

## Modernism/Experimentation Module (1914 - 1945)

THEME: Modern Times, Modern Issues  
11th grade American Literature

### Context

You just wrapped up two units that detailed how literature changed during and following the Civil War (Realism and Naturalism). As America grew, its character began to change as more and more people migrated to the United States. In search of the American dream. In this module you will learn how literature developed through experimentation with form and subjects. You will learn the historical background of the time period, then you will study two seminal pieces of literature: *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck and *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. You will compare and contrast how each author treats the theme of achieving the American dream as well as reflecting on YOUR American dream.

### CCGPS Standards and "I CAN" Statements

ELACC11-12RI4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze how an author uses and refines the meaning of a key term or terms over the course of a text

ELACC11-12L5: Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

ELACC11-12RI1: Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

ELACC11-12W9: Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

ELACC11-12W5: Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.

ELACC11-12RL9: Demonstrate knowledge of eighteenth-, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.

ELACC11-12RL10: By the end of grade 11, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, in the grades 11-CCR text complexity band proficiently, with scaffolding as needed at the high end of the range.

### Learning Objectives

I CAN identify and interpret a variety of rhetorical devices such as symbols, irony, tone, foreshadowing

I CAN compare and contrast how two authors treat the theme of achieving the American dream.

I CAN incorporate background knowledge of the author and the time period into my analysis of theme.

I CAN analyze how similar themes and topics are treated in two different stories

I CAN use evidence from the text to support my analysis.

I CAN correctly cite the evidence from the text that I use to support my answer.

I CAN critically review my written work and revise and edit it BEFORE turning it in for a grade.

### Physical Resources Needed

*Elements of Literature, Fifth Course* (always referred to as "the RED literature book")

*Passing the CCGPS American Literature EOCT* work book

DVD - *Of Mice and Men*

DVD - *The Great Gatsby*

### Length of Module

This module takes approximately 3 weeks (12 - 15 class periods) to complete. Not every student will complete the unit in the same amount of time - some will complete it before the due date; some will struggle to meet the due date. Because you can work on this in class as well as at home, it is advisable that you complete work both at home as well as in class so that you can meet the due date. If you are struggling, please let me know - I am flexible if you are working hard. Click the following link to check on the due date of this unit:

<http://schoolwires.henry.k12.ga.us/cms/lib08/GA01000549/Centricity/Domain/1689/Eng%203B%20COURSE%20Syllabus-Spr>

### Task 1. The Lost Generation

In the workbook called "Passing the CCGPS American Literature EOCT", read pages 44-45 on The Lost Generation.

1. Define "Lost Generation" using this link: <http://www.discoveryeducation.com>
2. Why did Gertrude Stein name the artists of the WW1 generation "The Lost Generation"?
3. Define "expatriate". <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/expatriate>  
(use def. #2)
4. The disillusionment of American writers after World War 1 showed in themes of \_\_\_\_ and techniques like \_\_\_\_ that mirrored the individual's \_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_.
5. Define "stream of consciousness" <http://grammar.about.com/od/rs/g/Stream-Of-Consciousness.htm>  
(use def. #1)
6. Gertrude Stein, an American poet living in Paris, lamented that the artists of the WWI generation were unable to live normal lives because of their \_\_\_\_.
7. Many American poets living in Europe experimented with the form and structure of poems, creating work that was often \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_.
8. The most influential poem to arise from this period was the epic poem about the postwar world, was TS Eliot's \_\_\_\_.

### Task 2. The American Dream

In the RED literature book, read pages 523 - 529, then answer the following questions.

1. In 1917 the US entered World War I, conflict which was fought under the bright banners of \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ , but which in fact became a \_\_\_\_.
2. After the war, despite the victory of the US, American writers began to question the \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ that had seemed to be American bedrock.
3. The war introduced new \_\_\_\_ codes, as well as \_\_\_\_ skirts, \_\_\_\_ hair, and even new \_\_\_\_ expressions.
4. In 1929 the crash of the \_\_\_\_ brought suffering to millions of Americans and was followed by the Great \_\_\_\_.
5. The modernist movement in literature, painting, music and the other arts called for \_\_\_\_ and a wholesale \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_ themes and styles.
6. World War I was a turning point in American life, marking a loss of \_\_\_\_ and a strong \_\_\_\_ with \_\_\_\_.
7. Name the three central ideas of the American Dream. (the 1st is on p. 525; the 2nd and 3rd are on p. 528 - you can also find them in 2 other places on p. 529)

### Task 3. Breakdown of tradition/The Jazz Age

In the RED literature book, read pages 529 - 531. Answer the following questions on YOUR OWN PAPER.

1. in the box at the top of p. 528-529, answer the following:
  - 1a. How did FDR give hope to the "forgotten man"?
  - 1b. Name three technological marvels that were built during the 1930s.
  - 1c. What was the most popular form of entertainment during the 1930s?
2. (bottom of p. 529) Postwar writers became skeptical of the New England \_\_\_\_ tradition and the \_\_\_\_ that had been central to the literary ideal.
3. Many modernist writers were born, not in New England, but in the \_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_ or the \_\_\_\_.
4. (p. 530, bottom) In 1919 the Constitution was amended to prohibit the manufacture and sale of what thing that was singled out as a central social evil?
5. Instead of protecting traditional values, Prohibition (as the new amendment was called) ushered in an age characterized by the \_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_, the new rhythms of \_\_\_\_ and the dangerous profession of the \_\_\_\_.
6. The poet Edna St. Vincent Millay became a symbol of the \_\_\_\_ woman.
7. 1920, women finally won the right to \_\_\_\_.

8. The wave of expatriates to Europe was another signal that something had gone \_\_\_\_ with the American \_\_\_\_.

#### Task 5. Robert Frost

**BACKGROUND.** In the RED literature book, read p. 558 - 560, then answer the questions below.

1. Although Robert Frost is the poet whom Americans most closely identify with \_\_\_\_, he was born in \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_.
2. Why did his family move to Massachusetts when he was 10?
3. As an adult, Frost did several things to earn a living before his poetry began to make him money. Name at least THREE things he did.
4. After moving to England, Frost completed two volumes of poetry, which turned him into an accomplished, well-known poet. These poems were marked by a \_\_\_\_ realism and an impressive mastery of \_\_\_\_ rhythm, \_\_\_\_ dialogue, and the \_\_\_\_ monologue.
5. How many Pulitzer Prizes did he win?
6. For whose inauguration did he recite the poem "The Gift Outright"?
7. Frost's art with words brought him not only the friendship of a \_\_\_\_, but also the largest single \_\_\_\_ in history for a \_\_\_\_ up until that time.
8. In a period when poetry was being changed by \_\_\_\_ experiment and by \_\_\_\_ influences from \_\_\_\_, Frost remained devoted to \_\_\_\_ forms.
9. He was an artist who developed his \_\_\_\_ with stubborn \_\_\_\_, and he created a \_\_\_\_ voice that remained unaffected by the clamor of \_\_\_\_.

**READ THE POEM** "Nothing Gold Can Stay." RED literature book, p. 562. Then answer the questions that follow.

10. Identify four specific things in the poem that cannot, or did not, "stay."
11. Think what the first buds of leaves look like in spring; then explain what line 1 means.
12. What differing ideas might "gold" symbolize in the poem? Why can't gold stay - or do you disagree?
13. Literary terms

Alliteration - write two lines that uses alliteration

Slant rhyme - write the one set of lines that uses slant rhyme

#### Task 4. The New American Hero

In the RED literature book, read pages 531 - 533. Answer the following questions

1. \_\_\_\_ was a major theme in the fiction of the time.
2. The most influential of all the post-World War I writers was \_\_\_\_.
3. Describe the new kind of hero that was introduced around this time by completing the below sentences.
  - 3.1 The new kind of hero was a man of \_\_\_\_, a \_\_\_\_, and a tough \_\_\_\_
  - 3.2 He had a code of \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_.
  - 3.3 He shows " \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ "
  - 3.4 His most important trait is that he is thoroughly \_\_\_\_.
4. Name the 5 elements of modernism in American literature listed on p. 533.
5. Name 2 influential modernist poets and describe the movements to which they were associated.
6. (p. 534)... Name three poets who rejected modernist trends.

#### Task 5. Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck

**DIRECTIONS:** After viewing the film, post your answers to each of the following questions in the appropriate discussion forum. Comment thoughtfully on AT LEAST TWO other classmates' posts.

1. The American Dream? Thinking of the time period (the Great Depression), why was the vision of a house, a piece of land, raising their own food, and being their own bosses so important to George, Lennie, Candy, and
2. Compare/contrast the shooting of Candy's dog to the shooting of Lennie. Write a well-developed paragraph or use a Venn diagram
3. How does the shooting of Candy's dog foreshadow the shooting of Lennie?
4. Does George fit the new kind of hero? EXPLAIN with specific examples and details (see p. 531-533 for help in answering this question)

---

**Task 6. The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald**

**DIRECTIONS:** After viewing the film, post your answers to each of the following questions in the appropriate discussion forum. Comment thoughtfully on AT LEAST TWO other classmates' posts.

1. Explain how Fitzgerald uses setting to emphasize the differences between the social classes. For example, compare the homes (describe the home as well as the LOCATION) of Gatsby and Myrtle.
2. What do the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleberg symbolize?
3. Does Gatsby fit the new kind of hero? EXPLAIN with specific examples and details (see p. 531-533 for help in answering this question)

---

**Task 7. Culminating Activity: Achieving the American Dream.**

**TWO PARTS:** There are two parts to this task. Make sure you do BOTH of them!

**PART 1. Short Essay.**

1. In a short essay (couple of paragraphs), COMPARE yourself to either George or Daisy regarding your ideas and desires for achieving the American Dream. (Compare means tell how things are ALIKE)  
. With which character do you most closely identify? Explain in detail!
2. Post your response in the appropriate discussion forum.
3. Thoughtfully comment on at least 2 classmates' posts.

**PART 2. Power Point or poster.**

1. CONTRAST George and Daisy in their pursuit of the American Dream.

Include the following information

**TITLE:** Contrasting Daisy in "The Great Gatsby" and George in "Of Mice and Men"

- Show how their circumstances are different.
- How would they each define happiness?
- How would they each define success?
- What "things" indicate success for each of them? Come up with AT LEAST THREE (3) for each character
- How do they go about achieving their idea of the American Dream?
- How would each character react if they lost absolutely everything except the clothes on their backs?
  - a. what would each character say?
  - b. what would each character do?
  - c. how would they survive?

2. Present your Power point or poster to the class (make appointment with your teacher).