

The Eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg

The Great Gatsby and the Sense of Sight

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Grade Level	10th – 12th Grade	**Time Frame**	3-5 class period(s)
Subject	English/Language Arts		
Course	A.P. Literature and Composition, American Literature		

Essential Question

What can one's observations about a person reveal about their character?

Summary

This lesson should be taught as a culminating project after the novel "The Great Gatsby" has been read completely. In this lesson, students will explore the essential question "What can one's observations about a person reveal about their character?" The goal is to create a multimodal composition that explores the sense of sight in "The Great Gatsby" by F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Snapshot

Engage

Students examine a photograph and play the role of spectator. As they make observations about an individual in the photograph, students use what they notice and wonder to make judgments about what is revealed about their subject's character.

Explore

Students work together to find the significance of the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, an observant spectator, in order to find the connection between making observations and revealing aspects of a character that might not be apparent to other characters.

Explain

Using the "*The Great Gatsby* and the Sense of Sight" handout as a guide, students create a multimodal representation of the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg that "see" a "hidden" side of a character from the novel.

Extend

Students compose a written reflection of their creative process in creating the "eyes" and to think deeper about their perspective on their chosen character.

Evaluate

This project can be evaluated using the attached rubric in the "*The Great Gatsby* and the Sense of Sight" handout packet.

Standards

ACT College and Career Readiness Standards - Reading (6-12)

CLR502: Locate important details in more challenging passages
CLR503: Draw subtle logical conclusions in somewhat challenging passages

Oklahoma Academic Standards: English Language Arts (Grade 10)

10.3.R.7: Analyze how two or more texts address similar themes or topics, using textual evidence to support their claims and inferences.
10.7.W: Create engaging multimodal content that intentionally addresses an audience and accomplishes a purpose.

Attachments

- Face-in-the-Crowd-Photograph-The-Eyes-of-Dr-T-J-Eckleburg - Spanish.docx
- Face-in-the-Crowd-Photograph-The-Eyes-of-Dr-T-J-Eckleburg - Spanish.pdf
- Face-in-the-Crowd-Photograph-The-Eyes-of-Dr-T-J-Eckleburg.docx
- Face-in-the-Crowd-Photograph-The-Eyes-of-Dr-T-J-Eckleburg.pdf
- Lesson-Slides-The-Eyes-of-Dr-T-J-Eckleburg.pptx
- The-Great-Gatsby-and-the-Sense-of-Sight-handout-The-Eyes-of-Dr-T-J-Eckleburg - Spanish.docx
- The-Great-Gatsby-and-the-Sense-of-Sight-handout-The-Eyes-of-Dr-T-J-Eckleburg - Spanish.pdf
- The-Great-Gatsby-and-the-Sense-of-Sight-handout-The-Eyes-of-Dr-T-J-Eckleburg.docx
- The-Great-Gatsby-and-the-Sense-of-Sight-handout-The-Eyes-of-Dr-T-J-Eckleburg.pdf

Materials

- Varied materials as needed for the multimodal compositions
- Face in the Crowd Photograph (attached)
- *The Great Gatsby* and the Sense of Sight handout (attached; one per student)
- Lesson Slides (attached)

Engage

To begin, display **slide 2** of the attached **Lesson Slides** to introduce the lesson. Consider reading both the title and informing students that, having completed reading *The Great Gatsby*, they will be exploring the sense of the sight in the text.

Teacher's Note

Since this lesson is focused on one of the five senses, have a short whole class discussion about what the five senses are. Who can name them all? What can be said about each? Why are they important when reading a novel?

After reading aloud the essential question on **slide 3**, "What can one's observations about a person reveal about their character," inform students that they will engage in a Quickwrite. Display **slide 4** and tell students that they will observe a photograph for two minutes. During these two minutes, they will participate in the I Notice, I Wonder strategy; ask students to draw two columns, labeling one "I Notice" and the other "I Wonder," using the format on slide 4 as an example. While the photograph is displayed on the board, students should first choose **one person** in the photograph on which to focus and then write for the full two minutes, recording observations about that person in the "I Notice" column and questions/musings about that person in the "I Wonder" column.

Display the photograph (also in attachments) on **slide 5**. Before students start writing, inform them that this photograph is called "Face in the Crowd" by the artist Alex Prager. Give students some time to react to the photo and to choose the individual from the crowd about whom they would like to write. Once students are ready to write, tell them that they have two minutes to record what they notice and what they wonder.

Teacher's Note

More information about this photograph and the artist Alex Prager can be found here. Similar photographs and information about "Face in the Crowd" are detailed in the link.

While they are engaged in the Quickwrite, they also participate in the Think-Pair-Share strategy. Display **slide 6** for instructions.

After students have completed the I Notice, I Wonder Quickwrite, they should share their writing with a partner sitting closest to them. Give students a minute to share their writing and then hold a whole-class discussion where students share the observations made about the individual they chose from the photograph. This is a great time to establish how quickly our observations of a person's body language, appearance, and actions can lead us to make judgments about their character. as well as hearing similarities and differences from students' writing.

Teacher's Note

While students are sharing, consider keeping a working list of what elements of character were written about. Some ideas might include character motives, indirect and direct traits, and/or relationships with those around them.

After this whole class sharing session, the essential question "What can one's observations about a person reveal about a character?" should be brought up again to lead into the next stage of the lesson.

Explore

On **slide 7**, revisit the title "*The Great Gatsby* and the Sense of Sight" and the essential question from the beginning of the lesson. With this slide posted, ask students to think about the sense of sight in the novel. Ask what symbol in the novel relates most literally to sight. Most likely, perhaps with some hints from the teacher, students will easily answer that the symbol is the billboard with the eyes of Dr. T. J Eckleburg.

Once the class has recalled the symbol of the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg, students should again engage in the Think-Pair-Share strategy. Display **slide 8** and give students time to work on their own and then with their Think-Pair-Share partner from earlier for **slide 9**. They should focus on the questions below:

1. Find instances of F. Scott Fitzgerald writing about the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg in the text. Flag these pages to share with the class and to use later.
2. What do the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg represent?
3. What do the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg see?

Teacher's Note

Some students may have difficulty with the last two questions, wanting to provide the "right" answer. Encourage students to think back through discussions held during the reading of the text and work with their partners to come to their own conclusions based on their informed reading of the text.

After students have had time to share their findings with their partners, display **slide 10** and hold another whole group discussion where students can share where they found the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg mentioned in the book. As instances from the text are shared, students should flag new examples.

Teacher's Note

Two prominent examples can be found in Chapters 2 and 8 (there is space for both examples on the "*The Great Gatsby* and the Sense of Sight" handout).

The whole class discussion of the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg should lead students to answer the question, "What role do the eyes play in *The Great Gatsby*?" A simple answer is that the eyes play the role of a spectator (have fun making the connection between spectator and spectacles for a mini-lesson over prefixes!) or observer, always seeing the actions of the characters in the text. Some students may make connections to an omnipotent or godlike figure. At this point return to the essential question re-posted on **slide 11**. Remind students of the activity they were engaged in as spectators and observers during the Quickwrite with the photograph "Face in the Crowd."

With the essential question posted on the board, ask students what the connection between the Quickwrite with the photograph and their knowledge of the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg is. They are likely to provide answers such as "The eyes in the novel are like what we did the photograph. They observe a character to reveal more about who they are."

Inform students that they will be doing a project in which they use their skills of critical reading and observation to understand a "hidden" side of a character in the novel that other characters may not necessarily see. They will be using the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg to represent seeing this side.

Explain

Pass out the attached **"*The Great Gatsby* and the Sense of Sight"** handout to each student and display **slide 12**.

With the image of the eyes displayed, read the first statement, "Think of a character in *The Great Gatsby* who has a "side" to him/her that the other characters in the novel may not see." Give students a few moments to digest this, and if necessary, provide examples of your own. Next, ask "How do critical reading skills help readers see these "hidden" sides?

Teacher's Note

While students are offering answers to this last question, refer back to the Quickwrite where students played the role of spectator and observer of a figure in the photograph.

Together, read the two passages at the top of the handout, "Consider a Unique Perspective" and "Procedure." This passage clearly introduces and describe the process of this summative project. Stop as needed to answer questions, clarify misunderstandings, and include your own modifications to the assignment.

The final product of this project is to create the "eyes" of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg as a symbol of their vision of the "side" of the character that students are choosing to portray. They should have plenty of creative freedom with this!

Teacher's Note

Remind students that since this is a creative, multimodal product, no two will look exactly alike. Even if two students choose to portray a "hidden" side of Jourdan Baker, for instance, the way that their final "eyes" will appear will be different and the perspective that they took to reach their conclusion about Jourdan's "hidden" side will differ as well.

Teacher's Note

Tell students that, in addition to the essential question of "What can one's observations about a person reveal about their character?", another question to keep asking is, "What isn't seen by everyone?"

Once an overview of the project has been covered, take time to go into the three parts of the handout in detail (I. Brainstorm, II. Reflection/Write-Up, and III. Rubric). **Slide 13** holds the directions that are also on the handout.

1. Brainstorm: Using the spaces provided on the handout, students should use the flagged examples from the "Think-Pair-Share" discussion earlier to record where the eyes are mentioned in the novel. Remind students that significant examples are found in Chapters II and XIII. Ask students as they return to those examples why they are significant.
2. Character Focus: Here, students choose a character of focus, then explain what is "hidden" about their character. What is a side that other characters don't see? Using the space on the handout, students also collect evidence from the text to support their perspective and start planning ways (pictures/symbols) that they could creatively represent this.
3. Image Planning: The final product should fill at least an 8 1/2 X 11 size sheet of paper, but this space can hold students' planning for their composition.

This is a project that will benefit from having at least 3-5 days set aside, so after going through these instructions, allow students time to begin working on their assignment. Most likely, they need a full class period to gather thoughts and evidence for this Brainstorm stage on the handout.

Consider having staple materials available to students (paper, colored pencils, markers, glue, etc.) but also encourage students to bring their own materials to make their project appear the way they would like. Encourage them to use a range of materials (textiles, photos, various textured materials, etc.)

Extend

While students will be spending much of this lesson composing the eyes that show a "hidden" side of their character, they will also extend the process by completing a written reflection to be turned in with the final product. The three questions for this reflection are on the "*The Great Gatsby* and the Sense of Sight" handout. The questions are below:

1. Provide a relevant piece of evidence (cited with author's last name and page number) from the text that clearly describes (1) the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg and (2) the side of your character that the eyes might reveal.
2. Describe in at least 5-6 sentences the "hidden" side of your character. Include the following information in your description: context (setting, situation of character(s), point in plot), significance to character and plot, and thorough description of why this side is revealed only through careful observation
3. Describe in at least 5-6 sentences what is shown on Dr. T.J. Eckleburg's eyes. Include the following information, listing (1) materials, images/symbols, placement/formation of images on/within the eye and (2) justification for why you chose them.

This reflection enables students to think back on their process as well as think deeper about their perspective of their character. These questions can be answered on another sheet of paper and turned in with the final visual.

Teacher's Note

Students may find a fun "creepy" aspect to creating the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg that are always watching their character. This is a fun discussion to hold! In fact, more information about fearing the eyes in *The Great Gatsby* can be found here.

Evaluate

On the "*The Great Gatsby* and the Sense of Sight" handout, there is a simple rubric than be used to evaluate this project. Consider also using **slide 14** as a reminder for students. The slide informs students that their final project should include the (1) creatively illustrated eyes, (2) the reflection/write-up, and (3) the rubric.

Resources

- Fallerini, P. (2014). The rhetorics of gaze in Luhrmann's "Postmodern Great Gatsby". Between, 4(7). http://dx.doi.org/10.13125/2039-6597/1147
- K20 Center. (n.d.). I notice, I wonder. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/180
- K20 Center. (n.d.). Think-Pair-Share. Strategies. https://learn.k20center.ou.edu/strategy/139
- Prager, A. (2013). Still image from Face in the Crowd. Cool Hunting. https://coolhunting.com/culture/alex-prager-face-in-the-crowd/
- Segal, G. (2017, March 23). 9 Irrational fears we can blame on books. Bookstr. https://archive.bookstr.com/article/9-irrational-fears-we-can-blame-on-books/