color, is poorly designed and is boring

Grammar and Mechanics (5 points)	The advertisement contains little to no spelling and grammatical mistakes	The advertisement contains some spelling and grammatical mistakes	The advertisement contains a lot of spelling and grammatical mistakes	The advertisement contains a ridiculous amount of spelling and grammatical mistakes
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LESSON PLAN: 2

Topic: Consumerism and The Great Gatsby

Class: 10th grade College Prep English

Essential Questions:

How do cars act as a symbol of their time period?

How is the theme of consumerism portrayed in *The Great Gatsby* and how is it connected with the automobile industry?

Objectives: SWBAT...

- Write an argumentative essay in which they analyze how the cars in *The Great Gatsby* contribute to the themes of consumerism throughout the novel
- Use transitions in a piece of writing
- Use evidence to support their claim in a piece of writing
- Read *The Great Gatsby*

Standards:

CC.1.3.9-10.A: 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.

CC.1.3.9-10.B: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences and conclusions based on an author's explicit assumptions and beliefs about a subject.

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Write with a sharp distinct focus identifying topic, task, and audience.

- Introduce the precise claim.

CC.1.4.9-10.I: Distinguish the claim(s) from alternate or opposing claims; develop claim(s) fairly, supplying evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

CC.1.4.9-10.J: Create organization that establishes clear relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence; Use words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections of the text, create cohesion, and clarify the relationships between claim(s) and reasons, between reasons and evidence, and between claim(s) and counterclaims; provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

CC.1.4.9-10.K: Write with an awareness of the stylistic aspects of composition.

- Use precise language and domain-specific vocabulary to manage the complexity of the topic.
- Establish and maintain a formal style and objective tone while attending to the norms of the discipline in which they are writing.

Activating Activity:

- **Cars and Consumerism Game:** At the beginning of class, students will guess the company that corresponds to a set of car logos and slogans via a class game on Powerpoint. Then, discuss briefly what consumerism is, and how advertising has affected our way of thinking.

Teaching Strategies and Game Plan:

1. Activating Activity

2. Small-Group Discussion: Using the set of questions below, students will discuss the concept of consumerism in *The Great Gatsby* in small groups. After about fifteen minutes, discuss the questions and their answers together as a class.

3. Introduce Performance Task: The final essay will be discussed in class and students will begin brainstorming ideas for their papers. They may work on this at home, in class, or a combination of the two. Set aside another 2-3 days for students to work on this.

4. Summarizing Strategy

Summarizing Strategy:

Snowball: Students will write answers to the question “Is consumerism more present in the 1920s or in today’s society? Why do you think so” on a piece of paper. Then, they will crumble it up into a ball and throw it into the middle of the room. Pick out a few random snowballs and read the answers aloud to the class.

Differentiation:

This lesson is not differentiated.

Assessment, Assignment and Materials Needed:

- **Assessment:** The performance task is a summative assessment that examines the students’ ability to utilize symbolism, characterization and theme in an argumentative essay
- **Assignment:** The final essay is the assignment for this lesson plan. The exact circumstances (length, depth, etc.) of this assignment will vary depending on the teacher and classroom.
- **Materials Needed:** Powerpoint game, copies of *The Great Gatsby*, word-processing software (unless the teacher wants the essays to be hand-written), sets of questions for discussion, essay guidelines

THE GREAT GATSBY

In groups of 3-4, answer the questions below. Be ready to discuss your answers with the class. Write down notes of your discussion so you remember what you talked about!

1. The 1920s were an era called the “Roaring Twenties,” where Americans lived in excess and enjoyed lots of luxuries. Then, when the Great Depression occurred, the success and extravagance crashed down around them. Although *The Great Gatsby* was written before the Great Depression, this same pattern can easily be seen throughout the novel. What luxuries do the characters in the novel partake in, and how do their indulgences negatively affect them?

2. We have already discussed how cars are seen as symbols of class, wealth and status both in the 1920s and today. Keeping this in mind, how do cars relate to the theme of consumerism throughout *The Great Gatsby*? (It is not an accident that Myrtle is killed by a *car*)

3. Consider your answers to number one. Where else is consumerism present throughout *The Great Gatsby*? Find quotes and page numbers to support your answers.

THE GREAT GATSBY: FINAL ESSAY

Throughout this unit, we have been discussing how cars, symbolism, characterization and consumerism all relate to each other within the context of *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. As a result, the final assignment for this unit is an argumentative essay, where you will answer the following question:

How do cars in *The Great Gatsby* contribute to the theme of consumerism throughout the novel?

The essay must include effective transitions, evidence to support your argument, MLA citations, as well as quality focus and thesis statement.

The Writing Process:

1. There is no need to start from absolute scratch to write this essay. Look through your notes and brainstorm some ideas. Then, come up with a tentative thesis statement. Remember, the formula for a quality thesis statement is:

Topic + Thesis reason 1 + Thesis reason 2 + Thesis reason 3 = Thesis Statement

2. Then, begin pulling quotes from the novel to support your argument. If you cannot find at least two quotes per thesis reason, then it might be a good idea to tweak your argument so you can find more evidence. Make sure you write down page numbers as you find quotes for internal citations. You want to find as much evidence as possible, because the majority of your grade is based around your argument. Remember, this is the meat of your essay!

3. Next, write an outline to put your thoughts in a logical order. Include topic sentences, quotes, internal citations, transitions, and concluding statements.

4. The next step is to write your actual essay; fill in your own voice and argument into the context of your outline.

5. Peer review, revise and edit.

6. Finally, create your works cited page!

Grade Breakdown:

This essay is worth 50 points. A rubric for this assignment is on the next page.

	Exemplary	Above Average	Acceptable	Inadequate
Argument and evidence (20 points)	The essay proposed an exceptional argument and thesis statement; it used a superb amount of textual evidence to support the claim	The essay's argument and thesis statement was sufficient for the topic and used a decent amount of textual evidence to support the claim	The essay offered a mediocre argument and the thesis statement could use more work. The essay used some textual evidence to support the claim	The essay's overall argument and thesis statement lacked a sense of direction and there was little to no evidence to support the claim
Organization and Focus (16 points)	The argument was presented in a logical order, used superior transitions and always stayed on topic	The argument was presented in a logical order, used adequate transitions and usually stayed on topic	The argument was presented in a somewhat logical order, used adequate transitions and sometimes stayed on topic	The essay had no logical order, used little to no transitions and usually strayed off topic
MLA Internal citations and Worked Cited (8 points)	The essay cited all textual evidence and completed a Works Cited page perfectly according to MLA standards	The essay cited most textual evidence well and completed a Works Cited page with few mistakes according to MLA standards	The essay cited some textual evidence or cited textual evidence poorly, and completed a Works Cited page with multiple mistakes according to MLA standards	The essay cited none of the textual evidence and there was no Works Cited page.
Grammar, Usage and Mechanics (6 points)	There were few grammatical, usage and/or mechanical errors throughout the essay	There were some grammatical, usage and/or mechanical errors throughout the essay	There was a lot of grammatical, usage and/or mechanical errors throughout the essay	The amount of grammatical, usage and/or mechanical errors throughout the essay made it impossible to read

LESSON PLAN: 3

Topic: Cars and Symbolism

Class: 10th grade College Prep English

Essential Questions:

- How do cars act as a symbol of their time period?
- What is symbolism?

Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain what symbolism is
- Students will be able to compare, contrast and analyze what cars symbolized in the 1920s vs. now

Standards:

CC.1.3.9-10.A: 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.

CC.1.3.9-10.J: Acquire and use accurately grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases; gather vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Activating Strategy:

- Upon entering the classroom, students will pick up an index card with a picture on it (3 options – an engagement ring, a recycling sign, and a red rose). On the back of the index card, they will write down the first thing that the picture makes them think of.



Teaching Strategies and Game Plan:

1. **Activating Activity**
2. Ask students to share what they wrote on the back of their index card. Responses will probably be things like marriage, commitment, recycling, being “green,” love, beauty, etc. Then, explain to them that all of these images are **symbols**.
3. Discuss what a **symbol** is based off of the information from the activating activity (an image that represents a larger, abstract concept)
4. Cars can be symbols, too! **Around the room game** – There will be small posters around the room with pictures of various cars on them. One side of the room will have pictures of cars

from the 1910s-1920s and the other side of the room will have pictures of contemporary cars. With a partner, students will walk around the room and write down what they think that car represents.





5. Discuss as a class the similarities and differences between what the cars represent today and what they represented in the 1920s.

6. Summarizing Strategy

Summarizing Strategy:

- Exit Ticket: What is symbolism? Draw a symbol that represents you and explain why.

Differentiation:

- Differentiation by process is used in the Activating Activity and in the Around the Room Game. In the Activating Activity, students are allowed to choose whichever image they like out of the three options. In the Around the Room Game, students can choose their partner, the order in which they can analyze the cars and set their own pace. This lesson also appeals to Bodily-Kinesthetic learners. Early finishers can speculate how the colors and styles of the cars affect what the symbol means.

Assessment, Assignment and Materials Needed:

- Assessment: The summarizing strategy is an informal assessment that assesses the students' ability to analyze symbolism by transferring the ideas from the image to the concept as well as the concept to the image.
- Assignment: That evening, students will use their smartphone to take a picture of a symbol they encounter in real life. They will then email it to the teacher or post it to a class Instagram/Flickr account (depending on what the school district allows) along with what that image represents. Students who do not have a smartphone can simply draw the symbol on paper and bring it to class the next day.
- Materials: Index cards with pictures for Activating Activity, small posters for around the room game, exit tickets and writing utensils.