

Activities for Assignment #2: Text Messages by The Great Gatsby Characters

CHARACTER BOARDS

SWBAT describe the main characters of the novel and create visual representations to express their understanding of these characters by contributing to the classroom boards

Step 1: Before class begins, have 5 large blank posters (preferably white) posted on the wall in some area of the classroom.

Step 2: When students take their seats, point out and explain the posters around the room. These are "Character Boards." Ask students to brainstorm the five major characters of The Great Gatsby. When they say names, write one name on each of the posters. (Guide students toward Nick, Jay, Daisy, Tom, and Jordan).

Step 3: By the end of each week, students will be required to post any information to the boards about at least 2 different characters. Explain that they should utilize the class time before the bell rings, after class, or when class time permits individual work, to write their ideas on the boards.

Step 4: Explain what students can write for each character: pictures, quotes, words, descriptions, etc., that describe the characters. These will remain in a stationary place through the reading of the whole novel.

Outcome: Each student must have written at least one bit of relevant information for each character board by Friday (student should write their name next to the information they write on each board to identify their work).

WEEKLY JOURNAL ENTRY

SWBAT interpret themes and issues that arise in the novel and examine these themes/issues by completing a weekly journal entry.

Step 1: Introduce weekly journals to students on the first Friday of the unit. Either provide each student with a notebook, give each student a stapled bunch of lined paper, or have students provide their own "journal."

Step 2: Ask students to bring their journals with them to every class on Friday.

Step 3: Every Friday, students will write in their ongoing journals about a prompt assigned by the teacher. The teacher should write this prompt on the board before class begins. When the bell rings on Fridays, students will be expected to take their seats and complete this "bell ringer" quietly. The topics of the journals will vary; however, they should pertain to themes, plot, events, and characters in the novel.

Step 4: Collect these journals every Friday after class to read over the week. Work will be assessed as participation.

Outcome: Journal entries to be collected weekly (on Fridays). Grade based on participation/writing a journal entry relevant to the assigned prompts

CHARACTER WEB

SWBAT identify and organize character relations in the novel and illustrate these connections in a character map.

Step 1: The teacher should give each student a larger sheet of paper (ie. construction paper).

Step 2: Have a list of the characters from the novel displayed on the board.

Step 3: Each student should write all of the characters names in a circle on their piece of paper.

Step 4: While reading, students should literally map (with lines) the connections between the characters. For example, when Daisy and Jay meet, students should draw a line between those two names.

Step 5: Whenever a student draws a connection between characters, they should write a brief description of the event that caused the two characters to meet.

Step 5: Each week, students should choose at least 2 connections that they've drawn and write a brief explanation of the two characters and how they connect. Students should also explain the significance of this connection and its relation to some larger theme or issue in the text.

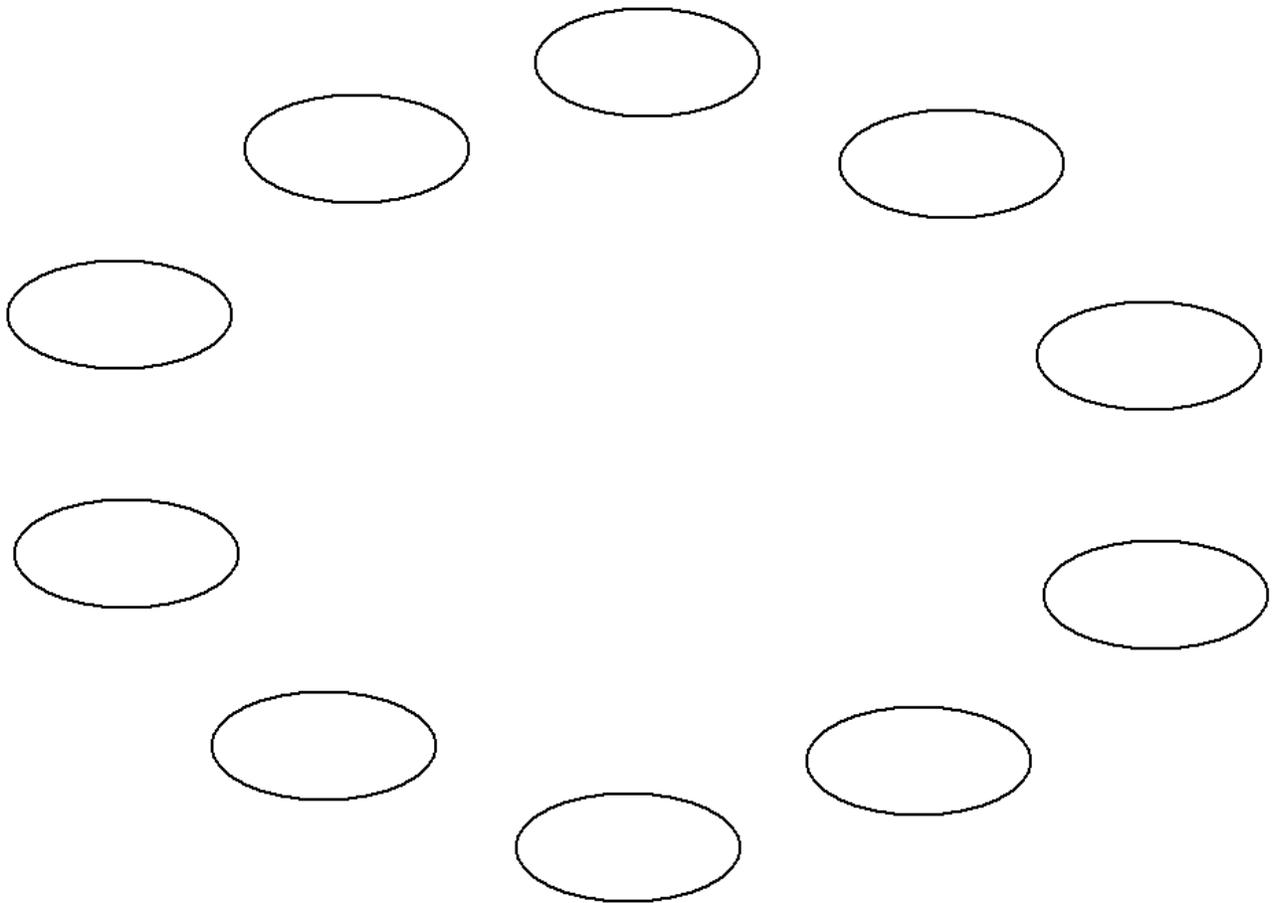
Outcome: Graphic Organizer for Character Web. Will be look at by teacher one day per week (by Friday) and will be turned in for a final grade (completion and correct connections/information from text) after novel has been finished.

(see below for Graphic Organizer)

Name: _____

Character mapping

This organizer is to help you follow the connections between the various characters of The Great Gatsby! First, record each of the characters names in one of the circles below. Then, when one of the characters has some sort of interaction with another character, draw a line between the two. On that line, write a brief description (one sentence) describing the event that caused the two characters to meet. Keep this organizer as a reference tool to use in the future when looking back on events and character relations :)



EMPHASIS LESSON

SWBAT recall experiences they have had using “emphasis” in their writing and identify how emphasis and tone are used and expressed in writing.

Step 1: Explain to students that before there were Word processing programs, writers still found ways to express themselves and their words in their writing by underlining words, using exclamation points, typing “dot dot dot (...),” and more. Today, with more tools at their disposal, writing often use italics, boldface, underlining, font size, and font styles to convey various moods and expressions.

Step 2: Ask students how often they use these types of writing with emphasis OR when do they remember using such a tactic in their writing?

Step 3: After a few students share, ask for volunteers to read aloud the following statements, one at a time:

- a. Sorry...I didn't think you would want to go to the recital...
- b. Sorry!! I didn't think you would want to go to the recital.
- c. Sorry, I didn't think you would want to go to the recital.

Step 4: Next, ask other students in the class to explain how the reader changed his/her voice or inflection for each sentence. How did the meaning of the sentence change? How was the tone affected in each sentence?

Step 5: Students should free-write for 10 minutes about what “tone” is and what it looks like. In their free-write, ask them to emphasize words to add more meaning.

Outcome: “Free-write” journal entry to be spot-checked for completion.

THE MAIN EVENT

SWBAT identify the main themes and events in the novel, organize their thoughts in a double-entry journal, interpret the significance of main events in a novel, and present their findings in

the form of a multimedia project.

Step 1: Give a brief overview of this activity: it will focus on identifying the main themes and events that have occurred up to this point in the novel.

Step 2: Assign partners for this task by pairing students sitting next to one another (or by preparing partners the night before, paying attention to student skill and ability).

Step 3: In these partners, students will keep a "double entry journal" in their notebook to record any of the main events, ideas, or themes as they arise in the novel. Each student should record the same information in the chart in case their partner is absent one day.

Step 4: Explain how the double entry journal works. On the left column of the journal, the students should record the event/theme/idea. On the right column, the students should briefly explain (2-3 sentences) what significance this aspect represents in the text.

Step 5: Once the students have completed their double-entry journal for the book, they will convert these ideas into some other form of multimedia: PowerPoint, YouTube video, song, photo collage, music album, etc. They will need to present to the class what the major ideas they noted throughout the novel and also provide the description they wrote about the ideas. This is an informal assessment and will not require a strict rubric (unless the teacher feels the need to do so). Students should be given one class period (either in the library or computer lab) to brainstorm/draft the presentation with their partner. These projects will be shared with the class.

Outcome: Double-Entry Journal Worksheet to be turned in once the novel has been finished.

Will be graded for completion, accuracy of ideas, and analysis of event/idea/theme significance.

Name: _____

“The Main Event” Double-Entry Journal

You will be assigned partners during class. Together, you will keep track of any major events/themes/ideas as they arise during your reading of *The Great Gatsby*. You will each have your own copy of this organizer and will each be expected to write down your ideas on your own papers (only one copy will be turned in). On the left-hand column, you should record the event/theme/idea. In the right-hand column, briefly explain (2-3 sentences) what significance this aspect represents in the text.

Event/Theme/Idea	Explanation

TEXT MESSAGES BY THE GREAT GATSBY CHARACTERS:

Text Messages by The Great Gatsby Characters

Goal: Analyze the relationship between characters in the novel and communicate that relation through the modern technology of text messaging. Also, focus on using emphasis to control the message being portrayed.

Purpose: To demonstrate an analysis of the main characters of the text, how they relate to other characters, and to creatively express your understanding by focusing on how language is expressed in teen's culture today. Also, to start practicing using emphasis in writing to further stress meaning.

Assignment: Now that we have read half of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, it is your task to analyze the characters of the text. What better way to do so than through writing text messages! Since you probably text a ton nowadays, here's your chance to do so in school.

1. Pick four of the main characters of your choice as the "sender" of a text message. Write the names of these characters in the first column below.
2. Choose any other person (either a character from the book or from your imagination) to be the "receiver" of this text message. Write this person's name in the second column.
3. In the third column, write a brief text message that you think your character would send to this person. Be sure to focus on some theme/event/idea, etc. from the book. However, be sure you do not write all 4 messages on ONE focus (ie. do not write all TXTs on an event). Diversify your focus and write about at least 3 different topics.
4. To further the message you are constructing, add emphasis to the words. Think about how you envision your character speaking to the other, and attempt to portray emphasis in your TXTs.

Once completing these steps for all four characters, write a brief explanation (2-3 sentences) for each text message explaining why/how your message is important to the text. Make sure you clearly explain what connection the text message has to some aspect of the novel. Feel free to write as if this was a real text message!! Use abbreviations, emoticons, or slang!! Just be sure it's appropriate 😊

(EXAMPLE) Theme/Event#1: _____ Nick meets Gatsby _____

TXT SENDER	TXT RECEIVER	TXT MSG
Nick	His sister	Soooo...kinda <i>weird</i> here...hvnt met host yet. Might leave early? Jk I see him!! ttyl!!
Explanation: This text explains the instance at Gatsby's party when Nick was curious as to why he never saw Gatsby. He was mysteriously invited to this party and didn't know why. This will soon lead up to when the two characters meet.		

Theme/Event#1: _____

TXT SENDER

TXT RECEIVER

TXT MSG

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Explanation:

Theme/Event#2: _____

TXT SENDER

TXT RECEIVER

TXT MSG

--	--	--

Explanation:

Theme/Event#3: _____

TXT SENDER

TXT RECEIVER

TXT MSG

--	--	--

Explanation:

Theme/Event#4: _____

TXT SENDER

TXT RECEIVER

TXT MSG

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Explanation:

RUBRIC for GREAT GATSBY TXT MSG ASSIGNMENT:

	Excellent (5)	Competent (3)	Emerging (1)
Topic of Message	The student clearly represents a theme/idea of the novel in the text message. The student's message also clearly depicts their comprehension of the story by focusing on a specific theme/idea that occurred.	The student adequately represents a theme/idea of the novel in the text message. The student's message also somewhat depicts their comprehension of the story by focusing on a general theme/idea.	The student vaguely represents a theme/idea of the novel in the text message. The student's message does not depict their comprehension of the story and does not depict a theme/idea from the story.
Character Relation	The text message clearly examines a relation between two characters (imaginary or not) through a strong choice of appropriate words in that context.	The text message adequately examines a relation between two characters (imaginary or not) through somewhat obvious word choices, although the word choices may not appropriately influence this relation.	The text message does not examine a relation between two characters (imaginary or not). No clear understanding of the character relationship is depicted.
Reflective Response	The self reflection clearly explains what connection the student was conveying in their text message. They explain their understanding of some theme/idea/event and how that affects the character(s).	The self reflection somewhat explains what connection the student was conveying in their text message. They briefly explain their understanding of some theme/idea/event and how that affects the character(s).	The self reflection does not explain what connection the student was conveying in their text message. They do not explain their understanding of some theme/idea/event and how that affects the character(s).
Style/ Creativity	The student writes his/her text message with text slang/abbreviations that are popular in current culture. The student also "sounds" like the character in their message through their word choices. No (unintentional) spelling/grammar mistakes.	The student writes his/her text message with some text slang/abbreviations that are popular in current culture. The student also adequately "sounds" like the character in their message through their word choices. Few (unintentional) spelling/grammar mistakes.	The student does not write his/her text message with text slang/abbreviations that are popular in current culture. The student does not "sound" like the character in their message. Several (unintentional) spelling/grammar mistakes.

TOTAL: _____/20

FINAL ASSESSMENT: COMPARE/CONTRAST CHARACTERS

SWBAT compare and contrast two characters from the novel, value the traits of each character, select which character they believe is the “better” one, and justify their response in both a written assignment and group discussion.

Step 1: For this assignment, the class will be divided into two large groups. Assign each student to one of the two groups.

Step 2: Assign two characters to one group and two different characters to the other group (you will probably want to assign the main characters, including Nick Carraway & Jay Gatsby, Daisy Buchanan & Jordan Baker).

Step 3: In these groups, the students should first create one large T-chart with a character’s name on either side of the chart. Allow students to draw these charts on the whiteboards.

Step 4: Have one student in each group be the designated recorder: this person’s job is to copy down the chart and descriptions from the board onto a sheet of paper that their group can refer back to.

Step 5: Next, students should work together to write characteristics and descriptions of these characters on their respective sides. Students should also write more than physical descriptions, also noting actions the character took, their personality, their values, etc.

Step 6: Once completed, the students will work together to organize their notes on each character according to various sub-themes (ie. physical appearance, personality, actions, etc). This will conclude the group work for this assignment.

Step 7: After the students have structured their charts with their large groups, they will then work individually to determine which of their two characters is the “better” character based on positive attributes of the person. To clarify, the students will need to make a value judgment on the characters, weigh their notes on each character, and decide which character shows more positive contributions and better morals in the novel.

Step 8: Once making this decision, each individual student will be required to write a 5-paragraph essay explaining their choice and reasoning. MLA formatting applies: 12 pt font, double-spaced, Times New Roman.

(for more information on teaching Compare/Contrast Essays, see Smagorinsky p. 109-138)

Works Cited

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. New York: Scribner, 1995. Print.

Smagorinsky, Peter, et al. *The Dynamics of Writing Instruction: A structures process approach for middle and high school*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2010. Print

