

American Literature: Classics

Second Edition

Coursebook



Oak Meadow

Oak Meadow, Inc.

Post Office Box 615

Putney, Vermont 05346

oakmeadow.com



Table of Contents

Introduction	vii
Course Materials	
What to Expect in This Course	
Academic Expectations	
A Note About the Workload	

UNIT 1 Nineteenth-Century Short Stories

Lesson 1 Nathaniel Hawthorne	3
Lesson 2 Herman Melville	7
Lesson 3 Edgar Allan Poe	11
Lesson 4 Mark Twain	15
Lesson 5 Stephen Crane	17
Lesson 6 Unit Project and Literary Analysis	21

UNIT 2 Essays and Speeches

Lesson 7 Ralph Waldo Emerson, Part 1	27
Lesson 8 Ralph Waldo Emerson, Part 2	33
Lesson 9 Abraham Lincoln	37
Lesson 10 Persuasive Essay or Speech	41

UNIT 3 Nineteenth-Century Poetry

Lesson 11 Walt Whitman	47
Lesson 12 Emily Dickinson	53
Lesson 13 Comparative Analysis, Part 1	59
Lesson 14 Comparative Analysis, Part 2	63

UNIT 4 African American and Southern Short Stories

Lesson 15 Charles Chesnutt	71
Lesson 16 Richard Wright and Ralph Ellison	75
Lesson 17 William Faulkner and Eudora Welty	79
Lesson 18 Personal Essay: Intolerance and Oppression	83

UNIT 5 *Passing*

Lesson 19 Past and Present	87
Lesson 20 Values and Actions	91
Lesson 21 Comparative Essay	95

UNIT 6 *The Great Gatsby*

Lesson 22 The High Life	101
Lesson 23 Complications	109
Lesson 24 Tragic Endings	113
Lesson 25 Literary Analysis	117

UNIT 7 Twentieth-Century Poetry

Lesson 26 Elizabeth Bishop	123
Lesson 27 Gwendolyn Brooks	127

UNIT 8 *The Grapes of Wrath*

Lesson 28 Leaving Home	133
Lesson 29 On the Road	139
Lesson 30 Arriving in the West	147
Lesson 31 Life as a Migrant Laborer	155

UNIT 9 Twentieth-Century Short Stories

Lesson 32 Ray Bradbury	161
Lesson 33 James Baldwin	165
Lesson 34 Louise Erdrich	169
Lesson 35 Stephen King	173
Lesson 36 Short Story and Reflection	177

Appendix

“Self-Reliance” by Ralph Waldo Emerson	180
Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address	194
Abraham Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address.....	194
“Song of Myself” by Walt Whitman	196
Academic Expectations	240
Original Work Guidelines	240

Finding Reputable Sources.....	241
Citing Your Sources	242
Elements of Good Writing.....	245
The Writing Process	248
Outline Template	253



Introduction

Welcome to *American Literature: Classics!* In this course, you will be reading the thoughts and feelings of those who have lived on this land that we now call the United States. Through their words, you will experience the events that helped create this country and that made it what it is today. In the process, you will begin to understand more fully the unique heritage and vision of the American people. Each work of fiction is a window into the real-life issues experienced in the past and today.

Content warning: The classic texts in this course describe events that portray historical events, beliefs, and perspectives in an accurate, realistic way. You will encounter disturbing material. As with all material in this course, please approach the topics with sensitivity and kindness, both to the people you are studying and to yourself. If you are struggling emotionally with topics in this course, please contact your teacher or another trusted adult.

Course Materials

The following materials are used in this course:

- *Great American Short Stories*, edited by Paul Negri
- *The Oxford Book of American Short Stories*, edited by Joyce Carol Oates
- *Passing* by Nella Larsen
- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
- *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck

This course also uses online resources, which can be easily accessed at oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links. Visit this page to familiarize yourself with how to locate the online resources for this course, and then bookmark the page for future reference.

What to Expect in This Course

In each lesson, you will find reading and writing assignments. For written assignments, include examples and direct references from the text to support your observations and opinions.

When you begin each lesson, scan the entire lesson first so you have an idea of what you will be doing. Take a quick look at the number of assignments and amount of reading. Having a sense of the whole lesson before you begin will help you manage your time effectively. Use the assignment checklist to keep track of your progress. Check off tasks as you complete them so you can see at a glance what you still need to do. Follow this process for each lesson.

This full-year course is divided into 36 lessons, and each lesson is designed to take about one week to complete. In the lessons, you will find the following sections:

An **Assignment Checklist** is included at the beginning of each lesson. Assignments are fully explained in the lesson.

Learning Objectives outline the main goals of the lesson and give you an idea of what to expect.

Lesson Introductions provide background information or questions to guide your learning.

Reading Assignments include a wide range of classical texts from American writers.

Reflect and Discuss sections offer questions and prompts to think about and talk about with others, which gives you a chance to further explore your ideas about the topics.

Writing Assignments highlight important literary elements, develop your analytical skills, and help you gain deeper insight into the literature.

Share Your Work provides reminders for students who are submitting work to a teacher.

This course is designed for independent learning, so hopefully you will find it easy to navigate. However, it is assumed you will have an adult (such as a parent, tutor, or school-based teacher) supervising your work and providing support and feedback. We will refer to this person as “your teacher” in this course. If you have a question about your work, ask them for help.

Academic Expectations

You are expected to approach your work with authenticity, integrity, and effort. The appendix contains important information that you will need to read and incorporate into your work throughout the year. Take some time to familiarize yourself with the resources in the appendix. You will find information about original work guidelines, tips on how to avoid accidental plagiarism, and details on citing sources and images as well as writing guidelines.

A Note About the Workload

Students vary greatly in terms of reading speed, reading comprehension, and writing ability. Some may find the reading in this course takes less time than expected; others may find the writing assignments take a great deal of time. In general, you can expect to spend about five to seven hours on each weekly lesson.

Keep an eye on the workload as you progress through the course. If you find you are struggling to complete the work, contact your teacher to discuss your options. Your teacher might modify lessons depending on particular learning goals or challenges you are facing.



UNIT 1 Nineteenth-Century Short Stories

“In truth, all through the haunted forest there could be nothing more frightful than the figure of Goodman Brown.”

Excerpt from “Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne



(Image credit: Nilfanion)

For the study of nineteenth-century American short stories, we will be reading selections from two books: *Great American Short Stories*, which includes stories written from 1835 through 1927, and *The Oxford Book of American Short Stories*, which includes stories written from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries.

The selections in the Oxford book were made by the writer Joyce Carol Oates, and she provides background information about her choices in the book’s preface and introduction. The book also includes biographical information about each author selected. Oates reflects on the description of a short story:

My personal definition of the form is that it represents a concentration of imagination, and not an expansion; it is not more than 10,000 words; and, no matter its mysteries of experimental properties, it achieves closure—meaning that, when it ends, the attentive reader understands why. (5)

She goes on to note that each short story “signals a tangible change of some sort; a distinct shift in consciousness; a deepening of insight” (5–6).

In this unit, you’ll explore short stories by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Mark Twain, and Stephen Crane. As you read works by these esteemed authors, see if you can sense the “deepening of insight” in each story.

Lesson

1

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, you will:

- Identify story elements that influence the reader’s experience.
- Determine an author’s point of view in a text, and analyze how an author uses the narrator for a specific purpose.
- Analyze how the style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of a text.

Lesson Introduction

We will begin this unit on nineteenth-century short stories by reading works by Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville. These two authors were contemporaries and, for a time, friends. They were also both closely associated with Emerson (whose work you will study in lessons 7 and 8). Both Hawthorne and Melville went on to write novels that were major accomplishments in American literature, considered by many to be masterpieces: Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* and Melville’s *Moby Dick*.

In this lesson, we’ll read Hawthorne’s famous short story, “Young Goodman Brown,” which was written in 1835 and published in 1846 in a collection titled *Mosses from an Old Mosse*. From 1842 to 1845, Hawthorne lived with his family at the Old Manse in Concord, Massachusetts, where his neighbors were Emerson and Thoreau.

“Young Goodman Brown” takes place in Puritan times, before the Salem witch trials of 1692; the names of some of the twenty victims appear in the story. Hawthorne’s grandfather had been one of the Salem witch trial judges, and because of that, Hawthorne had thoroughly studied the history of the Puritans. The main character of this story, Young Goodman Brown, enters a dark forest and meets with various spectral (ghostly) characters.

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- Read the lesson introduction.
- Read the biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne.
- Read “Young Goodman Brown” by Nathaniel Hawthorne.
- List the essential elements of a good story.
- Choose three questions to answer regarding the story’s narrator, point of view, and setting.
- Reflect on the story’s theme and where the author leaves things uncertain.

In *Hawthorne's Short Stories*, edited and with an introduction by Newton Arvin, Edgar Allan Poe—whose work you'll read in lesson 3—is quoted as describing one of Hawthorne's stories in this way: "Every word tells, and there is not a word which does not tell." In his introduction, Arvin describes Hawthorne's writing:

. . . the palette of Hawthorne's vocabulary: the favorite adjectives, *dusky*, *dim*, and *shadowy*, or *cold*, *sluggish*, and *torpid*; the favorite verbs, *separate*, *estrangle*, and *insulate*; the favorite nouns, *pride* and *egotism*, *guilt* and *intellect*, *heart* and *sympathy*. They tell us everything about his sensibility, his imagination, and the creative idiosyncrasy of his human insight. (xv)

As you read Hawthorne's story, try to be aware of this "palette of Hawthorne's vocabulary."

Reading Assignments

1. In *The Oxford Book of American Short Stories*, read the biography of Nathaniel Hawthorne (60).
2. In *Great American Short Stories*, read "Young Goodman Brown" by Nathaniel Hawthorne (1–12).
3. As you read, take notes on your impressions. Pay particular attention to the setting—you will be asked to do an assignment about the significance of the setting, so make note of any details that stand out for you.

Other elements to note in the story:

- Voices of the inner (or outer) world
 - Significant journeys taken by the characters (physical or emotional)
 - Human connections (or lack thereof)
 - Unfamiliar vocabulary words
4. After a day or two, read the story a second time, and then complete the writing assignments below.

Writing Assignments

1. Throughout the course, you will be reading a variety of short stories and doing several creative story writing projects. What elements do you feel are essential for a story to be engaging, entertaining, or meaningful?

Make a list of the criteria you look for in a story. (You can use this list to evaluate the stories you'll read in this course.)

2. Choose three of the following assignments to complete.
 - a. In "Young Goodman Brown," what does Brown believe is happening to him? Using direct quotations and examples from the story, describe Brown's feelings and ideas.

- b. We experience Brown's journey through Hawthorne's narrator. Do the narrator's opinions differ from Young Goodman Brown's opinions of himself? Who do you trust—the narrator or the young man? Provide evidence of your opinion.
 - c. Since the author chose not to have the main character narrate the story, what is the purpose of the narrator?
 - d. How would the ending of the story have been different if it was narrated by Brown?
Compose an alternative ending to show how the story's ending could have been different if told from Brown's perspective.
 - e. Consider the descriptive setting of the story. What adjectives and adverbs does the author use to describe the path and the forest? How do these words make you feel?
3. Reflect on the impact of Brown's experience that changed him so dreadfully. Brown seems to have encountered—either by seeing them or by hearing their voices—a cast of impossible people: an elderly person with a serpent staff, Goody Close, the minister, Deacon Gookin, Faith, and his dead father and mother.

Did Brown experience these events or only imagine (or dream) them? Would you call this a ghost story? In what way is the story about evil?

Write one or two paragraphs.

SHARE YOUR WORK

At the end of each lesson, you will share your work with your teacher for feedback. (If your teacher prefers a different submission schedule, they will let you know.) You are not necessarily required to complete all the assignments for each lesson, so be sure to check with your teacher at the beginning of each lesson to make sure you understand what you are required to do.

Below is a list of assignments you can share with your teacher, which you can use to organize your work submission:

- List of essential elements of a good story
- Answers to three questions
- Reflection on the story's theme

Your teacher will let you know the best way to submit your work. If you have any questions about the lesson content, assignments, or how to share your work, contact your teacher.

Lesson

2

Herman Melville

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, you will:

- Explore how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics.
- Support an opinion using concrete details and relevant quotations.

Lesson Introduction

“Bartleby” by Herman Melville is written in the first-person perspective, a striking difference from Hawthorne’s third-person narrative voice in “Young Goodman Brown.” Melville’s story is about the narrator as much as it is about the title character. Bartleby does not change, but the lawyer/narrator undergoes a transformation; it is very different from Young Goodman Brown’s transformation, but both characters experience something very strange, almost uncanny. Brown is not able or willing to question, evaluate, or deeply reflect on his own experience that night in the forest, but the lawyer is able to do so, and the narrator’s way of acknowledging and reflecting on his experience creates the story.

In “Melville’s Parable of the Walls,” Leo Marx describes “Bartleby” as told in three movements:

- Bartleby’s gradual resistance
- The lawyer’s attempts to make him comfortable
- Society’s punishment

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- Read the lesson introduction.
- Read the biography of Herman Melville.
- Read “Bartleby” by Herman Melville.
- Choose one:
 - Identify notable details in a description and explain their impact.
 - Describe the narrator’s transformation.
 - Analyze, illustrate, or relate to a figurative passage.
- Write or tell a story or poem using emphasized words.
- Compare the stories of Hawthorne and Melville.

Oddly enough, the narrator's feelings of aversion to Bartleby (described on pages 30 and 31) are what begin to disrupt the lawyer's safe world view. This first awakening of conscience is accompanied by an expression of bewilderment. His struggle involves the divine injunction "that ye love one another" (39) and expands on the virtue of charity.

So, how does the voice of this first-person narrator come across to the reader? In "The Reliable Narrator," Dan McCall writes:

Melville really does ask us questions about kindness, about love, about what we can fix and what we cannot. What happens when you run into something that you cannot explain and cannot remedy? Where is your humanity then? (*Nathaniel Hawthorne's Tales* 275)

Keep these thoughts in mind as you read (and reread) the story.

Reading Assignments

1. In *The Oxford Book of American Short Stories*, read the biography of Herman Melville (85).
2. In *Great American Short Stories*, read "Bartleby" by Herman Melville (18–46).
3. As you read, take notes on your impressions. Pay particular attention to the narrator's thoughts and reactions to Bartleby throughout the story.
4. After a day or two, read the story a second time, and then complete the writing assignments below.

Notes from the Text

- A *scrivener* is a scribe, notary, or law clerk.
- *Office* also means a position (such as the office of a Master in Chancery).
- A *dun* is a bill collector.
- A *conveyancer* is one who draws up deeds.
- *The Tombs* is a prison in New York.
- A *rockaway* is an open carriage.
- "The tragedy of Colt and Adams" refers to a famous murder case.
- "With kings and counselors" is a biblical phrase.
- The Dead Letter Office was a government office that handled letters that had no known address or living recipient.
- Notice how Bartleby's use of the word *prefer* begins to affect the narrator, Nippers, and Turkey.

Writing Assignments

1. Choose one of the following assignments.

a. In the story, the narrator describes Bartleby:

His steadiness, his freedom from all dissipation, his incessant industry (except when he chose to throw himself into a standing reverie behind his screen), his great stillness, his unalterableness of demeanor under all circumstance, made him a valuable acquisition. One prime thing was this—*he was always there*—first in the morning, continually throughout the day, and the last at night. I had a singular confidence in his honesty. (30)

Write one paragraph on what stands out to you most in this description, and clearly express your reasons why.

b. Trace the lawyer's character throughout the story through exploring his reactions to and feelings about Bartleby. How and why does he change? Referring to your journal notes, write one paragraph to describe this transformation.

c. In this story, the author uses figurative language when describing Bartleby as “a bit of wreck in the mid-Atlantic” (36) and “like the last column of some ruined temple” (37). These descriptions mirror the lawyer's struggle with himself and the meaning of this experience, which crescendos in a moment when he finds himself to be no longer the safe, comfortable, and protected person he took himself to be:

I was thunderstruck. For an instant, I stood like the man who, pipe in mouth, was killed one cloudless afternoon long ago in Virginia by summer lightning; at his own warm open window he was killed, and remained leaning out there upon the dreamy afternoon, till someone touched him, when he fell. (38)

Choose one of the following ways to respond to this passage:

- In one paragraph, give your impressions of this passage. Analyze both the language and the symbolism, drawing on aspects of the entire story.
- Illustrate this scene in the story, emphasizing the lawyer's experience.
- Recall a shocking experience you had with somebody in your life, and write about it in metaphorical terms.

2. The italicized and repeated words and phrases in the story impart a special emphasis. For instance, the phrase “I would prefer not to” occurs 37 times in the story and is italicized 6 times. Here are other repeated or italicized words (including the page numbers where they are found):

- safe (19)
- you (26 and 27)
- lunny (27)
- will (29)
- prefer (multiple references)
- he was always there (30)

- nonchalance (31)
- anything (33)
- must (36)
- assume (38)
- should (41)

Write a simple story or poem that features many italicized words and phrases, either those from the list above or words of your own choosing. In homage to Melville, you might like to use “I would prefer not to” as many times as possible.

Alternatively, you might like to tell a story to someone and emphasize certain words (the way you would use italics in writing). This can be a story you know or one you make up. Afterward, ask your audience how the emphasized words influenced their enjoyment or understanding of the story. If you choose this option, record your storytelling and/or write a few sentences about the experience and your audience’s feedback.

3. Though their approach is very different, Hawthorne and Melville center their stories on something that is almost otherworldly or supernatural. Write a brief essay (two or three paragraphs) about the ways that “Young Goodman Brown” and “Bartleby” are ghost stories. In your comparison, reflect on who is being haunted and why. Use specific examples and at least one direct quotation to support your opinion.

SHARE YOUR WORK

When you have completed your work, share it with your teacher. Remember to check with your teacher at the beginning of each lesson to make sure you understand what you are required to do.

Below is a list of assignments you can share with your teacher, which you can use to organize your work submission:

- Choice assignment (choose one):
 - Notable details in a description
 - Description of the narrator’s transformation
 - Response to a figurative passage
- Story or poem that uses emphasized words
- Comparison of stories by Hawthorne and Melville

If you have any questions about the lesson content, assignments, or how to share your work, contact your teacher.

Lesson

6

Unit Project and Literary Analysis

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, you will:

- Examine some of the themes of the stories through developing a creative project.
- Engage and orient the reader by setting out a problem, situation, or observation and its significance, establishing a point of view, and introducing a narrator and/or characters to create a smooth progression of experiences or events.
- Write an impression of early American literature and reflect on why the stories are considered classics and masterpieces that have endured for so many years.

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- Complete a creative project or short story.
- Write a reflective or analytical essay.

Writing Assignments

1. Choose one of the following project options.
 - a. Do a creative project—visual or graphic art, music, poetry, etc.—on a topic of interest connected to the stories you have read. Include an artist’s statement along with your project.

When brainstorming your project, think about some of the inspiration for the short stories you have read, which include the following:

- Hawthorne’s study of Puritan history and his own ancestor’s involvement in the Salem witch trials
- Melville’s association with Emerson
- Poe’s interest in the human psyche
- Twain’s lack of experience with war
- Crane’s understanding of the reality of war

b. Poe wrote,

A skillful literary artist has constructed his tale. If wise, he has not fashioned his thoughts to accommodate his incidents; but having conceived, with deliberate care, a certain unique or single effect to be wrought out, he then invents such incidents—he then combines such events as may best aid him in establishing this preconceived effect. (*The Oxford Book of American Short Stories* 8)

Following Poe’s formula, craft a short story with a first-person narrator who harbors a secret. Once you have decided on this “single effect,” create a setting and story incidents that best support your theme and character. Your story doesn’t have to be long, but it should be well structured and center on this character and their secret.

2. Choose one of the following options, and write a one- or two-page essay. Your essay should be well organized, include relevant quotations, and express your thoughts clearly and with originality.

Follow the steps of the writing process to plan, write, revise, edit, and proofread your essay. Refer to the outline template in the appendix for details on how to sequence your ideas into a well-organized essay. Additional information about the writing process can be found in the appendix of this coursebook.

a. Write a reflective essay on the stories of Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, Twain, and Crane. Address the following questions:

- Of these five stories, which was most difficult to read, and why? Was it worthwhile to read?
- What story did you most resonate with? What about the story did you relate to?
- How do these stories express what it means to be an American?
- These stories are considered classic masterpieces of American Literature. Why do you think these stories have endured for so many years?

You might want to look over your responses to previous assignments before writing your essay. When answering the questions (and the last question in particular), explain the reasoning behind your opinion.

b. Some of the themes that have emerged in these stories are:

- Voices of the inner and outer world
- Significant journeys taken by the characters (physical or emotional)
- Human connections (or lack thereof)

In a one- or two-page analysis, compare one of these themes across several stories you have read. Use relevant quotations to help explain how the stories expressed the theme.

SHARE YOUR WORK

When you have completed your work, share it with your teacher. Below is a list of assignments to help you organize your work submission:

- Creative project or short story
- Reflective or analytical essay

If you have any questions about the lesson content, which assignments to complete, or how to share your work, contact your teacher.

Lesson

17

William Faulkner and Eudora Welty

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, you will:

- Practice close reading to see how the opening of the story prepares you for the rest of the narrative.
- Analyze the perspective of different characters and draw logical conclusions from the evidence given.
- Consider the relationship between historical events and literature.

Lesson Introduction

African American authors were not the only ones using literature to explore intolerance and oppression. White writers, especially ones in the South, also took up the topic as they illuminated the forms of racism and bias that they observed in their own communities. This week, you will read two such authors: William Faulkner and Eudora Welty. Both writers used their native Mississippi as a setting for their stories. Faulkner is slightly older than Welty—he was born in 1897, and she was born in 1909—yet, as you will see, both provide a powerful representation of race in Southern life.

Both authors also share a focus on psychology. As you read the stories, think about how they reveal the ways in which their characters think. How do they create vivid portraits of human consciousness? How does racism fit in with other thoughts their white characters hold? Both Faulkner and Welty place the reader in the consciousness of a very limited narrator: “That Evening Sun” is narrated from the perspective of a child; “Where Is the Voice Coming From?” is narrated by a white supremacist who has just murdered

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- Read the lesson introduction.
- Read the biography of William Faulkner.
- Read “That Evening Sun” by William Faulkner.
- Read the biography of Eudora Welty.
- Read “Where Is the Voice Coming From” by Eudora Welty.
- Use close reading to analyze the opening paragraphs of a story.
- Provide evidence of how dialogue is used to reveal values and beliefs.
- Research the historical setting of Welty’s story and examine the impact of fictional and nonfictional accounts.
- Identify and explain revealing character details.
- Create a detailed outline for your essay on intolerance and oppression.

a Black civil rights activist. As you read, consider how the perspective of these characters shape your understanding of the stories.

Reading Assignments

1. In *The Oxford Book of American Short Stories*, read the following:
 - Biography of William Faulkner (335)
 - “That Evening Sun” by William Faulkner (336–352)
 - Biography of Eudora Welty (395)
 - “Where Is the Voice Coming From” by Eudora Welty (396–401)

Writing Assignments

1. Reread the first two paragraphs of “That Evening Sun,” and underline any details that help you understand the setting of the story. What qualities of Jefferson, Mississippi, appear most important to you? How does this opening set the tone for the rest of the story? In your response, be sure to cite and interpret specific details from the first two paragraphs.

Writing tip: This type of response requires *close reading*, which means you examine small details carefully and consider how they relate to the whole passage as well as the larger work of literature. It is essential that you include details and explain what impression they create. You may find it useful to keep in mind these three *I* words when you integrate textual evidence: *introduce*, *insert*, and *interpret*. When you **introduce** a quote, you give some context for it in terms of the story and how it connects to the point you are making. You **insert** the quote in a relevant place, and then you **interpret** or analyze the quote by explaining what your understanding is. Don’t assume the quote will speak for itself—tell your reader what you see and why you find it illuminating.

2. Although Nancy is the central character of “That Evening Sun,” Faulkner often focuses on how the white characters in the story—the children (Jason, Caddy, and Quentin) as well as their parents (Jason and the unnamed mother)—view her. Pick any two of these white characters and discuss how their dialogue reveals their thoughts about Nancy or African Americans in general. For each of the two characters, include at least two examples of something they say to support your characterization of them.
3. Eudora Welty’s “Where Is the Voice Coming From?” tells a fictionalized story of the murder of Medgar Evers in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1963. She wrote the story immediately after the murder was committed and before the assailant (Byron de la Beckwith) was discovered.

Drawing on at least two reputable sources, compose a paragraph about the historical facts of Evers’s murder. Then, write one or two paragraphs reflecting on the difference between learning about this event through historical research and experiencing it through a story written from the perspective of the murderer.

For historical research, you may want to consult the following resources:

“White Supremacist Convicted of Killing Medgar Evers”

“Medgar Evers”

(All online resources can be accessed at oakmeadow.com/curriculum-links.)

4. In addition to shedding light on a historical event, “Where Is the Voice Coming From?” showcases Welty’s mastery as a writer. How does Welty use descriptive details to create the impression of a vivid character?

Choose three details and explain how they shaped your understanding of the character and the events described in the story. Present your answer in the form of a chart, such as the one shown below—an example is given that you can use as a model.

Descriptive Detail	Impression of Character
Protagonist looks at the victim’s green yard and thinks, “I bet my wife would hate to pay her water bill” (308).	This points to his family’s poverty and suggests his envy of people who have more.

5. Read over the ideas you generated in the previous lesson when brainstorming about your personal essay on intolerance and oppression. Circle the main ideas that you want to include. Using these ideas as a starting point, create an outline that organizes your ideas into sections (paragraphs) that focus on the main points you will address. Your essay will be three or four pages, so you will want to identify several main ideas to explore. (Feel free to use the outline template in the appendix to help organize your main ideas and supporting details.)

Add specific details you will use as you explore each main idea. For each paragraph, consider what topic you will cover and what details you will use to support it. For instance, if you have three main ideas, you might write two or three paragraphs for each main idea. Identifying the sequence of topics and details in your outline will help you create a solid structure for your essay. Your outline should be quite detailed.

SHARE YOUR WORK

When you have completed your work, share it with your teacher. Below is a list of assignments to help you organize your work submission:

- Analysis of a story's opening paragraphs
- Evidence of how dialogue is used to reveal values and beliefs
- Research of the historical setting of Welty's story and comparison of fictional and nonfictional accounts
- Explanation of revealing character details
- Detailed outline for your essay

If you have any questions about the lesson content, which assignments to complete, or how to share your work, contact your teacher.

Lesson

23

Complications

Learning Objectives

In this lesson, you will:

- Interpret a text in terms of what is explicitly stated and what is meant.
- Write an argument in support of a claim using reasoning and evidence.
- Produce coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style match the task, purpose, and audience.

Lesson Introduction

As Gatsby leans on his friends to bring Daisy into his sphere, the extent of his contrived existence becomes clearer. All his aspirations were woven tightly around his dream of Daisy. His house, parties, and entire persona were built to attract her to him, and when Daisy comes to his house, he is eager to show off all that he has created:

He hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy, and I think he revalued everything in his house according to the measure of response it drew from her well-loved eyes. Sometimes, too, he stared around at his possessions in a dazed way, as though in her actual and astounding presence none of it was any longer real. (91)

Yet Gatsby is not satisfied, and his driving desire to recreate the past causes complications for everyone.

Reading Assignments

1. Read chapters 4–6 in *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald (61–113).

ASSIGNMENT CHECKLIST

- Read the lesson introduction.
- Read chapters 4–6 in *The Great Gatsby*.
- Interpret a passage from the story.
- Write an argument regarding the significance of a passage in the story.
- Choose one:
 - Describe a character using imagery or figurative language.
 - Describe a character using visual images.

Vocabulary

The author uses a varied and complex vocabulary. Here are some words that may be unfamiliar to you.

- punctilious: adj. meticulous; showing great attention to detail.
- girder: n. a strong horizontal beam used as a main support in building.
- benediction: n. a blessing.
- postern: n. a small rear gate.
- laudable: adj. commendable; worthy of praise.
- notoriety: n. the quality or state of being widely and unfavorably known.
- meretricious: adj. outwardly attractive but inwardly worthless; false.
- ingratiate: v. to gain favor or acceptance by flattery or obsequiousness.

You are encouraged to look up words you don't know to expand your vocabulary and gain a greater understanding of the text.

Writing Assignments

1. In this assignment, you'll continue your analysis of the author's use of language. Choose one of the following passages and write your own interpretation. What is the author expressing that goes beyond the literal or figurative meaning? Use the prompts below each quote to guide your interpretive response, and write at least one paragraph for the quote you choose.

- a. "His correctness grew on him as we neared the city" (68).

How did "his correctness" manifest? Have you ever experienced or witnessed this type of shift from informality to formality? Why do you think Gatsby's demeanor changed as they neared the city? Interpret this statement within the context of the scene and in terms of plot and/or character development.

- b. "He came alive to me, delivered suddenly from the womb of his purposeless splendor" (78).

How did Gatsby "come alive"? Have you ever experienced a similar change in how you perceive someone? What happened to bring about this change in Nick's perception of Gatsby? Interpret this statement within the context of the scene and in terms of plot and/or character development.

- c. "His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one" (93).

What object is diminished? Why do people tend to imbue objects with extraordinary significance? Does it make Gatsby seem more human or more eccentric in your eyes? Why?

- d. “The truth was that Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself. He was a son of God—a phrase which, if it means anything, means just that—and he must be about His Father’s business, the service of a vast, vulgar, and meretricious beauty.” (98)

What is this Platonic (in reference to Plato) sense of self? If this is how Gatsby sees himself, do his actions align with this image?

- e. “For a while these reveries provided an outlet for his imagination; they were a satisfactory hint of the unreality of reality, a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy’s wing.” (99)

Explain this in your own words within the context of the story and Gatsby’s later life.

2. Using your rhetorical skills, you will state a claim related to a passage from the story, provide reasoning to support your claim, and engage your audience by appealing to their emotions. Complete each of the steps below.

- Select a phrase, sentence, or longer passage from the reading that you judge to be significant to the plot or characters.
- Explain the context of the passage.
- State a claim as to its significance.
- Defend your claim with reasoning and by referencing specific events from the story.
- Support your argument with an example that appeals to your audience’s emotions by connecting with something they can relate to. (Remember *pathos* from the tools of rhetoric? See the introduction in the previous lesson.)

Here is an example that you can use as a model (or you can write your response in one or two well-organized paragraphs):

Quote:

“His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one” (93).

Context:

Once Daisy and Gatsby meet, the significance of the green light at the end of her dock ceases to hold any magic for him because she is no longer out of his reach.

Claim:

This is a turning point in Gatsby’s life.

Reasoning to support the claim:

Gatsby had been building his entire life on trying to impress Daisy and be worthy (in his eyes) of her love and joining her social circle. By devoting all his energies to this pursuit, he found meaning in his life. Once he and Daisy were reunited, the “object” (the green light at

the end of her dock) ceased to have special meaning for him. This is a turning point in Gatsby's life because it signifies the beginning of the end for Gatsby. Suddenly, the single-minded goal that has been the focus of his life was achieved.

Example that appeals to the audience's emotions:

If Gatsby has achieved his lifelong dream, what will define him now? Have you ever wanted something so badly that it was all you could think about, but then when you got it, it didn't seem so special anymore? Ultimately, this is how Gatsby feels—his dream was more exciting and more real to him than reality.

3. Fitzgerald uses striking imagery to convey elements of the setting, tone, characters, and plot. Choose one of the following assignments to explore the use of imagery.
 - a. Write an original passage that uses imagery or other figurative language to describe one of the characters in the story. Your description can be related to their sense of self, how they present themselves to the world, or something that they have experienced. Write one paragraph.
 - b. Imagery creates a visual picture in the reader's mind. Use visual images—artwork (well-known works or your own), sketches, photographs, graphics, etc.—to describe a character, episode, theme, relationship, etc., from the story. Write a brief description of the significance of the images you chose.

SHARE YOUR WORK

When you have completed your work, share it with your teacher. Below is a list of assignments to help you organize your work submission:

- Interpretation of a story excerpt
- Argument about the significance of a passage in the story
- Choice assignment (choose one):
 - Character description using imagery or figurative language
 - Character description using visual images

If you have any questions about the lesson content, which assignments to complete, or how to share your work, contact your teacher.



Appendix

“Self-Reliance” by Ralph Waldo Emerson	180
Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address	194
Abraham Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address	194
“Song of Myself” by Walt Whitman	196
Academic Expectations	240
Original Work Guidelines	240
Finding Reputable Sources	241
Citing Your Sources	242
Elements of Good Writing	245
The Writing Process	248
Outline Template	253