

Subject area/course: English Language Arts/American Literature

Grade level/band: 11

Task source: Providence Schools; Authors: Nilda Caraballo and Stephanie Morrison

The American Dream and *The Great Gatsby*

STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

A. Task context:

Imagine that you have been asked to give the opening presentation at a conference on interpretations of the American Dream. Here are the questions you must address:

1. What is F. Scott Fitzgerald's view of the American Dream and why did he say it was dead?
2. Is that dream the same today as it was then? If not, what is the American Dream now? How do you know? What is the evidence for your claims?
3. Which dream is alive today?

In a photographic essay, argue your opinion using examples from the text (*The Great Gatsby*), another text/source, and your life experiences today.

B. Final product:

There are three parts of this task:

Part 1:

You will focus only on your opinion of the American Dream. You must include the following:

1. Soundtrack or music that expresses your view of the American Dream
2. Art, pictures, and other images
3. Quotes from *The Great Gatsby* and other authors/sources that express your view of the American Dream
4. Using the images, quotes, soundtrack and Photo Story software, narrate your view of the American Dream. Make sure to explain thoroughly how those images, quotes and soundtrack present your view of the American Dream.

Part 2:

Create a photographic multimedia presentation. You will shape your argument by proving that the dream is alive or dead today using examples from the text. To reach a level of "Advanced," you must also analyze and incorporate examples from a second text/source.

Your presentation must include the following:

1. Art/images that align with the text or view
2. Choose ONE character *The Great Gatsby* that best proves Fitzgerald's point of view
3. Use 3-4 quotes from the text to illustrate Fitzgerald's idea of the American Dream. Make sure to cite evidence on slides.
4. In the next slides, add art/visuals and quotes from another text or source that express your opinion of the American Dream. Make sure to cite evidence on slides.



5. Soundtrack music (from Part 1) can be changed, kept the same, or added to. Use soundtracks that are appropriate or relate to the ideas on the slides in Part 2.
6. A concluding slide that brings it all together. "Is the American Dream alive or is it in decline/dead today?"
7. Add a Works Cited page/slide with references to your sources, including pictures/visuals and soundtracks.
8. Finally, write a 2-3-page reflection. Consider what you've learned about the American Dream from this project. The pursuit of the American Dream in *The Great Gatsby* didn't end well for all the characters. Can you see any parallels in contemporary society? Can you think of examples of successful pursuit of the American Dream? What makes the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful pursuit of the American Dream?

Part 3:

You will present your photo story to the class. Be prepared to answer questions about your ideas.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

C. Knowledge and skills you will need to demonstrate on this task:

You will need to:

- Cite evidence from *The Great Gatsby* and at least one other text/source to support your opinion about the American Dream.
- Create a multimedia presentation that supports your argument.
- Be prepared to answer questions about your work and your argument.

D. Materials needed:

- Texts: *The Great Gatsby* and at least one other text or source
- Computers or tablets
- Microphones and headphones
- An application similar to PhotoStory which allows for the recording of narration to accompany music and pictures
- Graphic organizers that your teacher will provide

E. Time requirements:

You will have four weeks to complete this task.

F. Scoring:

Your work will be scored using the Argument Photo Story Rubric. You should make sure you are familiar with the language that describes the expectations for proficient performance.

