

Fitzgerald and Hopper: Windows on the 1920s

Kate Reber
School of the Future

Overview

Rationale

Objectives

Background

Strategies

Classroom Activities

Annotated Bibliography

Appendices: Standards, Lesson Resources

*“Yet high over the city our line of yellow windows must have contributed their share of human secrecy to the casual watcher in the darkening streets, and I was him too, looking up and wondering. I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life” – F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby**

Novels and paintings can offer us, “the casual watcher,” a chance go look into the windows of other worlds. This unit will unwind the tangle of ideas in this quote. We will look and wonder about the novel *The Great Gatsby* and the paintings of Edward Hopper. It is my hope that students will be enchanted by the masterful prose and art we encounter. I also anticipate that they will be repelled at times by works they find less accessible, characters they find unsavory, or ideas they find unwieldy. We will play with perspective – being within and without the text and images we study. After getting lost in the truly inexhaustible and varied body of work on Hopper and Fitzgerald I have arrived at unit that is itself a window into the 1920s.

Overview

This unit is designed to be taught in the second semester of English 3 at the School of the Future, a public comprehensive high school in West Philadelphia. English 3 is the district’s standard 11th Grade English course. I am dual-certified in English and Social Studies and I plan units and coordinate projects with the 11th Grade History teacher at my school. She teaches African American and American History and we share the same group of students. This unit will fall in the spring Semester and it will tie into our interdisciplinary unit on “Class in America,” which will cover the Populist movement through the World Wars.

At its essence this unit is about social class and perspective in *The Great Gatsby* and the art of the 1920s, especially the paintings of Edward Hopper. Through close reading, image analysis and comparative study of paintings and prose we will look at how matters of class are dealt with in the works. Our discussions of history and social history will be complemented by a study of authorial intent and artistic choice. This is therefore also a unit highly concerned with the craft of writing and painting.

With regard to skill development, this unit will focus on reading comprehension and analysis. The emphasis will be on the literary elements of mood, tone, and style. We will look for evidence of authorial intent in the use of these literary elements. Students will also learn how to make inferences and draw conclusions about artistic choices based on clues in the work. Students will carefully build their analytical skills through step-by-step close reading activities and guided practice. By the end of the unit, students should be able to make their own commentary on social class and artistic choices in the texts and images. Students' culminating unit projects (which we call Performances of Understanding, or POU's) will involve either prose or images, but must also include a reflective paper about their process and creative intentions.

It is my hope that this unit will work on multiple levels – sociological and critical – to guide students to better understanding of class and perspective in literature and art.

Rationale

The novel *The Great Gatsby* can be considered a staple of the American High School Literature experience. The trouble I have encountered with teaching this novel is that students find it dry and boring. It is challenging for my students to find works of literature accessible if they do not feel a direct connection to them. It is hard for them not to see *Gatsby* the book (and the characters) as belonging to a world that is both foreign and boring to them. This aversion is working on multiple levels. The canonical quality of the work does not hold much sway with my students and the actual elite society of the novel does not captivate them. What is more, sustained engagement is a challenge I face when teaching any novel. As a whole, my students are not strong readers. They prefer to plod through novels in class page-by-painful-page instead of reading at home. They struggle when asked to trace motifs and characterization over the course of a longer work. The test-prep, anthologized curriculum of District English classes does not build the skills they need to tackle longer works.

Therefore what I see as the “teachability” of *The Great Gatsby* is very useful. The text affords me an ample supply of passages of clear characterization or examples of symbolism for our close readings. Throughout the unit students will develop and apply reading comprehension skills to the novel. They will practice finding exact quotes from the text to support their conclusions about characters, plot, theme and other literary

elements (especially tone, mood, and style). Through group work and guided practice students will get comfortable combing through the novel and working with it interpretatively. As my students build dexterity with using the text, we will continue address the deeper issues they have with literary texts and the traditional canon.

The themes in *The Great Gatsby* can be used to call direct attention to the discomfort my students may have when facing an iconic work of literature. As a novel, *Gatsby* is both alien to my students, but also deeply concerned with the alienation and attraction of a dominant society. I think it would be effective to call out the valid feelings my students may have about canonical literature and tie them into our study of this novel. The unit I have planned will play with the ideas of distance, distrust, and disenchantment in the novel and in my students' experiences of literary studies. In fact our opening discussions of the book will center on the literary and cultural barriers the novel may present to the class.

In order to take this idea of perspective and alienation further and connect it to our study of Class in America, I will draw on the work of Edward Hopper. We will study Hopper's paintings in class both as an illustration of this idea of "looking in" on a world and as a complement to the characterization and description of setting in *The Great Gatsby*. Hopper gives us some of the visual language of the 1920s and of characters in an American landscape, not so far from the world of *The Great Gatsby*. We will view Hopper's New York paintings, while we will certainly view the paintings with settings the connect to *Gatsby* (the hotel rooms, gas stations and evening street scenes), we will also view paintings that expand our discussion of the historical period, unit themes, and literary elements beyond the novel.

Through our analysis of the paintings and the text we will take ideas from our theoretical discussions of social class and economic alienation and make the somewhat challenging leap into a discussion of literary elements. While I see the point of comparison as clear, this transition will certainly need to be spelled out in my classroom. Hopper and Fitzgerald treat their subjects with a deliberate distance. They also share the trait of portraying American society in a carefully stylized way. It will be interesting to have my students compare the differences in the portrayals of America in Hopper and Fitzgerald's works. This comparative analysis may enhance some of our discussions of social history of the 1920s and of issues of class in American during this time period.

Returning to the materials themselves, we can look at *The Great Gatsby* as a social history of sorts. We can study class in the 1920s by examining the dynamics of the novel. The Buchanans and the Wilsons provide a study of contrasts. The novel paints a vivid picture of wealthy and carefree Tom and Daisy, combatants and conspirators in turn. They are clearly opposed to the somber, repressed, socially-conditioned Myrtle and George. In fact, almost every character can be charted on a socioeconomic schema – interpreted through his or her position. Jordan Baker is well-heeled and flip. Nick is

advantaged and for two-thirds of the novel blindingly naïve. *Gatsby's* aspirational gestures are compromised by his humble beginnings – the novel's denouement stems from his dangerous delusion that he can buy his way up the social ladder. Even minor characters like Meyer Wolfsheim and Klipspringer relate to the other characters and plot developments through socioeconomic connections – characterized as crook and freeloader, respectively.

Settings in the novel also offer themselves up for analysis as socioeconomic artifacts: The mansions of East and West Egg; the auto shop in the Valley of Ashes; the hotels and apartments of Manhattan. Each location of the novel's critical scenes communicates the balance of power, the relationships of characters, the boundaries of money and marriage. In our close reading activity, students will focus on the descriptive passages that communicate these aspects of character and setting. We will pin our analysis to specific lines of the text and examine how Fitzgerald communicates his ideas about class, equity, and integrity.

Hopper's paintings also offer scenes of contrast and glimpses of worlds delineated by socioeconomic issues. Although there the schema at work in Hopper's paintings is not as clear-cut as the one in *Gatsby*, both the subjects and the style of Hopper's work comment on class and alienation in America. First, with regard to class, Hopper's paintings often feature working class stores and venues – bustling city streets, lonely late-night diners, solitary Chinatown eateries, and more. There is never a clear judgment articulated in the paintings, but there is a famous isolation and malaise in many of the works. Figures appear lonely or alone, even in crowded rooms. In paintings that showcase a higher class of people – in glamorous hotels, on potentially exclusive New England beaches or boats – the same melancholy mood is pervasive.

What is more, Hopper's compositions also communicate a distancing. Many Hopper paintings situate the viewer on the street looking in on a subject – in the diner across the street, up at a lit window, across a field at the gas pump. These are not scenes in which the viewer can feel him or herself belonging. The distancing effect appears intentional. As we study these paintings in class we will compare them to *The Great Gatsby* in subject, theme and approach. We will also use both the depictions of socioeconomic class and the feeling of audience alienation to expand on our discussion of these topics. Again, it is not to collapse one into the other, but really to explore the possible nodes of connection. The idea that there may be an intended or unintended comment about class in a piece of writing or art that makes the reader or viewer feel distanced.

Our close study of both the paintings and the novel will also help underscore our work with the literary elements tone, mood and style. These three literary elements are especially important for my students to recognize and analyze as they appear regularly on the standardized tests that dominate their 11th grade year – the SATs, PSSAs and ACTs.

It is especially effective to use paintings to teach these literary elements and in particular to distinguish between tone and mood. Although these are commonly taught literary elements their definitions are sometimes misunderstood. In fact many academics and teachers conflate mood and tone and teach them as the same thing. For our purposes and for the State of Pennsylvania and the School District of Philadelphia mood and tone are actually very distinct entities. It is necessary that students learn the definitions of these elements and that they can then recognize, analyze, and write about these elements as they appear in literature.

I have devised a set of definitions for these three terms, which I use with students. Tone is defined as the author or artist's attitude towards the subject (WHAT the author feels). Mood is the atmosphere or emotional register of the piece (WHAT it makes you/the reader feel). Style is the writer's use of language, including but not limited to diction, grammar, dialect, dialogue, etc. (HOW the writer or artist works). For simplicity's sake I will use the same definitions for our study of painting, although tone may be much harder for students to interpret in a painting.

The elements of tone, mood and style figure significantly in the novel *The Great Gatsby*. Fitzgerald's attitude towards his subjects is not to be confused with Nick Carraway's narratorial perspective. In fact, Fitzgerald gives the reader many clues that Nick's professed neutrality as a narrator is suspect, even from the first chapter. These are the passages I will focus on in using *Gatsby* to teach about tone. In studying mood there are numerous descriptive passages – specifically introduction to characters and places – that will allow the students to reflect on their own emotional reaction to the characters and events of the novel. We will also look closely at some of these descriptions to tease apart the strategies Fitzgerald uses to achieve a certain mood in each scene. This is part of our ongoing work to decipher clues about authorial intent. We will use text rendering and close reading strategies to highlight aspects of Fitzgerald's writing style that specifically work to communicate tone and mood, as well as thematic through lines in the novel.

In addition to activities emphasizing tone, mood and style in *The Great Gatsby*, students will also learn about how these elements work in art. As I mentioned, interpreting the intentions of an artist may at first seem more challenging to my students. They may be very good at picking up on mood in paintings, but I figure that tone and style will be more difficult to pin down in a visual medium. To explore style, we will need to look different pieces from across Hopper's career. I have selected his "Self Portrait" (1903), "House by the Railroad" (1925), "Two on the Aisle" (1927), "Ground Swell" (1939), and "El Palacio" (1946). I chose these pieces out of many that show a range of atmospheres and stylistic approaches in Hopper's work.

Throughout the academic year we dedicate a portion of each unit to study authors as well as texts. In part this is an attempt to emphasize the writing process and authorial

choices that go into creating a work of fiction. This strategy is also one of the ways in which we connect our study of American Literature to the students' coursework in American History. We will situate the biography of these figures in their historical setting – particularly with regard to economic issues in their careers and matters of class and sociocultural context. In our study of writer/artist and their works we will rely on the strong biographical and autobiographical materials available on both Hopper and Fitzgerald.

Few authors are as perfect a fit for this kind of study as F. Scott Fitzgerald. The body of work on Fitzgerald was intimidating to me at first. From excellent biographies to volume after volume of literary criticism there is a truly an overwhelming amount of material about Fitzgerald's life, relationships, influences, literary pursuits, and personal struggles. There is almost too much material to pare it down to a series of manageable classroom lessons. I plan to draw on very specific texts and material from this body of work in my classroom and have detailed some of the more helpful resources on Fitzgerald in the annotated bibliography that follows.

One of the most useful aspects of the Fitzgerald canon is his famous (and often quoted) letters – to his wife Zelda, his daughter, other writers like Hemingway, his editor and his agent. In our introductory lessons for *The Great Gatsby*, we will read excerpts from some of his letters to set the context for his life and his writing. Students will have the opportunity to refer back to the letters throughout the unit as a way of giving context to the novel and supporting their analysis of authorial intent. I will supplement our reading of the letters with broader biographical information about Fitzgerald's life. We will use some of this information in our literary analysis and some of it as a point of comparison between Fitzgerald and Hopper.

Edward Hopper will be the first artist we will study in depth in my English 3 class. While I plan to draw on my experience in this course and bring in artists and artworks earlier in the year, I am eager to go deeper in our work with Hopper. I will introduce him to the class through his work, but we will also study Hopper's life and artistic persona through readings and other presented materials. I will highlight aspects of Hopper's personal life, career, and artistic choices to reinforce our understanding of his paintings, of the unit's themes, and provide a point of comparison for our study of F. Scott Fitzgerald.

It will be interesting for my students to learn about the background of both Fitzgerald and Hopper. In the course of our study of both figures we will discuss their different career paths, their relationship to their artistic communities and viewing/reading public, and the fascinating role that their wives played in their careers. Both Fitzgerald and Hopper were interestingly positioned in relationship to the economic gains of their artistic pursuits. Fitzgerald is as famous for his aspirations as his literary creation *Gatsby* was. As many biographers and critics point out, Fitzgerald was torn between writing for

creative purposes or for economic gain. Hopper also struggled with commercial constraints in the slow arc of career. Hopper's reclusive reaction to the establishment was dramatically different from Fitzgerald's striving-for-acceptance. Finally, Zelda Fitzgerald and Jo Hopper were more than just dynamic forces in the creative careers of their husbands; they were also artists in their own right. I am not yet sure how to incorporate some discussion of these remarkable women in my course, but I feel it would be a shame to leave them out!

Objectives

The goals of this unit are to build students' understanding of literature and art. We are concerned with both appreciation and analysis of actual pieces – the novel and paintings – and with the creative process.

At a bare bones level students will examine story structure and to trace narrative developments and artistic motifs. They will build the vocabulary and strategies of analysis over time. Then they will direct their deepened understanding of the images and prose they encounter into comparative analysis and thematic interpretation.

To hone their analytical skills, students will learn to identify literary and artistic elements, including but not limited to mood, style and tone. Students will need to be able to pick out lines of prose or aspects of an image that communicate a specific atmosphere in a work, or indicate the voice and choice of an artist/author, or communicate the artist/author's attitude towards his or her subject. Students will also learn how to use these specific examples in their writing, learning how to embed quotes or descriptions of images in their analytical writing. After students are able to identify and write about these literary and artistic elements, they will be positioned for better interpretation of the works as a whole.

Beyond the technical analysis, we will focus thematically on issues of social class. We are particularly interested in how thematic matters are communicated through authorial and artistic choice, specifically around perspective. Students will need to develop a content-specific vocabulary here – most likely putting new words to phenomenon of alienation and inequity that they are used to observing and reacting to in their own lives. The new element will be using this understanding of class dynamics in our reading of literary and artistic pieces. Through background readings and discussion of the novel and the paintings, students will understand the historical and socio-cultural context of these works of art and literature.

Finally, learners will develop their own creative faculties through writing and art making. We will pay careful attention to both intention and process. Students will then

solidify their understanding of the effects of literary elements and perspective on art through reflective writing.

Background

I will teach this unit in my 11th Grade English 3 classes at the School of the Future in West Philadelphia. The school is a comprehensive (or neighborhood-based), non-magnet public high school that was formed in a partnership between the School District of Philadelphia and the Microsoft Corporation. The unique circumstances of my school include a one-to-one laptop learning environment, dual-certified educators, a student-centered pedagogy, and a project-based curriculum. The school opened in September 2006 and will both reach four full grades and graduate our first class in the 2009-2010 school year.

More than 75% of our student population comes from the immediate catchment area surrounding our school – the communities of Parkside, West Park and Mantua; the rest of our students come from other parts of the city. All of our students are admitted by lottery, and we do not filter our admissions process for behavior, test scores, academic performance or attendance. Our student body is therefore varied in terms of academic ability and past achievement. The student population is more homogenous in terms of racial and socioeconomic factors: over 95% of our students are African-American and over 83% qualify for reduced or free lunch. Additionally, over 13% of our student population receives Special Education services.

Our school is still very much a work-in-progress. In our short history we have had a number of changes in our administration and in our instructional philosophy. There are still number of aspects of our school that are “futuristic” or innovative. We teach in teams and through project-based learning and use more student-centered teaching strategies. We also are a “1:1” laptop school, with a great deal of technology integrated into our instruction. Each student is issued a laptop that puts powerful educational software and programs at their disposal. Our classrooms have wireless Internet, LCD projectors, and interactive whiteboards.

The lessons in this unit are designed with the awareness that most educators do not have the same resources available to them. Wherever possible I indicate that while in my classroom I use the software program, OneNote, a traditional notebook or journal would suffice. Similarly, my students are all able to access the online materials for this lesson directly. However, other teachers may need to collect and print these materials or arrange for computer access to implement some aspects of these lessons.

Standards

This unit will address Pennsylvania State Standards for Reading Writing and Speaking and Arts and Humanities.

We will build a vocabulary for our analysis and interpretation which will allow students to demonstrate their ability to “integrate and apply advanced vocabulary to the arts forms” (9.1.12.C), “know and apply appropriate vocabulary used between social studies and the arts and humanities” (9.2.12.F) and “understand the meaning of and apply key vocabulary across the various subject areas” (1.1.11.F).

In our analytical approach to Fitzgerald and Hopper we will incorporate an understanding of artists and their cultural and historical context. This will allow students to “analyz[ing] the works of art influenced by experiences or historical and cultural events through production, performance or exhibition” (9.1.12.F) and “analyz[ing] a work of art from its historical and cultural perspective” (9.2.12.D).

In this unit, students will “read and respond to nonfiction and fiction including poetry,” specifically *The Great Gatsby*, biographical pieces, critical summaries and poems (1.3.11.F). When analyzing texts students will attend to literary elements, demonstrating that they can “analyze the relationships, uses and effectiveness of literary elements used by one or more authors in similar genres including characterization, setting, plot, theme, point of view, tone and style” (1.3.11.B).

Finally, the Writers’ Workshop will ensure that students will work in groups (1.6.11.A, D and E) and revise their writing (1.5.11.E and F). Students will be producing their own works of art and poetry (1.4.11.A) showing they can “use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities” (9.1.12.A). Students will also write reflective and analytical pieces about the novel and the paintings, which would be considered “complex informational pieces” (1.4.11.B)

Strategies

Throughout the unit I will employ various student-centered teaching strategies that I find both engage students and support the development of their reading, writing and analyzing skills. Many of these strategies are part of my daily teaching now and some are elements of a classroom culture I wish to establish next year.

Do Nows: Like many educators I use “Do Nows” as opening activities to start class almost every day. Although they are a small part of my daily teaching, they are actually an impactful part of my classroom procedures and grading policies. They end up making up a large part of my students’ grades for participation and they are one of the most flexible and responsive parts of my daily teaching practices. In my classroom, Do Now prompts are posted to a blog which students answer in a comments section. Students

can see each other's answers, which creates a collective experience of the question which easily lends itself to classroom discussion. Students without laptops do answer the Do Now questions on paper – so this simple activity is certainly transferable to classrooms without the technology!

Often my five-minute “Do Now” does double-duty and sometimes triple-duty in my classroom. The “Do Now” prompts require students to reflect on earlier classes and discussions or connect to or draw on personal experiences and prior knowledge. I also use “Do Nows” to hook students and get them to pay attention at the start of class. At times “Do Nows” focus more on course business, prompting students to review rubrics or preview assignment deadlines and plan accordingly. In this unit, I would be likely to employ all these uses for Do Nows.

Reading Journals: Reading journals are my preferred strategy for assessing students' at-home reading and for encouraging critical analysis and reflective connection to texts. Though it may be surprising, in my school I find it challenging to hold students' accountable for reading a novel at home. I have tried many different strategies (reading questions, reading quizzes, literature circles) with texts of varying length and complexity (*The Crucible*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *The Autobiography of Frederick Douglass* and *The Great Gatsby*). I have conferred with my fellow educators on many occasions regarding the specific question of how to ensure that students read at home. In my small five-person department, we each prefer strategies that best reflect our respective pedagogies.

I find that an overreliance on pop quizzes actually discourages rather than encourages my reluctant readers. Most chapter reading questions end up being easily copied from other students or web-based sources like Sparknotes.com and Bookrags.com. I prefer Reading Journals to quizzes and questions because they require a deeper level of analysis, which is necessarily supported by good reading. The journals I assign for homework are usually reflective prompts that require students to make an argument about a text, compare one text to another entity, or make a connection between their lives and the text. The Reading Journals for *The Great Gatsby* unit will require students to analyze character development in the novel, address social or historical issues in the novel, and compare the written text of the unit to some of the visual images we will study.

Text-Rendering: When students encounter text they often need a tool to interact with the document. Instead of always using reading questions or graphic organizers, I will emphasize an interactive reading approach usually called text-rendering. Students are instructed to mark-up the text they are reading as they read. I typically use a 5-pronged text-rendering strategy in which students *underline* important lines or ideas, *circle* new words, mark a star next to their favorite parts of a passage, write question marks next to things they do not understand, and draw an exclamation point where something in the passage surprises them. Some readers do find this process slows them

down, for these readers I suggest a reading once without rendering and re-reading to make the marks. For struggling readers this approach is often particularly helpful since it requires them to react and process in chunks. It is also a good way to create a built in study-guide for a text students will return to. In this way, students can go back and just use the marks as flags indicating where they had found important, surprising or confusing information.

This is a strategy that traditionally works well on paper, but I have found that with modifications (and the “track-changes” feature in Microsoft Word it can work well with technology. I have also seen educators use various “sticky note” programs to enable students to have an interactive experience with digital texts.

Writers’ Workshop: I will be introducing the Writers’ Workshop as a structure in my classroom next year for the first time. I hope to build a community of writers in the style of Nancie Atwell and other education scholars. Atwell’s model, which I first encountered in her book *In the Middle: New Understanding about Writing, Reading and Learning* emphasizes student ownership, regular conferencing and an emphasis on students writing in class. The model fosters a community of writers by creating a supportive environment, an authentic audience and a consistent feedback loop. One of the things I also appreciate about a workshop setting is that establishes an expectation that students share their writing and writing process with their peers. I hope to tailor Atwell’s model and bring in some of what I learned from Ralph Fletcher and JoAnn Portalupi’s *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide*. By the time my students undertake their writing for this unit, I expect that they should be used to the workshop model. They should be prepared to share their work – while it is in process – not only when it is done. We will have “workshop” class periods immediately following “writing days,” this is also another way to establish an expectation that students should actually complete writing tasks on the day they are assigned (and not wait until the final draft is due).

Writing Poetry: One of the ways in which students will respond to the artwork and texts in this unit is to write their own poetry. I want to use poetry for a number of reasons. First, I think there is an immediacy and expressiveness to poetry that allows students to address the “feeling” in a literary or artistic work more precisely. I find that prose analysis of tone and mood sometimes misses the point and I hope that poetry will be more effective for communicating this analysis. Additionally, I find that when students respond through poetry it is harder for them to cheat! Student associate poetry with things that are personal and are less likely to copy! Finally, I want to ensure differentiated possibilities for students to use the ideas and strategies of this unit. Some students may be able to communicate their understanding of these topics and approaches better in prose, or in visual expression or in poetry.

Painting Analysis: My students are not familiar with art history or art criticism, yet I am certain that with a little coaching they will be able to conduct a sophisticated

analysis of the paintings we are studying. I will carefully scaffold or work with paintings. First I will use a particularly evocative painting and ask them to interpret the work in a free-form way (probably asking them to generally “respond” to the painting a Do Now). We will then review some key principles of interpretation. In order to have a guideline for our work with paintings I have decided to introduce some of Terry Barrett’s ideas about interpretation to give my students a framework for their analysis of paintings. Barrett has outlined at least 20 principles of interpretation that I have found particularly instructive. I will introduce these principles to my students (and have included them in my appendix).

After we practice interpretation as a class, I will introduce my students to some of the language of art analysis. We will define composition, light, shading, color, foreground, and background. We will then practice identifying these elements and using these words in our conversations about the paintings. I will encourage students to incorporate this new vocabulary when they write about paintings. We will also reflect on how some of these “artistic” elements actually appear in written compositions as well. As we jump between interpreting art and interpreting text, I hope my students will be able to apply the analytical skills they gain with one medium to the other.

Gallery Walk - The Jazz Age: One of the aims of this unit is to situate the novel and paintings (and the author and artist) in their historical context. The Gallery Walk is an activity, lasting one or two class periods, in which students can explore articles and artifacts about the 1920s. The news articles, images, song or video clips, and other short texts would be organized in folders or stations around the classroom. During the gallery walk students to move around the classroom and interact with these different materials which communicate aspects of life, art, literature, and history of the time period. This kind of activity is usually previewed with a tool to assess prior knowledge (a Do Now, or a graphic organizer that elicits ideas about the 1920s that students have before the Gallery Walk). Then there would be a written activity to accompany the “walk,” most likely a series of comprehension questions or a graphic organizer. The goal of the complementary activity would be to give students a way to organize their findings and experience of the different artifacts of the time period. Finally there would be a follow-up activity, likely a homework assignment or reflective in-class writing. This final piece would prompt students to connect their learnings from the Gallery Walk to their study of *The Great Gatsby* and the Hopper paintings.

Performance of Understanding – At our school we attempt to organize units around culminating projects in which students must demonstrate both skill-mastery and interdisciplinary understanding of material. These “performances” usually include both written and artistic expression of understanding and are usually showcased in an informal or formal presentation. This unit’s Performance of Understanding or POU will certainly contain all these components. POUs are one of the elements of my course that is planned

and taught with my co-teacher who teaches American History to the same group of students.

The POU for this unit will draw on our analysis of class in the novel and paintings, as well as our development of interpretative skills in the area of authorial intent. Through the POU students will also communicate understanding of the historical period drawn from the American History class. Students will need to produce their own work of art (image, poem, prose or multimedia project) and then they will need to explain how their piece of art communicates class and what artistic choices they made in creating the piece. Students will present their pieces and take questions from their classmates. After the POUs are presented students will reflect on whether or not they successfully communicated their artistic choices to their peers.

Classroom Activities

Lesson #1: Perspective Poetry

Description: This three-day activity will involve a creative free-write, a close reading of two model poems, an independent poetry writing activity and a peer review process. Students will write poems from the perspective of people depicted in Hopper's paintings and from the perspective of the "viewer" or "outsider" looking in on people in Hopper's paintings. Students will be able to select Hopper paintings of their choosing. Students will also revise each others' poems in a poetry workshop setting. When students share their poems, their classmates will get to look at the painting and will have to guess the identity of the speaker.

Learning Goals: Students will read and analyze poems by Joyce Carol Oates and Mary Leader. Students will respond to the mood of a Hopper painting through reflective writing. Students will demonstrate an understanding of characterization by writing from the perspective of a "character" in a Hopper painting. Students will write their own poems. Students will share and revise poems in a workshop setting.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Respond to a painting in writing.
- Identify mood, tone, and style in a painting.
- Read and analyze poems.
- Interpret the intention of a poet.
- Identify mood, tone, and style in a poem.
- Demonstrate understanding of characterization by develop their own character and back story based on a painting.
- Write a poem from the perspective of a character.
- Share their writing with their peers.

- Give and receive constructive feedback.
- Revise their writing for publication.

Materials for Educators:

Do Now Materials (blog or paper).

Images (PowerPoint or print versions) of Edward Hopper Paintings, specifically:

Nighthawks (1942) – for the Do Now
Automat (1927)
Tables for Ladies (1930)
Compartment C, Car 293 (1938)
Chop Suey (1929)
Gas (1940)
Hotel Lobby (1943)
Hotel Room (1931)
New York Movie (1939)
Night Windows (1928)
Summertime (1943)

* These paintings are available on ARTstor.org. They are also commonly available on Google images and in most collections of Edward Hopper's artwork.

Copies (paper or digital) of Joyce Carol Oates's poem "Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*, 1942" and Mary Leader's "Girl at Sewing Machine".

Guidelines for the Writers' Workshop

Learning Plan (2-3 day lesson)

Day 1

Opening Activity:

For the Do Now students will view Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*. Students will be instructed to write "in response" to the painting for 5 minutes. Students will be prompted with the follow-up questions: What do you notice in the painting? Who is in the scene? What does it feel like in the diner? What does it feel like on the street? Students may choose to write in either prose or poetry.

Students will volunteer to share their Do Now responses with the class. Students will reflect on the Do Now and the painting in a short discussion of the follow-up questions. While we discuss the Do Now, the educator will direct the conversation to the elements of the painting that communicate tone, mood and style.

Independent Reading:

1. Students will be assigned either Joyce Carol Oates's poem "Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*, 1942" or Mary Leader's "Girl at Sewing Machine".
2. Students will read the poem independently.

3. Students will use a text-rendering strategy to “mark up” the poems (digitally or on paper).
When “Marking Up” a poem, students will:
 - 1) underline important phrases
 - 2) circle new vocabulary words
 - 3) draw a star by phrases or lines they like
 - 4) write a question mark next to things they do not understand
 - 5) mark an exclamation point by lines or phrases that surprise them.
4. Students will complete a 3-2-1 graphic organizer to wrap-up their study of the sample poem.

3 = three-words (in a phrase) that stand out from the poem
2 = two objects or images that seem important in the poem
1 = one word that describes a person in the poem

Closing Activity:

Students will share their 3-2-1 Graphic Organizers with a partner who read the other poem.

Day Two

Opening Activity: Students will choose a painting from the Hopper collection (in a PowerPoint on the class site or in a packet on paper). Students will write a 3-5 sentence description of one of the people in the painting. Students should consider: Who is this person? Why are they at this location? How did they get there? Where are they going?

Writing Poetry

- 1) Students will write their own poems about a character in the painting of their choosing.
- 2) Students should pay attention to the tone of their approach to the character in their poem, the mood they are creating in their poems, and the style of the poem they are writing.
- 3) Final poems must be at least 10 lines long.

Poetry Workshop

Depending on the level of interest in the writing, students may take the whole period to complete their poems, or they can even finish them for homework.

- 1) Each student will share their poem in their workshop groups (10 students)
- 2) When students present their draft poems they will show the painting.
- 3) Students in the workshop group will attempt to guess which figure in the poem is the central character!
- 4) Students will give each other constructive feedback on the poems. Each student will receive at least 3 suggestions for revision.

- 5) Students will revise their poems for homework and will be encouraged to submit revised poems to poetry publishing sites.

Lesson #2: Close Reading – a Passage and a Painting (3 day lesson)

Description: After we model closer reading and close analysis as a class, students will conduct a close analysis of one painting and one passage from the novel (either a character description or a description of setting). In the “close reading”, students will need to identify the key vocabulary of the image and text. (What words/colors/images/patterns stand out?) Students will also need to identify elements of style, tone and mood in the painting and the passage.

We will use a text-rendering strategy for the close reading of a passage. Then we will use Terry Barrett’s 20 Principles of Interpretation to set the tone for looking closely at a work of art. We will not be overly reliant on this tool, since it is merely a set of guidelines intended to foster communal conversation about art and not a codified method for interpretation.

Learning Goals: Students will learn how to do a close reading of a passage and a close analysis of a painting. Students demonstrate that they can identify and interpret the literary elements tone, mood and style. Students will draw conclusions about authorial and artistic intent based on their observations from the close readings and analysis. A longer ranging goal is for students to start internalizing the Close Reading Questions and ask these questions of themselves when they encounter text.

Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify the tone, mood and style of a passage and a painting.
- Locate specific words or phrases that communicate tone, mood and style.
- Locate specific composition or artistic elements that communicate tone, mood and style.
- Analyze a passage or a painting’s stylistic techniques.
- Determine how stylistic techniques are used to indicate meaning.
- Draw conclusions about a work’s meaning after careful consideration of the author or artist’s techniques.
- Develop an interpretation or argument about the author or artist’s intent for a work.
- Use supportive evidence from the close reading and/or close analysis to support their argument.
- Participate in whole class discussions and interpretations.
- Build a working vocabulary for analysis of text and paintings.

Materials for Educators:

- Terry Barrett's Principles of Interpretation (Appendix B)
- A model passage from *The Great Gatsby* (I chose the Valley of Ashes description at the start of Chapter 2 because it is so evocative)
- Copies of *The Great Gatsby*
- Images (PowerPoint or print versions) of Edward Hopper Paintings
- Close Reading Questions (Appendix D)

Learning Plan:

Day 1

Opening Activity:

Do Now: What do you think it means to read closely? How do you know if you are doing this correctly when you are reading *The Great Gatsby*?

- 1) As a class we will generate a definition of close reading. Some important things our definition may include are: "attention to details", "understanding of key words", "not summary".
- 2) We will then quickly review the three literary elements central to this unit – Tone, Mood and Style.

Tone = the author or artist's attitude towards the subject (WHAT the author feels)

Mood = the atmosphere or emotional register of the piece (WHAT it makes you/the reader feel)

Style = the writer's use of language, including but not limited to diction, grammar, dialect, dialogue, etc. (HOW the writer or artist works)

Practicing Close Reading

1. All students will have a (digital or paper) copy of just the first two paragraphs of Chapter Two of *The Great Gatsby*, students will also receive a copy of Close Reading Questions.
2. A student will read the passage out loud.
3. We will answer the first set of Close Reading Questions (First Impressions) as a class.
4. In small groups, students will answer the other Close Reading Questions.

Closing Activity: We will review the Close Reading Questions as a class and discuss what the effects of mood, tone, and style are in this passage.

Homework: Students will select a passage from *The Great Gatsby* for their own close reading.

Day 2:

Opening Activity:

Do Now: How do you read a painting?

- 1) As a class we will discuss interpreting art.
- 2) I will distribute the Principles of Interpretation. Students will read their “favorite” principle and we will decide as a class which ones we think are most important to keep in mind while we discuss art. Students can volunteer to make posters for the class’s favorite principles.

Practice Interpreting a Painting

- 1) Students will view Hopper’s *Chair Car* (1965).
- 2) Students will have five minutes to jot down 6 things they notice about the painting.
- 3) Students will share the things they notice with their partners making one shared list of observations about the painting.
- 4) In pairs, will then draw 3 interpretative conclusions from the list of things they noticed.
- 5) The class will discuss the interpretations. Students will be awarded points for participation. Our discussion will touch on the mood and style of the painting (and to some extent any observations the students can make about tone).

Closing Activity:

Exit Slip: As students leave they will answer the following question, how is interpreting a painting different from interpreting a piece of writing?

Day Three

Opening Activity

Do Now: What passage from *The Great Gatsby* are you choosing to analyze in your close reading? What painting by Edward Hopper will you interpret?

Work Day

1. Students will have the class period to work on their own close reading and painting analysis.
2. The final product is a written 1 page response to the passage and painting drawing on the concrete evidence gained in the close reading and interpretation processes.
3. As students work independently, the educator will provide feedback and encouragement, but will not influence the interpretation!
4. Students will finish the assignment for homework.

Works Cited

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle: New Understanding About Writing, Reading, and Learning (Workshop Series)*. 2 Sub ed. Chicago: Boynton/Cook, 1998.

Barrett, Terry. "About Art Interpretation for Art Education." *Studies in Art Education* 42.1 (2000): 5-19.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Great Gatsby*. New York: Scribner, 1999.

Annotated Bibliography

Resources for Educators – Regarding Instructional Strategies

Atwell, Nancie. *In the Middle: New Understanding About Writing, Reading, and Learning (Workshop Series)*. 2 Sub ed. Chicago: Boynton/Cook, 1998.

This text and the workshops Atwell modeled are often taught in graduate schools of education. I first encountered her in this context and she is one of the few teacher/scholar's whose work I return to again and again. *In the Middle* outlines the rationale behind and logistical preparations for reading and writing workshops. If you are planning to deploy some version of the workshop in your classrooms, this text is the place to start.

Barrett, Terry. "About Art Interpretation for Art Education." *Studies in Art Education* 42.1 (2000): 5-19.

This text (available online at Terry Barrett's website www.terrybarrettosu.com) outlines an approach to teaching art interpretation that I found especially useful. Educators can read the full article explaining his principles of interpretation and how they can be used with children of any age to guide them through observing and discussing a work of art. I have also included a list of the principles in Appendix B.

Bonzo-Sims, Laura. "Inquiry-Based Close Reading and Critical Thinking." *Laura Bonzo-Sims Home Page*. The Lexington School, n.d. 1 June 2010.
<<http://web.thelexingtonschool.org/bonzo/Literature/inquiry.htm>>.

This is one of a number of educator and professor's websites that I located with detailed guides to close reading. I am including many of them here so that educators can see a range of close reading approaches and choose which one best fits their classroom and students. These are from an 8th grade English class in Kentucky.

Davis, Juliet. "How to Read Critically and Interact with Texts." *Juliet Davis - Home*. University of Tampa- Department of Communication, n.d. 4 June 2010. <www.julietdavis.com/COM232/howtoread.pdf>.

This is a college professor's approach to text rendering (although she does not use that term). She includes a possible schematic for marking up texts. She also provides detailed explanations of ways in which readers can interact with texts to ensure better comprehension. Coincidentally, Davis also references the Hopper painting *Nighthawks*, the Joyce Carol Oates poem about the painting and an essay about both pieces as an example of how students can respond to text.

Fletcher, Ralph, and Joann Portalupi. *Writing Workshop: The Essential Guide*. Chicago: Heinemann, 2001.

This text offers a clear and useful guide to setting up writing workshops in your classroom. Fletcher and Portalupi explain different aspects of the workshop always with an eye for the practical matters of implementing the model in a classroom setting. The book covers structures for supporting independent writing, teacher-student conferencing, the writing process, using literature and reinforcing writing skills.

Teaching Close Reading | eFiles." *English 316K: Masterworks of Literature Resources for Teaching Assistants*. University of Texas at Austin, Department of English, n.d. 4 June 2010. <<http://efiles.cwrl.utexas.edu/node/130>>.

This resource is for teaching assistants at the college level, but it is certainly applicable to teachers at secondary schools. The website breaks down close reading by offering tips, interpretative questions and sample assignments. The site also offers a clear articulation argument in support of close reading as a teaching strategy. Educators or students reluctant to use the close reading strategy may find this site convincing.

Wheeler, L. Kip. "Close Reading of a Literary Passage." *Dr. Wheeler's Website*. Carson-Newman College, 18 Jan. 2010. 4 June 2010. <web.cn.edu/kwheeler/reading_lit.html>.

Dr. Wheeler's set of close reading questions were the best I came across in my web research. I plan to use them with some modifications in my classroom and have included my version of these questions in Appendix D. I appreciate that the questions are clear and direct. I also find that the emphasis on point of view, characterization and symbolism lends itself well to further analysis in my classroom.

Resources for the Unit

Bryer, Jackson R., and Nancy P. VanArsdale. *Approaches to Teaching Fitzgerald's the Great Gatsby (Approaches to Teaching World Literature)*. New York: Modern Language Association of America, 2009.

This collection of essays and analytical approaches to *Gatsby* seems intended for a college audience, but could be useful for an educator in a high school setting. The first part of the book collects resources on the novel which extend beyond the resources I have collected here. The essays do not lend themselves directly to lesson plans, but they provide interesting perspectives and background on various issues in the novel, including but not limited to issues of class, gender, regional politics and race.

Dowling, David. *The Great Gatsby in the Classroom: "Searching for the American Dream" (NCTE High School Literature Series)*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers, 2006.

This collection of lesson plans on *Gatsby* almost discouraged me from writing this unit. There is already such a breadth of material out there on the novel. This book includes lessons that connect to each of the nine chapters as well as pre and post-reading activities. The lessons include critical material as well as detailed lesson plans and other classroom resources.

"Edward Hopper." Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2007. 4 June 2010. <<http://www.mfa.org/hopper/>>.

This website was designed to accompany the 2007 exhibit on Edward Hopper at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. The website offers many resources to an educator learning or teaching about Hopper. In addition to biographical information and images and curatorial writings from the exhibit, the site also features an interactive Hopper sketchbook and a number of multimedia presentations.

"F. Scott Fitzgerald - An Annotated Bibliography." *F. Scott Fitzgerald - An Annotated Bibliography*. N.p., n.d. 4 June 2010. <<http://www.scott-fitzgerald.com/index.html>>.

This website by an anonymous Fitzgerald fan (who appears to live in Germany, judging by his/her email address) includes a rather comprehensive annotated bibliography of its Fitzgerald's works and critical materials about Fitzgerald. Each entry (Fitzgerald's novels, stories, scripts, letters and biographical

materials) is annotated with a link to purchase the site online.

Fitzgerald, F. Scott, and Zelda Fitzgerald. *Dear Scott, Dearest Zelda*. New Ed ed. New York, New York: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2003.

A collection of more than 300 letters sent between the Fitzgeralds, mostly from Zelda to Scott. Many of the letters and photographs included in this volume were previously unpublished. The letters could be used in class as background reading on Fitzgerald or as primary sources rich with information about the time period.

Garner, April. "Teaching the American 20s: Lesson Plans." *Educator Programs*. Harry Ransom Center at the University of Texas at Austin, 30 Jan. 2007. 4 June 2010. <<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/educator/modules/teachingthetwenties/index.php>>.

This website offers extensive and reliable resources on teaching this period in American history. The modules are organized thematically around social issues, town/city dynamics, creative expression and other cultural elements. There are also image galleries, audio resources, lesson plans and more instructional materials at this site. The site would be easy to navigate for students and lends itself well to a jigsaw or stations assignment since there are so many resources organized in distinct groupings.

Hopper, Edward, Deborah Lyons, and Brian O'Doherty. *Edward Hopper: A Journal of His Work*. 1st Edition. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997.

This book reproduces some of Hopper's journals which were painstakingly maintained by his wife Jo over Hopper's lifetime. The text in many of the journals is actually Jo's own writing, the sketches are Edward's. This may be a useful primary source to illuminate the artist's process for students.

Hopper, Edward, and Wieland Schmied. *Edward Hopper: Portraits of America*. Fort Worth: Prestel Publishing, 1999.

This is a great collection of Hopper's paintings. The hardcover edition is very lovely and would be great to show in class.

Levin, Gail. *Edward Hopper: An Intimate Biography*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996.

Gail Levin is one of the definitive Hopper scholars. This biography draws on many her extensive studies of his life's work, especially the journals of Jo Hopper. The book is probably too hefty for effective use in class, but it is a great resource for educators. Sections could be excerpted to give some insight into Hopper's career and artistic choices.

Moroff, Diane. "Edward Hopper's House by the Railroad: From Painting to Poem ." *EDSITEment - The Best of the Humanities on the Web*. National Endowment for the Humanities, 16 Sept. 2008. Web. 4 June 2010. <http://edsitement.neh.gov/view_lesson_plan.asp?id=781>.

This terrific lesson plan focuses on the Hopper painting "House by the Railroad" (1925) and the poem by Edward Hirsch about the painting. The lesson plan is designed to accompany a middle school art or history course, but could be easily adapted for an English class.

Nichols, Kathleen L. "Jazz Age Culture: Part I." *Nichols Home Page*. Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, KS, 11 Aug. 2008. 4 June 2010. <<http://faculty.pittstate.edu/~knichols/jazzage.html>>.

This is the first of two sections on Dr. Nichols's website on the culture of the Jazz Age. The resources collected here would be excellent for background lectures or activities on the time period. Part I at the site focuses on Flappers, the Harlem Renaissance, the second part focuses on Modernist and Harlem Renaissance Art. There is also a third section focusing on Jazz Age writers. Each section includes background writings by the professor and an index of links.

Tredell, Nicolas. *Columbia Critical Guide: F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Great Gatsby*. New Ed ed. Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1999.

I prefer this collection of literary criticism to the Bloom's Guide. Both are valid resources for a crash course in the critical approaches to *Gatsby*. I find this collection useful for its explanations of literary criticism and its emphasis on situating the novel in twentieth century history.

"Understanding "The Great Gatsby" A Novel by F. Scott Fitzgerald." *A Research Guide for Students*. N.p., n.d.4 June 2010. <www.aresearchguide.com/gatsby.html >.

This website has an exhaustive compilation of web resources on *Gatsby* and Fitzgerald. Despite many disclaimers about plagiarism, this is the kind of resource students will use to avoid reading a novel and copy answers and essays. It is therefore all the more important that educators review the content here carefully, so as to recognize it when it appears in plagiarized student work!

Zelasko, Ken. "The Great Gatsby." *Lesson Plan Library*. Discovery Education, n.d.4 June 2010. <school.discoveryeducation.com/lessonplans/programs/greatbooks-greatgatsby/ >.

This is a great lesson plan for educators looking to bring reader's theater and dramatic interpretation to their class. The plan was written by an educator for the Discovery Education website and complements a video available on Discovery Streaming. The site includes objectives, standards, guided plans, and supplementary materials for this lesson.

Classroom Resources

Images

ARTstor.

This digital library of images is usually only available through colleges and universities. Some other non-profit institutions also can gain access to this remarkable collection of pieces. The website allows for images to be exported to PowerPoint and also supports other methods of using the images in educational settings. Almost all of Hopper's pieces are included here, as are many sketches and other materials of Hopper's. Images of a few of Jo Hopper's paintings are also available here.

Pioch, Nicolas. "Web Museum: Hopper, Edward." *Web Museum, Paris*. Ibiblio: the public's library and digital archive, 14 July 2002. 4 June 2010.
<<http://www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/hopper>>.

This is one great source of Hopper images available online. The site includes some critical information but mostly just collections images with archival information organized in three categories: Interior scenes, Street scenes, and Landscapes. This image index can be used in class or as a resource for students when they choose paintings to analyze and write about in class.

Poems

Farrés, Ernest. *Edward Hopper: Poems A Bilingual Edition*. A Bilingual Edition ed. Trans. Lawrence Venuti. Saint Paul: Graywolf Press, 2009.

This is one of a few collections of poems based on Hopper paintings. All of these poems are by Catalan poet Ernest Farrés and each one is based on a different Hopper painting. These poems can be used as examples during the poetry section of this unit.

Levin, Gail. *The Poetry of Solitude: A Tribute To Edward Hopper*. New York:

Universe Publishing, 2007.

This is a collection of poems based on Hopper paintings coordinated by Hopper scholar Gail Levin. Poems included in this unit are also included here as well as dozens more. The existence of such a collection calls attention to how evocative Hopper paintings are and how well they lend to the poetry and analysis in this unit. The poems can also be used as examples in the poetry section of this unit.

Films

There are a handful of film adaptations of *The Great Gatsby*; none of which are particularly worthwhile.

I have shown the most recent version in class.

The Great Gatsby (A&E). Dir. Robert Markowitz. Perf. Mira Sorvino, Toby Stephens, Paul Rudd. A&E Home Video, 2000. DVD.

Another film that would connect to this unit is due out in the next year or so. *The Beautiful and the Damned* is set to star Keira Knightley as Zelda Fitzgerald and Leonardo DiCaprio as Scott Fitzgerald. This film is going into production as of 2010. Details about the film appear at: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1181615/> and Knightley may also appear in a film adaptation of *Tender is the Night*.

APPENDIX A – Pennsylvania Academic Standards

- 1.1.11.F Understand the meaning of and apply key vocabulary across the various subject areas.
- 1.3.11.B: Analyze the relationships, uses and effectiveness of literary elements used by one or more authors in similar genres including characterization, setting, plot, theme, point of view, tone and style
- 1.3.11.F: Read and respond to nonfiction and fiction including poetry and drama.
- 1.4.11.A: Write short stories, poems and plays.
- 1.4.11.B: Write complex informational pieces (e.g., research papers, analyses, evaluations, essays).
- 1.5.11.D: Write with a command of the stylistic aspects of composition.
- 1.5.11.E: Revise writing to improve style, word choice, sentence variety and subtlety of meaning after rethinking how questions of purpose, audience and genre have been addressed.
- 1.5.11.F: Edit writing using the conventions of language.
- 1.6.11.A: Listen to others.
- 1.6.11.D: Contribute to discussions.
- 1.6.11.E: Participate in small and large group discussions and presentations.
- 9.1.12.A: Know and use the elements and principles of each art form to create works in the arts and humanities.
- 9.1.12.C: Integrate and apply advanced vocabulary to the arts forms.
- 9.1.12.F: Analyze works of arts influenced by experiences or historical and cultural events through production, performance or exhibition.
- 9.2.12.D Analyze a work of art from its historical and cultural perspective.
- 9.2.12.F: Know and apply appropriate vocabulary used between social studies and the arts and humanities.

APPENDIX B – Terry Barrett’s “Principles for Interpreting Art”
(from the article “About Art Interpretation for Art Education”)

1. Artworks have “aboutness” and demand interpretation.
2. Responsible interpretations present the artwork in its best rather than its weakest light.
3. Interpretations are arguments.
4. Interpretations are persuasive.
5. No single interpretation is exhaustive of the meaning of an artwork and there can be different, competing, and contradictory interpretations of the same artwork.
6. Some interpretations are better than others.
7. Interpretations imply a world-view
8. Good interpretations of art tell more about the artwork than they tell about the interpreter.
9. Interpretations are not so much absolutely right, but more or less reasonable, convincing, enlightening, and informative.
10. Good interpretations have coherence, correspondence, and inclusiveness.
11. Feelings are guides to interpretations.
12. An interpretation of an artwork need not match the artist’s intent for the artwork.
13. The objects of interpretations are artworks not artists.
14. All art is in part about the world in which it emerged.
15. All art is in part about other art.
16. Interpretation is ultimately a communal endeavor and the community is eventually self-corrective.
17. Good interpretations invite us to see for ourselves and to continue on our own.
18. To interpret a work of art is to respond to it.
19. Interpreting art is an endeavor that is both individual and personal, and communal and shared.
20. Artworks attract multiple interpretations and it’s not the goal of interpretation to arrive at single, grand, unified, composite interpretations.

APPENDIX C – Poems based on Hopper Paintings

Edward Hopper's Nighthawks, 1942

by Joyce Carol Oates

The three men are fully clothed, long sleeves, even hats, though it's indoors, and brightly lit, and there's a woman. The woman is wearing a short-sleeved red dress cut to expose her arms, a curve of her creamy chest; she's contemplating a cigarette in her right hand, thinking that her companion has finally left his wife but can she trust him? Her heavy-lidded eyes, pouty lipsticked mouth, she has the redhead's true pallor like skim milk, damned good-looking and she guesses she knows it, but what exactly has it gotten her so far, and where?--he'll start to feel guilty in a few days, she knows the signs, an actual smell, sweaty, rancid, like dirty socks; he'll slip away to make telephone calls and she swears she isn't going to go through that again, isn't going to break down crying or begging nor is she going to scream at him, she's finished with all that. And he's silent beside her, not the kind to talk much but he's thinking thank God he made the right move at last, he's a little dazed like a man in a dream--is this a dream? --so much that's wide, still, mute, horizontal, and the counterman in white, stooped as he is and unmoving, and the man on the other stool unmoving except to sip his coffee; but he's feeling pretty good, it's primarily relief, this time he's sure as h*** going to make it work, he owes it to her and to himself.... And she's thinking the light in this place is too bright, probably not very flattering, she hates it when her lipstick wears off and her makeup gets caked, she'd like to use a ladies' room but there isn't one here and.... how long before a gas station opens?--it's the middle of the night and she has a feeling

time is never going to budge. This time
though she isn't going to demean herself-
he starts in about his wife, his kids, how
he let them down, they trusted him and he let
them down, she'll slam out of the g*****d room
and if he calls her Sugar or Baby in that voice,
running his hands over her like he has the right,
she'll slap his face hard, You know I hate that: STOP!
And he'll stop. He'd better. The angrier
she gets the stiller she is, hasn't said a word
for the past ten minutes, not a strand
of her hair stirs, and it smells a little like ashes
or like the henna she uses to brighten it, but
the smell is faint or anyway, crazy for her
like he is, he doesn't notice, or mind-
burying his hot face in her neck..... She's still contemplating
the cigarette burning in her hand,
the counterman is still stooped gaping
at her, and he doesn't mind that, why not,
as long as she doesn't look back, in fact
he's thinking he's the luckiest man in the world
so why isn't he happier?

From: www.ccds.charlotte.nc.us/runnels/Runnels.Poetry.Reader_06.doc

Girl at Sewing Machine
(after a painting by Edward Hopper)

By Mary Leader

It must be warm in the room, walls the color of over-steeped tea,
the sun high,
coating the yellow brick exterior of the apartment building,
angling in on
the girl, stripped down to camisole and petticoat, sewing.
She's a busty girl,
soft, no doubt perspiring, slippery under her breasts, moisture
trapped on the back
of her neck under all that chestnut hair. She doesn't notice,
though; you can see
she's intent on her seam. She doesn't slump over the machine
but bends from the hip,

her body as attuned as her hands. Her feet, though not shown
in the painting,
are bound to be pudgy, are probably bare, pumping the treadle
ka-chunk ka-chunk ka-chunk
but that's unconscious. Her point of concentration is the needle,
silver, quick,
its chick chick chick chick chick, necessity to keep the material
in perfect position,
position. What is she making? The fabric looks heavy and yet
billowy, like
whipped cream, or cumulus clouds; certain girls, while large, move
with grace (when nobody's
there) but in public, conceal, or try to conceal, their bodies
beneath long clothes.
They favor long hair, feeling it wimples and veils embarrassment.
Yes, I know this girl.
Only in her room, only when unseen, can she relax at all, peel off
a hot blouse,
a brown skirt, like the one heaped on her bed in the background,
take pleasure in
a good hairbrush, the bottle of scent on the dresser, the picture
of her own choosing
on the wall. Whatever she's making--let's go ahead and say it's
a dress for herself--
she is not, as you might think, dreaming of a party, a dance,
or a wedding. No, she's
deciding to flat-fell that seam--time-consuming, but worth it--
stronger, better-looking.
I'm sure she knows by now not to expect much attention from boys.
She's what? twenty?
eighteen? She will, in time, use many words to describe herself,
not all of them bad;
but not once will one of them be "pretty," or "lovely." Those
aren't for a fat girl
though she can take a mass of cloth, and a cast-iron machine,
and make a beautiful shape.

From: <http://www.english.emory.edu/classes/paintings&poems/sewing.html>

APPENDIX D – Close Reading Questions

(modified from http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/reading_lit.html)

First Impressions:

1. What is the first thing you notice about the passage?
2. What is the second thing?
3. Do the two things you noticed complement each other? Or contradict each other?
4. What mood does the passage create in you? Why?
5. What appears to be the author's tone in this passage? Why?

Vocabulary and Diction:

6. Which words do you notice first? Why? What is noteworthy about this diction?
7. How do the important words relate to one another?
8. What words are new to you? (Look them up!)

Discerning Patterns:

9. Does an image here remind you of an image elsewhere in the book? Where? What's the connection?
10. How might this image fit into the pattern of the book as a whole?
11. Could this passage symbolize the entire work? Could this passage serve as a microcosm--a little picture--of what's taking place in the whole work?
12. What is the rhythm of the writing like? Short and choppy? Long and flowing? Does it build on itself or stay at an even pace? What is the style like?
13. Look at the punctuation. Is there anything unusual about it?
14. Is there any repetition within the passage? What is the effect of that repetition?
15. What is left out or kept silent? What would you expect the author to talk about that the author avoided?

Point of View and Characterization:

16. How might the passage make us react or think about any characters or events within the narrative?
17. Are there colors, sounds, physical description that appeals to the senses? Does this imagery form a pattern? Why might the author have chosen that color, sound or physical description?
18. Who speaks in the passage? To whom does he or she speak? Does the narrator have a limited or partial point of view? Or does the narrator appear to be omniscient, and he knows things the characters couldn't possibly know?

Symbolism:

19. Are there metaphors or examples of personification in this passage? What ideas are being represented symbolically?
20. How might objects represent something else in this passage?