



*Tim and daughter Freya
keep warm with cups of tea
in Glenfinnan, Scotland
(October 2009)*

TIM WOODCOCK

“A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say.”

(Italo Calvino)

“If you are doing your job, a high school English class will never finish saying what it has to say.”

(Tim Woodcock)

My name is Tim Woodcock. I have lived in St. Louis since 2001 and until recently I made my living as a journalist. I spent eight years at the *West End Word*, a newspaper that covers the central corridor of the city of St. Louis, as well as University City and Clayton. Initially I was hired as a staff writer, and after three years I was promoted to editor. Along the way I have also done pieces of freelance work for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, *St. Louis Magazine* and the *St. Louis Beacon*. Working for a newspaper is one of the best ways to get to know a community: it gives you a license to phone strangers out the blue and ask them probing questions; it allows you to go for a walk in an obscure part of the city and call it research; and it requires you to dissect the oddities and customs of where you live. On top of this, it gives you lots of time to write — and to think about how one communicates using the written word.

Fast forward to 2009: budget cuts at my workplace, and almost every other newspaper in the land. I found myself feeling increasingly unhappy in my job and ever more pessimistic about my ability to earn my keep through print journalism. In the meantime I was presented with the opportunity to teach a course in feature writing at St. Louis University. It was both enjoyable and challenging. It made me re-evaluate my own writing process. Although the revelation did not come immediately — it took about 18 months — I eventually came to realize that full-time teaching could be quite a fulfilling career choice for me.

That's how I came to the decision to retrain as a high school English teacher, and I'll admit part of me is still in mourning for my aborted journalistic career. But the thought of teaching literature and helping teenagers grapple with the power of language is exhilarating to me. I am originally from Great Britain, and as a result, American literature — a sizable chunk of what I'll likely be teaching — is somewhat exotic to me. Staples of the American high school curriculum, such as *The Great Gatsby* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, may seem passé to others, but I am excited about the prospect of exploring them in a classroom setting, with my interpretations of such books meshing with those of the different classes I'll teach. I truly believe that, "A classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say." Beyond helping students to appreciate literature, the English teacher has the role of inspiring students to express themselves through language, giving them a tool to help them think about their place in the world.

Is it reasonable to expect that I might inspire a student or two to go into journalism? We'll see. Maybe by that time someone will have figured out how to make it pay.

Rationale: The themes of *The Great Gatsby* — money, glamour and various ways in which people attempt to get ahead — are ones of interest to most people, and these ideas have a particular appeal to teenagers. It is envisioned that by the time students begin the *Gatsby* magazine project, they will have familiarity with the novel, having studied it in class previously. The magazine project allows students to find their own way into the material and to discuss how it relates to their lives. As teenagers they are beginning to make decisions that affect the ways in which they can partake in the American Dream. *The Great Gatsby* is one of the finest American novels but it requires careful re-reading because its use of its use of flashbacks and the deliberately confusing versions of Gatsby's story. The novel is often described as one that encapsulates the spirit of the 1920s and this project offers the chance for students to make connections to what they have learned in other subject areas — for instance, history, economics and music.

Summary: The magazine will be produced collaboratively by the class and it will be a showpiece that they can show to friends and family. In the first part of the project, each student will be asked to produce at least one page of work. In the second part of the project, students will be split into three groups — editors, picture editors, and page designers. The pages will be laid out by a small group of students, according to a template created by the teacher. Each student will be given two keepsake editions of magazines at the end of the project.

Objectives:

This project will give students:

- a deeper understanding of *The Great Gatsby* and an appreciation of this work in its larger cultural context
- the opportunity to work individually on a piece of written work
- the opportunity to refine work via peer review
- the opportunity to work collaboratively and to create an object for which all class members feel ownership. The process will rely on students being accountable to one another.
- a basic grasp of the editorial process, magazine design, and page layout.

Length:

The unit will be three weeks long. The classes meets five days a week, and classes last 50 minutes each.

Materials and resources:

- Access to a computer lab to allow to Internet-based research. Access to printers to allow students to share drafts of their work with each other in class time.
- 4-5 computers loaded with layout software (InDesign would be ideal; Pagemaker or Quark Xpress would be acceptable)
- Budget to allow for 60 black-and-white copies to be printed (two copies for each of the 24 students in the class, plus an extra 12 copies) – perhaps \$120.

Assessment

Formative: Check marks and participation points for contributions to class discussion, peer review comments, and willingness to help other students.

Summative: Written comments and grades for each student, the groups (editors/picture editors/page designers) and the class as a whole. Individual comments will center on the student's written contribution to the magazine and observation about his/her ability to work well with others. The group grade will assess the quality of the final product.

TEACHER'S CALENDAR

WEEK 1

M: Introduce topic and brainstorm kinds of articles that magazine could include

Tu: Teacher offers additional ideas in brainstorm format (see previous page); students refine their ideas. (*By the end of class, students should have a sense of what they want to work on.*)

W: In-class time to work on assignment

Th: In-class time to work on assignment

F: In-class time to work on assignment

WEEK 2

M: Students submit two copies of first draft of work; peer review in class

Tu: Peer review in class

W: Form groups (editors, picture editors, page designers – see explanation below)

Th: Submit second draft of work; Work in groups: editors/picture editors/page designers (*Every contribution must be included in the magazine in some form but it can be expanded or condensed. The editors must review all articles and work out what work needs doing next. For example, is the priority for editors expanding articles, fact checking, or cleaning up copy because of grammatical problems and spelling mistakes?*)

F: Work in groups: editors/picture editors/page designers

WEEK 3

M: Submit third and final draft. Teacher presentation on the logistics of printing a magazine (page counts, budgets, deadlines etc.)

Tu: Work in groups: editors/picture editors/page designers

W: Work in groups: editors/picture editors/page designers

Th: Work in groups: editors/picture editors/page designers. (*To meet the deadline it may be necessary to ask some students to stay after school to finalize magazine layout and to proofread.*)

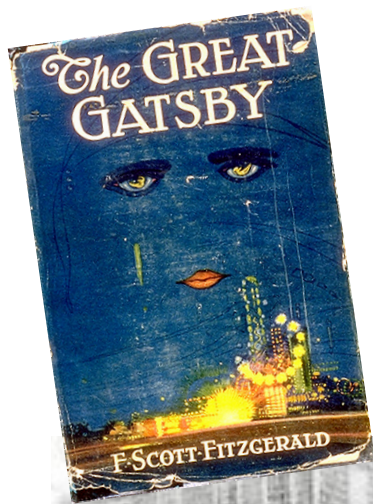
F: Class discussion to reflect on project.

From the Wednesday of week two onward the students will be working in three separate groups, each with a different focus.

- **Editors** – This group will edit the class's work with an eye on spelling, clarity etc. The group will have the authority to cut articles to length and to ask to the writer to expand his/her piece. The group will also write headlines for articles. It is important that this group includes some of the class's strongest writers.

- **Picture editors** – This group will use the Internet to find images that can be used alongside the written content and as part of advertisements. The students must have the right to use the images in order to use them in the magazine (therefore they must have an understanding of copyright and creative commons licenses). They must write a 500-word report on how to find images online that are copyright free.

- **Layout** – This group will lay out the pages using software such as InDesign or Quark Xpress. The teacher will give a “crash course” on using this software and design a template for the magazine with which students can work.



THE HIGH LIFE

a magazine about the life and times of
F. Scott Fitzgerald and his creation, Jay Gatsby



Your next assignment is to create a magazine inspired by *The Great Gatsby*. How would journalists of the time have viewed the life lived by Gatsby and his set? What was happening in 1922, when the book is set, in the United States and around the world? Who was F. Scott Fitzgerald and what else did he write?

HOW WILL YOU CONTRIBUTE?

We are all creative writers, and you should write something on a topic of your own choosing for this group project. What interests you most about Gatsby and the period in which the novel is set? Your first assignment is to write something — the more original the better — based loosely on *The Great Gatsby* or F. Scott Fitzgerald.

In the second week of the project, after you have polished your article, we will split into small groups to allow you to learn a specialized skill as we create the magazine together. Are you an editor, a picture editor or a page designer? We will work in groups to create a real-life magazine. That means the success of the magazine relies on the class pulling together, with every student helping others to produce the best work he or she can.

• DEADLINES

First draft due: May 8
Second draft due: May 11
Third draft due: May 15
Magazine ready to be printed: May 29

• ASSESSMENT

Your final grade will have three components:
- your individual article (45%)
- the work of your small group (45%)
- the work of the whole class (10%)

F. Scott Fitzgerald

What else did he write?

Read some of his short stories
(he wrote 160 in his lifetime!)
and write a review.

How did he write the book
(quickly, slowly etc.)? Was he
happy with the book?

To whom was he married?

Write a celebrity profile
of Jay Gatsby (otherwise
known as James Gatz)

Gatsby the story

Who is Jay Gatsby? What are
the lies he tells about himself?

What is the sequence of
events in the book?

How would a newspaper write
up the final scenes of the book?

Why was Gatsby murdered?

Who is Nick Carraway and
do we trust his storytelling?

The Great Gatsby

1922 - the year the story is set

Note Fitzgerald gave us the term "The Jazz Age"; the era is also known as "The Roaring 20s."

Styles: what clothes and hairstyles were popular in the 1920s?

What were the dances and music of the 1920s?

What did ads from the 1920s look like?

How do people spend their
money in Gatsby? Create a
series of ads around these ideas.

What books were people reading?

What was movies were people watching?

The political scene: Alcohol was prohibited. Why? What were the
consequences of this law?

Working in a pair, write two
newspaper-style editorials.
One person argues the case for
Prohibition; the other person
argues the case against.

Heading	Class AM. LIT Your Name TIM WOODCOCK Name of Lesson The Great Gatsby – the magazine Day 6
Objective	For students to engage in detailed peer review with a partner and gain ideas to improve own writing.
Instructional Framework	Initiating <u>Constructing</u> Utilizing
Lesson Plan Format	<u>Student Centered</u> Teacher Centered: Direct Instruction – providing information and building skills Presentation – demonstrating, lecturing Concept – introducing a new theory, symbol, idea Student Centered: Discussion Cooperative Learning Problem Solving
Grouping	Whole Class <u>Pairs</u> Individuals
Materials & Resources	School - Teacher – copies of PQP form, one for each student Student – two printed copies of the assignment
Strategies	1. PQP peer review
Review Previous Lessons	This lesson is on a Monday and students will have had the weekend to write a first draft on their article, which is due at the start of class. Student should have two copies with them — one copy for the teacher and one copy to be used for peer review exercise in class.
New Material	Explain concept of peer review, specifically the PQP technique (praise-question-polish). (10 min) Pair students up. Give them 30 minutes to look at other's work using PQP technique.
Guided Practice	Put up an example of typical student work on projector (first two paragraphs of a longer piece). As a class ask students to PQP it.
Closure to Lesson	Explain next step, which is to go home and revise the article, with PQP from partner in hand. A second PQP session will take place the next day.
Assignment	Revise article. Turn in second draft by Thursday.

Heading	Class AM. LIT Your Name TIM WOODCOCK Name of Lesson The Great Gatsby – the magazine Day 11
Objective	To understand the logistical issues that affect the look of a magazine and how this applies to the class project
Instructional Framework	Initiating Constructing <u>Utilizing</u>
Lesson Plan Format	<u>Teacher Centered</u> Teacher Centered: Direct Instruction – providing information and building skills Presentation – demonstrating, lecturing Concept – introducing a new theory, symbol, idea Student Centered: Discussion Cooperative Learning Problem Solving
Grouping	<u>Whole Class</u> Pairs Individuals
Materials & Resources	School - <u>Teacher</u> – PowerPoint presentation, large sheets of paper, markers Student –
Strategies	1. PowerPoint presentation (to convey key ideas) 2. Class discussion about how they would like the magazine to look. 3. An adaptation of the project journal (Content Literacy Strategies, p.200). Whole class helps compile a code of conduct to govern final week of magazine production. At end of project we will reflect on to what degree the conduct was followed.
Review Previous Lessons	To date the students will have submitted pieces for the magazine. The pieces will have undergone a process of peer review and two revisions. The articles now need to be edited; pictures found to illustrate them; and the pages laid out.
New Material	Prior to this I spent ten years working in newspapers and magazines. I will draw on this to introduce students to some of ideas they will encounter, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the cost of printing – black & white is always cheaper than color. • the quality of paper – what does the use of glossy paper tell you about a publication? • the page count is always a factor of four – a result of how printing presses work. • the importance of proofreading. The lesson will be based on a PowerPoint presentation that explains why magazines and newsletters look the way they do. I'll also have a selection of magazines and newsletters on hand. I will then lay out some suggestions for how the class magazine ought to look and an outline of the budget. The students will discuss what tweaks they'd like to make. For example, if they want a color cover then the number of pages goes down, or extra money needs to be found. I would give pointers as to what would help the layout process go smoothly. Deadlines needed to honored. Editors' judgments needed to be respected –

New Material	<p>Prior to this I spent ten years working in newspapers and magazines. I will draw on this to introduce students to some of ideas they will encounter, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the cost of printing – black & white is always cheaper than color.• the quality of paper – what does the use of glossy paper tell you about a publication?• the page count is always a factor of four – a result of how printing presses work.• the importance of proofreading. <p>The lesson will be based on a PowerPoint presentation that explains why magazines and newsletters look the way they do. I'll also have a selection of magazines and newsletters on hand.</p>
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|| Zeitgeist Publishing Company || Founded 2010 || Publisher and Editor in Chief: Tim Woodcock ||

MEMO

AKA STUDENT CALENDAR

My fellow journalists:

Here at Zeitgeist Publishing Company we are pleased to launch a new product — a magazine that will capture the spirit of the 1920s. A number of advertisers have expressed considerable interest in such a product. Our next task is to create a product worthy of their ad dollars. It has a working title of *The High Life* but I am open to other ideas. All content must be inspired by *The Great Gatsby*, and must aim to have the same flair and elegance as its author F. Scott Fitzgerald. A production schedule is below. Onward!

**Your publisher,
 Mr Woodcock**

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
1 Brainstorming: What could we include in a magazine inspired by <i>The Great Gatsby</i> ?	2 By the end of class you should have an idea of what you will write	3 In-class time to work on assignment	4 In-class time to work on assignment	5 In-class time to work on assignment
8 Submit first draft of work Peer review	9 Peer review	10 Form groups: Are you an editor, page designer or a picture editor?	11 Submit second draft of work Work in groups	12 Work in groups
15 Submit third draft of work The publisher, aka Mr Woodcock, wants to know how you are going to spend his money. How should we spend our limited budget?	16 Work in groups	17 Group deadlines: Picture editors should have all images collected and rights cleared Editors should have all articles edited and fact checked. Page designers should have layout mostly complete.	18 Work in groups After-school session to complete magazine Magazine ships to the printer	19 It's a wrap! Feedback: how did the project go?

DIFFERENT ROLES AT THE MAGAZINE

On the Wednesday of the second week you will be asked what position you want to fill at the Zeitgeist Publishing Company – editor, page designer, or picture editor. You'll work in the role for most of the rest of the project. Ideally, with 24 people in the class, there will be seven people in each group.

POSITIONS AVAILABLE

Editors –The editors will read the entire class's work with an eye on spelling, clarity, factual accuracy and edit the articles accordingly. The group will have the authority to cut articles to length and to ask to the writer to expand his/her piece. The group will also write headlines for articles.

Page designers – Working closely with the picture editors, the page designers are responsible for the look of the magazine. We will be using the layout program InDesign. Some of you may have experience with it from journalism classes or yearbook; no experience with the software is necessary though – the publishing company will provide a “crash course.” Team members will lay out three to four pages each. A template is available.

Picture editors – Picture editors will use the Internet to find images that can be used alongside the written content and as part of advertisements. The picture editors must ensure they have the right to use the images in order to use them in the magazine (therefore you are encouraged to look for pictures that are available through creative commons licenses and stock photo collections). The group could also include photographers, who would take pictures to illustrate specific articles. The group must write a 500-word guide for others on how to find images online that are copyright free.

Some questions to consider:

- In which role could you contribute best to the group?
- What skills would you like to learn?
- Do you have relevant skills that you could teach to others?

On the Wednesday of week two we will divide into these groups. Please start thinking about what role you will take in the production of the magazine.

RUBRIC

INDIVIDUAL	0-5	6-10	11-15
Creativity	Little originality or creativity exhibited in work.	Some originality exhibited in work.	Well-executed and original idea draws reader in to magazine.
Grammar/spelling	Poor spelling and grammar. Article is difficult to read.	Reasonably good spelling and grammar. Some mistakes, however.	Excellent spelling and grammar throughout work.
Engagement with <i>Gatsby</i>/biographical information about Fitzgerald/1920s	Work lacks specific reference to <i>Gatsby</i> or other relevant material.	Work makes some connections with <i>Gatsby</i> but on occasion merely “skims the surface.”	Work is deeply engaged with the novel or other relevant material. Readers would find this article a useful insight into <i>Gatsby</i> .

Score out of 45 =

GROUP (editors, picture editors, page designers)	0-5	6-10	11-15
Level of teamwork exhibited	Lack of teamwork prevented group from working effectively.	Good teamwork, marred by a few minor conflicts.	Superior teamwork. Group members able to take suggestions from others. Conflict handled in a mature way.
Ability to be self-directed	Difficulty moving project forward without substantial input from teacher.	Some ability to set own priorities but significant input needed from teacher.	Able to set own priorities as a group and meet those goals.
Professionalism of final product	Work needs major revision before magazine is ready to be printed.	Solid final product, marred by a handful of mistakes.	Excellent final product.

Score out of 45 =

WHOLE CLASS

Creativity and professionalism of final product; enthusiasm

Score out of 10 =

TOTAL out of 100 =