

Hollywood Magic
The Dream Factory Recreates the Novel

Subjects: Secondary Language Arts

Grade Level: 9-12

Rationale or Purpose: After reading *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, or *The Jungle*, by Upton Sinclair and studying HRC's "Teaching the American Twenties- The Dream Factory," students will rewrite a small scene from their novel into a dramatic film scene and then create a modern movie poster that demonstrates their understanding of the plot, major themes, and characters of the novel and the 1920's.

Materials: *The Great Gatsby*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald or *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair
Computer with internet access, HRC's "Teaching the American Twenties"
http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/exhibitions/online/teachingthetwenties/theme_viewer.php?theme=small§ion=dream&subsect=4
Ruled Paper
Pen or pencils
Large poster boards
Markers

Lesson Duration: Several class blocks. Students will need time to use the HRC online to research "The Dream Factory," synthesize material and write dramatic scenes; then students will need time to share and discuss their scenes. Students will also need time to create a modern movie poster of their novel.

Objectives: English III

- 1A-C The student writes in a variety of forms appropriate to audience and purpose.
- 2A-E The student pre-writes, organizes, proofreads, edits and revises, using technology to publish texts.
- 4A-F The student uses writing as a tool for learning.
- 7A-H The student comprehends selections using a variety of strategies.
- 8A-B The student will read extensively, including American literature to interpret influences of the historical context on literary works.
- 13A-E The student reads in order to research assigned and self-selected topics.
- 19A-C The student understands and interprets visual representations.
- 20A-F The students analyze and understand the importance of visual representations.
- 21A-E The student produces visual representations that communicate.

Activity:

- Step 1: Introduce students to the HRC online collection using computers with internet access. Share with students the research tools that are available to them within the collection that will assist in their understanding of “The Dream Factory.”
- Step 2: Discuss the movie posters and other pictures. What are they advertising in The movie posters? What elements in the posters would make people want to see the film? What do the other pictures tell us about film stars of the 1920’s and what brought people to their films? Why is film, now considered the modern day art form?
- Step 3: In small groups of 4-5 people, students will choose a small portion of the novel they have read, and create a small dramatic film scene of the novel. Each group will then share with the entire class their scene; what was left out and why; what was added or elaborated upon and why. What works in a novel that will not work on film? What are the elements of a really good film? In what ways does it reflect the 1920’s?
- Step 4: Working in the small groups, students will now create a movie poster for their novel. They must include modern actors for the roles, a director, themes, symbols, and a line from the novel that the film will explore. The poster will use illustrations and graphics to enhance its audience appeal. The poster must include the name of the novel as well as its author. Students may draw original art, or they may use pictures from another source.

Modifications: *Students with learning difficulties*: increase the number of students in their dramatic skit groups. Depending on the academic level of the student, you may want to eliminate the writing portion entirely.

For the gifted student: eliminate the group portion of the activity. The teacher will select the portions of the novel to be dramatized and then assign the portions to the students. Each portion should fit into the next, so that students create a united whole. Add an extra step in the activity and have students create connection between the scenes they have already written. They can act them out when complete.

Student Product: Each group of students will have created a scene from *The Great Gatsby* or *The Jungle* and also a movie poster for their novel.

Closure: Students will share and discuss their finished products. Some questions to ask are: how do these scenes and posters reflect the novel, what are some things that were happening during the time period? Why would this be important?

What are the themes, or symbols from the novel used? How will their work attract an audience?

Readers of *The Great Gatsby* may want to view the 1960 film starring Robert Redford. How well did this film recreate the novel? How well does it reflect the time period? Which was better, the novel, or the film and why?

Assessment: After sharing the groups' work, in a class discussion, make connections between the 1920's and the novel, *The Great Gatsby/The Jungle*. In what ways does the novel and their products reflect the time period? Are their choices for graphics, illustrations, actors, director, symbols, line from the novel designed to attract an audience?

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