



Curriculum Units by Fellows of the National Initiative
2015 Volume IV: Using Film in the Classroom/How to Read a Film

Film, Freud and Fitzgerald: A Psychoanalytical Critique of The Great Gatsby and Jazz Age Values

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High School students often struggle with comprehension and critical analysis of the classic literature suggested by the Common Core appendixes. Supplementing literature with its respective film adaptation will help to address this deficiency by giving students a visual representation of a story through which critical thinking and rich dialogue between students can occur. For this unit, students will analyze Baz Luhrmann's film adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* using the psychoanalytical critical lens theory to formulate conclusions around the stories' characters and author, F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Students will be considering questions around the characters' morality and how their behavior and psychological profiles are indicative of Fitzgerald's attitude as an author who was a witness to and participant in the Jazz Age. Students will draw connections to their own lives from themes surrounding class, materialism and gender. Lastly, they will learn how film is a unique medium for storytelling, in that techniques unique to film play an important role in developing characters, creating tension and portraying symbolism. This unit should be considered for teachers seeking to integrate a film dimension into a unit already in existence on *The Great Gatsby* or Fitzgerald as a means to increase the novel's accessibility for struggling or reluctant readers.

(Developed for English, grade 11; recommended for Film, grade 11)

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