**Lesson 1: Introducing The Great Gatsby**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson aims to introduce *Great Gatsby* to the students and consider the central themes and motifs used in the text. By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Understand the context of *Great Gatsby* and the effect it has on the book
2. Be able to name at least three central themes of the book and explain the way in which these themes are explored and developed
3. Be able to discuss the idea of the novel as a social satire, considering the theme of class and how important it is for understanding the book

**Plan:**

* Begin the class with a general discussion of the book. What did the students enjoy about the book? What did they not enjoy? What was interesting about the way the book was written? Ask the students to note down three things they liked and three things they did not and discuss this as a class
* Remind students of the concept of a semantic field. Brainstorm what would be in the semantic field encompassed within *Great Gatsby,* what recurring symbols, themes and motifs can they find in the book (i.e. wealth, love, illusion vs. reality)?
* Discuss the context of *Great Gatsby.* Introduce some ideas on the Roaring Twenties and prohibition New York. Watch the video giving a short introduction this period of history and ask the students if they think the 1920s are particularly significant to the novel.
* Introduce the idea of the American Dream. How important is this in the novel?
* Consider the presentation of wealth inequality in *Great Gatsby.* Link this to the problems of inequality at the time, and discuss how concepts of hierarchy and class play into the plot of the book. What class does each of the characters represent? Are there any characters who defy classification? How can we infer this from the text?
* Introduce the idea of the book as a social satire. Are any of the students familiar with this term? Can they think of other examples of social satire? How effective is the novel as an example of this genre?
* Returning to the brainstorm made at the beginning of the lesson about themes, ask the students to pick one theme and find two different examples within the book where this theme is explored or developed. Demonstrate an example of this with the theme of “illusion vs. reality”, using two extracts from the text to highlight the theme’s effect.
* Facilitate a discussion on what the class think Fitzgerald was trying to say with *Great Gatsby.* Thinking about the historical context, is there a particular message or moral that can be identified? How do they think Fitzgerald viewed the American 1920s society?
* Finally, ask whether the fact that the novel was written in 1925 changes their opinion on this. Is there a danger of ‘over-reading’ the significance of historical context on the book?

**Homework:** “*The Great Gatsby* demonstrates that the American Dream never truly existed.” Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Explain your answer with reference to the text and the wider historical context of the book.

**Lesson 2: Exploring Style and Narrative**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson aims to enable to students to think more broadly about the way in which *The Great Gatsby* is written. By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Be able to talk confidently about narration and perspective in *The Great Gatsby,* commenting on the theory of Nick as an unreliable narrator
2. Understand thegenre of tragedy and be able to evaluate the novel through this lens
3. Be able to conduct character analysis within the novel, thinking about the importance of symbolism given the book’s satirical nature

**Plan:**

* **Start the lesson by introducing the concept of tragedy in literature. Watch the short introductory video on this genre and ask the class to note down the two most important facts they gleaned from this**
* **Discuss the central characteristics of a tragedy (i.e. tragic hero, fatal flaws, hubris etc.) Do the students think these apply to the novel?**
* **Now the class should consider Gatsby’s fatal flaw or *hamartia*. What is it that leads him to his inevitable downfall? Is his downfall inevitable? Why?**
* **Leading on from this idea of the novel as a tragedy, with Gatsby as the tragic hero at its helm, discuss the role that Nick’s narration plays in this. Introduce the theory of Nick as an unreliable narrator. Do the class agree with this theory?**
* **Put some key quotes up on the board that illustrate the strength of Nick’s admiration for Gatsby. What can these quotes tell us about the narrative voice and perspective of the book? Does this change their opinion on whether Nick’s narration is reliable?**
* **Discuss the presentation of the key characters in the text. Are they well-rounded characters or do some seem more two-dimensional? Is there an element of symbolism with some of the characters? If so, what do they symbolise?**
* **Each student should write a P.E.E. paragraph analysing the presentation of a character of their choice, identifying what that character could potentially represent.**
* Ask the class if they think time could be designated the most important theme of the novel? Analyse the passage where Gatsby and Daisy first meet after all their years apart, focusing on the symbol of the clock. Could this help prove the point made about time above? What is Fitzgerald saying about the nature of the past?
* **Facilitate a debate based upon the question “is Daisy a realistic character?” Split the students into two groups, with one group arguing that she is, and the other arguing that she is not. Conduct the debate and make sure each side evidences their points with examples from the book and that they remember to respond to the points of the other team**
* **As a finishing activity, summarise *The Great Gatsby* in one sentence. Ask the students to really think about what they think is important enough in the book to be included in their very short summary. What is the essence of this novel, what is it all about?**

**Homework: Can *The Great Gatsby* be described as a love story*?*** Explain your answer with reference to the text and use quotations if you can.

**Lesson 3: Close Textual Analysis**

**Lesson Objective:** This lesson will aim to make students more comfortable with close textual analysis and how to incorporate it into their essays. By the end of the lesson the students should:

1. Be able to describe and analyse the effect of Fitzgerald’s style, language and structure
2. Be able to use close textual analysis when analysing a passage from *The Great Gatsby,* linking their analysis to wider themes within the book
3. Be able to confidently identify how Fitzgerald uses symbolism throughout the book, and to offer an opinion as to why they think that is

**Plan:**

* Begin the lesson by watching a clip from the film centred on the green light across the bay from Gatsby’s house. Ask the class why they think they have been shown this particular scene given the lesson objectives?
* Discuss the importance of symbolism in the novel, introducing the debate over the symbol of the green light. Brainstorm as a class what this could represent.
* Introduce a picture of the famous eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburgon from the billboard in the book. Brainstorm as a class what these could represent. Introduce the idea that they are the eyes of God in the book and discuss the connotations of this concept as a class, paying attention to the theme of consumerism
* Watch the scene of Myrtle’s death from the film. Ask the students to write down the themes that are being explored in this scene and then discuss. Ask if it is significant that Myrtle dies within sight of the billboard?
* Read and analyse the extract of Myrtle’s death within the book. What language techniques can they identify? How does Fitzgerald create a sense of tragedy in this scene?
* What do the students think Myrtle’s death could represent?
* Broaden the discussion out to consider the theme of death throughout the novel. Whose death is the most upsetting, the most moving or the most surprising? Why do they think Fitzgerald might have made that choice? What ramifications follow the deaths of Myrle and Gatsby? What themes does this illustrate?
* The students should imagine they are a newspaper editor in the 1920s. How would they view a character like Myrtle considering her gender and class? How might this differ as to how they would view Gatsby?
* Half the class should write a brief newspaper article on Myrtle’s death and half the class should write one on Gatsby’s, thinking about how the two deaths might have been presented at that time. What would be similar, what would be different? How can this be communicated through language and tone?
* For the last few minutes of the lesson, facilitate a wider discussion on what they have learnt from *Great Gatsby,* what they think is the most powerful theme or message and why?

**Homework:** What do you think the green light symbolises? Explain your answer with reference to the text and using quotations to back up your answer. Remember to discuss the most important themes of the novel!