

Perceptions of Success and The American Dream: How Culture Influences Our Beliefs

An 11th Grade Unit of Instruction
Class Setup: 25 students, 5 weeks,
90 Minute Classes



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Rationale

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“The process of schooling gives children the tools they can - and often must - use to survive after graduating into ‘the real world,’ and teaches them what it is to be a member of our culture.”

Derrick Jensen, 2003

As students move into the last years of high school, questions concerning what they plan to do with their lives become more prevalent. “The American Dream” has become inundated with various forms of media that seek to answer this dilemma for them. An unfortunate by-product of this culture has been the lack of skills necessary for our youth to define personal success for themselves. By recognizing the effect that culture has on our perceptions, I hope to engender in them a better comprehension of self and their own understanding of success.

The Common Core Standards (2010) identify the use of valid reasoning and analysis of substantive topics as skills necessary for students to successfully navigate the twenty-first century. This unit will use a variety of texts to illustrate the importance of these skills when making choices that will help them be successful in life. Throughout this unit we will focus on questions regarding success and how a close examination of our culture and values can help us determine what is needed to make progress towards achieving that goal.

Jenson (2003) points out that the role of a teacher should include creating an

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atmosphere in which students want to learn. Through the implementation of various writing projects and a dialogical classroom approach (Fecho, 2011), I hope to provide an environment where this positive atmosphere is possible. Students will practice critical thinking skills as they identify and define multiple interpretations of success as presented in the covered texts.

We will begin by watching Author Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. By examining the choices that Willie Loman makes in his pursuit of success, I hope to generate dialogue on the importance of making wise decisions as students define what success means for them. As we continue to examine how the ability to make these decisions for ourselves is relevant to our ultimate happiness, students will have the opportunity to demonstrate their thought process by producing clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

As we prepare our students for college and career readiness, it is important to expose them to different examples of success in multiple genres and from different time periods. *The Great Gatsby* focuses on materialism in the 1920s, and how this perception of success failed to provide any lasting results for the characters involved. This classic piece of American Literature will be used to help students recognize how individual perceptions of success can effect decisions, and to analyze potential outcomes as they pertain to different choices. We will contrast the materialism of

Gatsby with the views of success as defined by culture in the movie *8 Mile*. My goal is for students to see the importance of questioning what society tells them, and the value in clearly defining their own ideas of personal success.

Throughout the semester we will be also be reading several poems including Robert Frost's *The Road Not Taken* and Emily Dickinson's *Success is Counted Sweetest*. We will examine excerpts from Zig Zigler's self-help book *Success for Dummies* and Stephen Covey's *The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People*. Students will be encouraged to experiment with different genres as they analyze the texts introduced and practice reflective thinking in their writing journals. We will also use these nonfiction texts to help analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure that an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.

As teachers we have the opportunity to expose students to a variety of modes in which success can be measured. This unit is designed to start students thinking for themselves. What are the qualities and results they want to see in their lives? How do they define the elusive term "success", and how did they come to the definitions that they currently hold? How are these perceptions influenced by the culture in which they have been raised, and what obstacles will they have to overcome to achieve success? Because this process may call into question some of the beliefs implicit in our culture's perception, there may be some objections to the texts or the topics of discussion that

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are included. However, it is my belief that by encouraging students to take a more critical approach towards these preconceived notions, they will come away better prepared to find success in their future endeavors. How can we apply what we have learned, both in school and through other experiences, in a way that allows us to participate in the “The American Dream” and still remain faithful to our own definition of success? Finding this path requires a close examination of our own culture as we establish the values that will define success for each of us as individuals.

References

Common Core Standards for English Language Arts. (June, 2010)

Fecho, B. (2011). *Writing in the Dialogical Classroom: Students and Teachers Responding to the Texts of Their Lives*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English

Jenson, D. (2003). *Walking on Water: Reading, Writing, and Revolution*. White River Junction, VT: Chelsea Green Publishing Company

Unit Objectives

When this Unit has been completed students will be able to:

- Identify and define multiple interpretations of success as presented in the covered texts.
- Identify and refine their own definitions of success and produce at least one additional “text” that supports that definition.
- Cite evidence to support analysis of a central concept or idea. (CCS, LR, 1)
- Determine a central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. (CCS, LR, 2)
- “Analyze a case in which grasping point of view requires distinguishing what is directly stated in a text from what is really meant.” (CCS, LR, 6)
- “Demonstrate knowledge of twentieth-century foundational works of American literature, including how two or more texts from the same period treat similar themes or topics.” (CCS, LR, 9)
- “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.” (CCS, RI, 4)
- “Analyze and evaluate the effectiveness of the structure an author uses in his or her exposition or argument, including whether the structure makes points clear, convincing, and engaging.” (CCS, RI, 5)
- “Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness, or beauty of the text.” (CCS, RI, 6)
- “Write an argument to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.” (CCS, W, 1)

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- “Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.” (CCS, W, 3)
- “Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.” (CCS, W, 4)
- “Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.” (CCS, W, 9)
- “Write routinely over extended time frames.” (CCS, W, 10)
- Recognize how individual perceptions of success can effect decisions; and analyze potential outcomes pertaining to different choices.
- Participate in a variety of pursuits that expand their ability to analyze texts and utilize reflective thinking in their writing.
- Create a final multi-genre portfolio and accompanying narrative account that displays their understanding and the importance of the entire unit.

(Some goals adopted from Georgia Common Core Standards)

Texts

Main texts:

The Great Gatsby - F. Scott Fitzgerald (novel)

Death of a Salesman - Author Miller (play)

8 Mile - Scott Silver (excerpts from movie, edited for language)

Poems:

The Road Not Taken - Robert Frost

Success is Counted Sweetest - Emily Dickinson

Music:

"Glory Days" recorded by Bruce Springsteen (Born in the USA, Columbia, 1984), lyrics and music by Bruce Springsteen.

"The River" recorded by Bruce Springsteen (The River, Columbia, 1980), lyrics and music by Bruce Springsteen.

"Lose Yourself" recorded by Eminem (8 Mile soundtrack, 2002), lyrics and music by Eminem

Excerpts From:

[Success for Dummies](#) - Zig Zigler (YouTube video link)

[The 7 Habits of Highly Successful People](#) - Stephen Covey (webpage link)

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Goals and Accompanying Rubrics

Goal 1:

Multi-Genre Portfolio

Over the next five weeks we will be looking at several different texts from America's 20th century and considering how different values within our society have played a part in determining our culture's current definition of success. Beginning this week you will be expected to start work on a portfolio that you will present during the last week of class. This portfolio will include "items" that you feel represent your own perceptions of success. Each week you will be expected to add a minimum of one item that you feel represents your current beliefs, for a total of at least five different pieces. Examples might include but are not limited to: a song; a t.v./movie clip; a magazine article; pictures; poems; short stories; trophies... If you have a question about a particular item please feel free to ask me. For each item you will also write a short (one page) narrative explaining what perception concerning success the item represents to you, and how you believe this perception will contribute to your feeling successful in our society. You will have an opportunity to share your items and short narratives in small groups every Friday during class. We will be using the "PEAP" process as a guide for peer reviews. A hard copy of each weekly narrative will also be turned in to me and used when calculating your final grade for participation. During week five you will each present your portfolio to the class. You may use technology such as *Power-Point*, *Prezi*, or *Keynote* for your presentations. Finally, you will use your peer and teacher reviews to revise your narratives, then combine them into a single paper (three to four pages) you will turn in to me prior to presenting your portfolio. This project will be worth a cumulative score of 25% of your final grade.

The following criteria will be included when calculating your final score for participation:

Rubric for Multi-Genre Portfolio:

Students completing the following will receive an A:

- Have the appropriate number of items per week for your final presentation (minimum of one per week)
- All items are submitted on time (by class-time every Friday)
- All items are accompanied by short (up to one page) narrative account clearly stating the belief or perception the item represents and how you feel this belief will enable you to be successful.
- Active participation in small groups review sessions

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- Present your final portfolio to the class
- Turn in a final narrative (three to four pages) in which the author's voice comes through strongly

Students completing the following will receive a B:

- Have the appropriate number of items per week for your final presentation (minimum of one per week)
- No more than one item and accompanying narrative is submitted late (due by class-time every Friday)
- Items are accompanied by short (up to one page) narrative account clearly stating the belief or perception the item represents and how you feel this belief will enable you to be successful.
- Active participation in small group reviews
- Present your final portfolio to the class
- Turn in a final narrative (three to four pages) in which the author's voice is present

Students completing the following will receive a C:

- Have a minimum of at least four items for your final presentation
- No more than one item and accompanying narrative is submitted late (due by class-time every Friday)
- Items are accompanied by short (up to one page) narrative account stating the belief or perception the item represents
- Active participation in small group reviews
- Present your final portfolio to the class
- Turn in a final narrative (three to four pages) in which belief statements are present

Students completing the following will receive a D:

- Have at least one items for your final presentation

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- Item is presented on time (due by class-time on Fridays)
- Item is accompanied by short (one - two paragraphs) narrative account stating the belief or perception the item represents.
- Active participation in small group reviews
- Present your final portfolio to the class
- Turn in a final narrative in which belief statement is present

Response Journals receiving an F will:

- Fail to be turned in

Goal 2:

Response Journals:

Over the next five weeks we will be “interacting” with a variety of texts. We will establish and maintain a dialogue in class in which we will discuss these texts and how they demonstrate different perceptions of success. For a cumulative score worth 25% of your final grade, you will be expected to keep an ongoing journal tracking the development of your beliefs concerning success, your reactions to the various texts, and your thoughts generated via small groups and class discussions. These journals will be an informal writing assignment and will not be graded on technical errors. While format will be left up to each individual, a first person narrative account is suggested for at least a portion of your entries. You should have a minimum of two responses per week that demonstrate a knowledge of the text and reflective thought/analysis concerning the weekly readings and/or class discussions. Your entries will be due by 5:00 p.m. each Friday and may be delivered to me via email or hardcopy.

*Hint: “The purpose of these journals is to encourage students to attend carefully to the language of the literature and to read reflectively, pausing to think about passages before moving along.”
(Smagorinsky, Teaching English by Design: How to create and carry out instructional units. p.125)*

The following criteria will be included when calculating your final score:

Rubric for Response Journal:

Response Journals receiving an A will:

- Have the appropriate number of entries per week (minimum of two)

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- Be submitted on time (5:00pm every Friday)
- Demonstrate evidence of reflective thought that may include what meanings, questions, or conflicts you derived from that week's readings or discussions
- Exhibit the ability to analyze these thoughts and arrange them in a coherent fashion that demonstrates an understanding of the concepts covered

Response Journals receiving a B will:

- Have no more than one entry or response missing
- Be submitted late no more than one time.
- Show evidence that the weekly reading was completed by demonstrating some thought was given to the responses

Response Journals receiving a C will:

- Have no more than two missing entries
- Be submitted late no more than two times
- Have responses that show little relationship to the theme/texts of unit

Response Journals receiving a D will:

- Be missing three or more entries
- Be late three or more times
- Will not connect to theme/texts of unit

Response Journals receiving an F will:

- Fail to be turned in

Goal 3:

Extended Definition Essay

In lieu of a final exam, you will be required to complete an extended definition of success in a formal, but first person essay. This assignment will be four to six pages,

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double spaced, twelve point font, and one inch margins and will be worth 50% of your final grade. The essay should focus on your key beliefs concerning success, discuss why those beliefs are fundamental to your future goals, and access both experiential and referential evidence to support your definition. Your paper should include various character flaws and virtues identified from the texts you have read and discussed over the past six weeks. This essay will be a formal writing assignment and should be properly cited and referenced in [APA style](#). Your writing should engage the reader and clearly express your own voice. Your essay should include the following:

- An introduction with an attention grabber and a clear thesis that defines your beliefs/perception of success
- Support for this position with at least three reasons for your beliefs
- Each reason should be supported with examples from the text we have covered in class, current events, and your personal experiences
- Identify counterexamples for each of your reasons from the literature we have read, current events, and your personal experiences; then develop a rebuttal in which you defend your position
- Utilize conventional grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
- Evidence of having written at least one rough draft that has been submitted for peer review and evaluation. (*We will utilize peer review writing groups throughout the semester*)
- Utilize Times New Roman 11-pt. font, one inch margins, a title page, and a reference page (*APA guidelines for citations; title page and reference page are not considered in page count*)

The following rubric will be included when calculating the grade for your essay:

(Rubric adopted from Kristin Dalton's Unit Plan "Don't Touch That: Censorship and Literature in the High School Classroom:")

Rubric for Persuasive Essays:

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Category	4 - Exceeds Standards	3 - Meets Standards	2 - Approaching Standards	1 - Below Standards	Grade
Attention Grabber	The introductory paragraph has a strong hook or attention grabber that is appropriate for the audience. This could be a strong statement, a relevant quotation, statistic, or question addressed to the reader.	The introductory paragraph has a hook or attention grabber, but it is weak, rambling or inappropriate for the audience. The definition	The author has an interesting introductory paragraph but the connection to the topic is not clear.	The introductory paragraph is not interesting and is not relevant to the topic.	
Belief Statement: A clear statement that defines your perception/beliefs about success.	The author provides a clear strong statement concerning their perceptions and beliefs about success. The author's voice comes through clearly.	The author provides a clear statement concerning their perceptions and beliefs about success. The author's voice is present.	A belief statement is present, but does not make the author's position clear.	There is no belief statement.	
Support for Position	The work includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement. The writer anticipates the reader's concerns, biases or arguments and has provided at least 1 counter-argument.	The work includes 3 or more pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement.	The work includes 2 pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences) that support the position statement.	The work includes 1 or fewer pieces of evidence (facts, statistics, examples, real-life experiences).	
Source: Using Text as Evidence	The text is used properly, backed and explained through warranting and is cited correctly.	The text is used, some claims are paired with warrants, and most are cited correctly.	The text is referenced, most claims are lacking warrants or are not cited correctly.	The text is not referenced, claims are not warranted and are not cited correctly.	
Closing Paragraph: Your Last Chance to Sway	The conclusion is strong and leaves the reader solidly understanding the writer's position. Effective restatement of the position statement begins the closing paragraph.	The conclusion is recognizable. The author's position is restated within the first two sentences of the closing paragraph.	The author's position is restated within the closing paragraph, but not near the beginning.	There is no conclusion - the paper just ends.	
Technical Issues	Author makes minimal errors in grammar, spelling, or structure that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes more frequent errors in grammar, spelling, or structure that distract the reader from the content.	Author makes prevalent errors in grammar, spelling, or structure that distract the reader from the content.	Author's errors in grammar, spelling, or structure severely distract the reader from the content	

Lesson Plans

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Week One

Day 1 (Monday)

10 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping and welcome to the class. Have students complete name tents and fill out index cards with name, contact information, email address, and one interesting fact about themselves.

10 minutes: The teacher will divide class into pre-selected small groups of three to four students. These small groups will be changed once during the semester. The teacher will briefly talk about “success” as it pertains to the unit and give a description of an [opinionaire](#).

25 minutes: Introductory Activity: The teacher will provide the students with the [opinionaire](#) and allow time for them to respond.

- Small groups will dialogue about responses
- The teacher will facilitate opening up dialogue to entire class
- The completed opinionaires will be included as part of students’ reflective journals (teacher may suggest a journal entry later during the semester in which students evaluate whether or not any of their “opinions” have changed)

15 minutes: The teacher will introduce the unit “Perceptions of Success and The American Dream: How Culture Influences Our Beliefs” and pass out the [Goals and Rubrics](#) followed by a review of Goal 2, the [Response Journals](#) . The teacher will end with a brief introduction to Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*.

30 minutes: Begin watching *Death of a Salesman*

Day 2 (Tuesday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Name-tents and desks will be arranged in small groups established on Day 1.

15 minutes: The teacher will give a brief introduction of a [scenerio](#). The teacher will provide students with [scenerio](#) for the unit and allow time for them to respond.

- Small groups will dialogue responses
- Small groups will write down a list of personal goals they hope to accomplish and will be prepared share at least one of these goals later in class
- The teacher will collect the completed scenerios to be used as part of participation grade then return to be included in journals

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10 minutes: The teacher will introduce and mediate a chalk-talk on “Success” and use the results to generate a discussion to include ongoing perceptions of *Death of a Salesman* watched on Monday. The teacher will end dialogue by having small groups share a goal with the class from list developed earlier.

30 minutes: Continue watching *Death of a Salesman*

30 minutes: Small groups will discuss the events that have occurred in *Death of a Salesman* up to this point. Each group will be asked to choose a character from the play and write a short description of how they believe that character would define success. The small groups will share their descriptions with the whole class. The class will continue a dialogue on how the time period and culture of the 1920’s might have effected the character’s perception of success and The American Dream.

Day 3 (Wednesday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups.

15 minutes: The teacher will hand out a list of [Zig Zigler’s Top 100 Quotes](#). Small groups will be asked to select at least five quotes they would give to Willie Loman and write predictions in their journals of what actions he might have taken with this advice. Dialogue may progress from small groups to whole class.

30 minutes: The teacher will review Goal 1, the [Multi-Genre Portfolio](#), and begin a discussion on how success might be represented by different items. Students will be asked to identify one item that they will bring to class on Friday which they feel represents their perception of success. Students will then be given time to work on a one page narrative explaining how this item relates to their perceptions of success. This narrative will be shared in small groups on Friday during class.

40 minutes: Continue watching *Death of a Salesman*

Homework

Students will work on narrative relating to their first multi-genre item

Day 4 (Thursday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping

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30 minutes: Finish watching *Death of a Salesman*

10 minutes: Students will be given time to write in their response journals about their reactions to Willie Loman's choice to end his own life.

20 minutes: Students will break into small groups. Each group will be assigned an identified character virtue or flaw pertaining to Willie Loman and asked to discuss how this contributed to his "solution" at the end of the play. They will then be asked to discuss possible alternate endings imagining Willie Loman's story.

20 minutes: Each group will share one alternate ending to the class as a whole. The class will discuss differences in our current culture that might contribute to the endings.

5 minutes: The teacher will invite questions concerning the items due tomorrow in class.

Homework

Bring first item and narrative for Multi-Genre project to class tomorrow

Day 5 (Friday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups.

15 minutes: The teacher will pass out markers and transparencies while giving a description of a concept map. Small groups will be asked to represent what they believe is the central concept of success/The American Dream as portrayed in *Death of a Salesman*.

20 minutes: Small group will present their concept map to the class.

20 minutes: The teacher will provide students with the following prompt. "Arthur Miller suggests that in chasing the American Dream, we are all selling and trying to find success just like Willy." Tell why you agree or disagree with this assertion. Students will be asked to write their responses in their journals.

25 minutes: Students will share their items and narratives for the multi-genre project within small groups and respond using the PEAP process. The teacher will monitor discussions to assist with participation and collect narratives when finished.

5 minutes: The teacher will distribute copies of *The Great Gatsby* and collect journals and copy of narratives.

Homework

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Read chapter 1 of The Great Gatsby

Week Two_____

Day 6 (Monday)

10 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Pass out journals. Students will be asked to sit in small groups. The teacher will ask if there are any questions concerning response journals. Remind students that they may use response journals as a source for their final essays.

45 minutes: The class will listen to the [YouTube audio version](#) reading of chapters 1-2 of *The Great Gatsby*.

10 minutes: Students will be asked to discuss in small groups how the residents of East Egg might differ in their definition of success from the residents of West Egg. The teacher will monitor discussions and ask each group to compile a list of values they believe residents of each locale might endorse.

15 minutes: The teacher will list “East Egg” and “West Egg” on white board and have each group transpose their list under the appropriate column. After removing duplicates, the teacher will ask open ended questions to promote dialogue on what differences in culture might account for the different values.

10 minutes: The teacher will review the uses of response journals. Students will then be given the remainder of class to both read the text and respond in their journals to the following prompts: “Make at least two predictions as to what you think will happen to Gatsby in the story.” “At the beginning of the story, does Nick believe Gatsby is successful? Why?”

Homework

Finish reading through chapter 3 of “The Great Gatsby”. Work on response journals

Day 7 (Tuesday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will be asked to sit in small groups.

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10 minutes: The teacher will use a [Prezi](#) to visually introduce the class to the 1920's. The slide show will include sound clips and pictures appropriate to the time period.

15 minutes: The students will be asked to chalk-talk the prompt "1920's" based on their reactions to the slide show. After chalk-talk slows down, the teacher will engage the class in dialogue based on the responses on the board. The teacher should be prepared to assist in the conversation but should not take over here.

20 minutes: The teacher will write "The American Dream" on the white board and ask students to consider what the words mean. The teacher will give a brief description of a "fishbowl" activity. Students will assist in arranging four to five desks in the middle of the room. Volunteers will be selected to be the first in the fishbowl, and the teacher will have them initiate a discussion involving the differences between materialistic and idealistic values and what the American Dream means to them. Only students in the fishbowl are allowed to talk. Students wishing to enter the discussion may tap out a current fishbowl discussant. Each student will be required to sit inside the fishbowl during the discussion. (Smagorinsky, 2008)

20 minutes: Students will regroup into small groups. The teacher will review the parts of an [extended definition essay](#). Small groups will be asked to compose a list of Nick's perceptions of success through chapter 2. They should be prepared to defend their position to the class with at least three reasons supporting their beliefs.

10 minutes: The teacher will provide students with the following prompts on the white board: "Describe a time you experienced a form of success? What choices do you feel contributed to this success? How would the results have been different if you had made different choices?" Students will respond in their journals.

10 minutes: Students will be given time to read the text in class

Homework

Finish reading chapters 4 and 5 of the text

Day 8 (Wednesday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - A computer/iPad will be provided for each student for this lesson.

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25 minutes: The teacher will pass out copies of a cartoon as well as displaying it on the projector. Students will be asked to interpret the cartoon in their journals and respond to the following prompts: “What role does social class play in the American Dream?” “What clues are present in the cartoon that help identify this family’s social class?” “What social class is Nick a member of? Gatsby?” As they complete their journal entries, students may go to the website <http://www.pbs.org/peoplelikeus/>. This website has stories which could also be used as examples leading up to interviews, games, and other resources that engage students in the issues of social mobility, class, and the American Dream.

(credit E3T, <http://macombschools.org/udl-e3t/LPC1PV.cfm?ID=590>)

25 minutes: The teacher will review the definition and purpose of a meme with examples provided. The students will go to the website <http://memecrunch.com/generator/> and generate their own memes relating to Gatsby, social class, and the American Dream. These memes will be counted towards participation and will be displayed in the class. As students are working the teacher will monitor and assist where needed.

35 minutes: Students will be directed to go the website <http://todaysmeet.com/> where a virtual chatroom titled “Gatsby’s Party” will be set up. The teacher will randomly assign each student as either a “West Egg”, an “East Egg”, or a “Nick’s Egg”. The teacher will explain the students are supposed to react to the scene we will watch as a party guest from one of these three different social standings. The teacher will play a clip from the movie of the party scene from chapter 3 of the novel. With no talking, students will virtually dialogue in their role from a first person point of view. The transcript can be printed and used to facilitate discussions in class.

Homework

Finish reading chapters 6 and 7 of the text

Day 9 (Thursday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups.

40 minutes: The class will listen to the YouTube audio version of chapters 8 and 9 of *The Great Gatsby*.

30 minutes: To facilitate a student-generated whole class discussion the teacher will review items from yesterday’s transcript. The teacher will introduce the idea of a ‘Talk Show Format’, encouraging students to “combine their parodic skills with their insights about literature to pose questions, play roles of characters who might visit the show, and perhaps invent new roles” (Smagorinsky, 2008). Our guests will be James Gatsby and Willie Loman. The students will interview the guests with a focus upon the American Dream gone wrong. The teacher will provide the following prompts to get started: Which dreams are realistic and which are unrealistic? What happens when a

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dream is not realized? What determines whether or not a dream is fulfilled? How does a person cope with dreams that are not achieved? (*National Endowment for the Arts: The Great Gatsby*)

15 minutes: Students will be given time to record their thoughts and reactions to the Talk Show in their journals.

Day 10 (Friday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups. Teacher will collect journals.

25 minutes: Students will share their items and narratives for the multi-genre project within small groups and respond using the **PEAP** process. The teacher will monitor discussions to assist with participation and collect narratives when finished. The teacher will pass out last week's narrative.

60 minutes: The teacher will review the directions for a "Freeze Frame" activity. Each small group will then have 15 minutes in which to select an event or scene from the novel, decide why they think it is important, and design a new setting, title, and interpretation for that scene. Each group will then present their freeze frame to the class, whose job it is to figure out which part of the novel they are interpreting. The groups will then explain their decisions. The goal is to stimulate further student led class discussion (*Smagorinsky, 2008*)

Homework

We are going to have class time on Monday to work on the Multi-Genre Projects. Students will be reminded that they can bring in any pieces they may have forgotten for credit as well as work on their narratives. The teacher will also email students over the weekend.

Week 3 _____

Day 11 (Monday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will be assigned to new small groups to vary classroom organization. The teacher will distribute journals and the first two

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narratives from multi-genre project. These narratives will have comments to assist students as they begin to think about their final project.

25 minutes: Students may present late items for the multi-genre project to the teacher if needed. Students will be given time to revise their narratives and begin working on putting them together for the final paper. Students may also elect to read during this time.

60 minutes: The teacher will distribute markers and transparencies to each group and explain a ranking activity as follows: This activity requires students to assign a value for a specific trait to different characters and then plot the characters on a continuum. This will be a two stage ranking activity. We will be ranking the main characters from both “The Great Gatsby” and “Death of a Salesman” (Nick, Jay, Daisy, Tom, Jordan, Myrtle, Owl Eyes, Klipspringer, Meyer, Willie, Linda, Happy, Biff, Bernard, Howard, Uncle Ben) from most to least materialistic, then from most to least admirable. Each group will have the opportunity to share their transparencies with the class and discuss their own beliefs about materialistic values and how they correlate with what they find admirable. (Smagorinsky, 2008)

Day 12 (Tuesday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping

50 minutes: We will watch the first half of the movie “8 Mile” edited for language.

25 minutes: The teacher will use informal writing to facilitate a discussion surrounding success, social mobility, and social status. Students will be given 10 minutes to respond in their journals to the movie they have just watched with these topics in mind (success, social mobility, and social status). Then the teacher will ask for volunteers to use their writing to help generate discussion.

10 minutes: The teacher will distribute the lyrics to [“Loose Yourself”](#), [“Glory Days”](#), and [“The River”](#). The teacher will explain creating a storyboard as follows: a set of drawings outlining major events in sequence such as the scenes of a music video. Each storyboard should have between five and ten panels first drafted on paper then put on transparencies or created on the computer. The teacher will play the songs while students read lyrics until class ends. (Smagorinsky, 2008)

Homework

Review the songs and be prepared to create storyboards tomorrow. The students are allowed to bring in different lyrics that feature success and the American Dream. Remind students any songs they choose must be appropriate for school.

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Day 13 (Wednesday)

10 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups. The teacher will review storyboards again and provide the following questions for students to consider:

- * Should dreams be realistic?
- * What happens when a dream is not realized?
- * What images do the lyrics call up in your mind?
- * How could special effects be used to enhance the song's story?

10 minutes: Distribute materials (markers, transparencies, paper) Those in the class who want to work with multimedia/software will have access to computers either in class or through the media center.

70 minutes: Students will work in small groups preparing their storyboards for the rest of class for presentation tomorrow.

Homework

Prepare to present storyboards in class tomorrow

Day 14 (Thursday)

10 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups.

15 minutes: Groups will be given time to make any final additions to their presentations and prepare at least one discussion question for the audience.

5 minutes: Arrange seats in a round theatre format for watching presentations

55 minutes: Students will play their songs and present storyboards to class.

5 minutes: Put desks back in order. Remind students to bring in item and narrative for multi-genre project tomorrow and that journals will be collected

Homework

Bring multi-genre items and narrative to class

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Day 15 (Friday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups. Teacher will collect journals.

15 minutes: Students will share their items and narratives for the multi-genre project within small groups and respond using the **PEAP** process. The teacher will monitor discussions to assist with participation and collect narratives when finished. The teacher will pass out last week's narrative.

30 minutes: Class will watch the rest of "8 Mile".

20 minutes: Teacher will pass out "[Success is Counted Sweetest](#)" and "[The Road Not Taken](#)". The teacher will review the literary devices of imagery and meter. Students will be asked to write a short one paragraph interpretation of each poem as journal entries.

20 minutes: Teacher will review the literary devices of rhyme, alliteration, and imagery used in "[Loose Yourself](#)" and discuss how they contribute to the song by helping shape perceptions. Students will compare ideas about success from Dickinson, Frost, and Eminem. The teacher will play the YouTube video "Rhyme, Why Eminem is one of the Most Impressive lyricists ever" <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ooOL4T-BAg0>

Homework

Students will work at home on writing their own rap song lyrics. The focus of their pieces should be the American Dream. They should be prepared to share their work with the class on Monday.

Week 4 _____

Day 16 (Monday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups

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25 minutes: Students will share their rap lyrics within their small groups. Each group will also have the opportunity to present one or more of their songs to the class. Students will add this assignment to their journals.

10 minutes: Teacher will play three [audio clips from “Success for Dummies”](#) by Zig Ziglar.

20 minutes: After listening to the audio clips students will each write a short one paragraph summary of what how they believe Zigler would define success. These responses will be first shared in small groups. Each group should compile a summary to share with the class.

10 minutes: Teacher will review the primary traits of an extended definition as follows:

- 1) *introduction - clear overview of your definition*
- 2) *criteria - rules that support what your definition is and is not*
- 3) *examples - illustrations that match your criteria*
- 4) *contrasting examples - examples that superficially appear to meet the criterion but fail in some critical way*
- 5) *warrants - explain how examples meet the criteria and contrasting examples do not*
- 6) *counterargument - rebuttal in which you defend your position; 6) grammar - correct conventions of writing should be adhered to*

The teacher will review that students need an attention grabber and a clear thesis that defines their beliefs/criteria (they need at least three) for success. (*Smagorinsky, 2008*)

20 minutes: Students will use their journals and notes to begin working on an introduction for their final essays.

Day 17 (Tuesday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups

50 minutes: Pass out list of quotes from [“Seven Habits of Highly Effective People”](#) and give students time to read over them. Each small group will then select three quotes that they believe would have helped Willie Loman and three quotes that they believe would have helped Jay Gatsby. They should discuss their reasons together and then defend their selections to the class. Students may use some of this time to work in their journals.

15 minutes: The teacher will provide examples on the white board of criterion, example, contrasting example, and warrant and review with whole class. Teacher will invite discussion in which students identify examples from our interactions with the texts.

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20 minutes: Students will continue working on their extended definition essays. Teacher will monitor and assist when needed.

Day 18 (Wednesday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping

30 minutes: The class will walk to the media center and select books for independent reading. Free time to read after they have selected their book. While students are reading the classroom will be arranged as a mock court and the teacher will divide the class as follows: There will be on judge, two District Attorneys, and two lawyers for the defense. Daisy Buchanan Meyer Wolfsheim will be witnesses for the defense, and Tom Buchanan and George Wilson will be witnesses for the prosecution. Nick Carraway and Owl Eyes will be undecided. The rest of the class will act as jurors.

10 minutes: Class will return from the media center. The teacher will describe Putting a Character on Trial as follows: We are imagining that instead of Gatsby being killed, he was accused by Wilson of murder, arrested, and put on trial. While Daisy is under oath, she can not admit to driving the car. Lawyers should meet briefly with the witnesses and prepare for trial. The class should keep in mind what factors might help or hurt the accused: Wealth, social standing, appearances...

30 minutes: Jay Gatsby on trial

15 minutes: Class discussion on the verdict. Facilitate a tough talk on the moral and philosophical debates surrounding our justice system today and how social standing and money can effect the outcome.

Day 19 (Thursday)

10 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Teacher will review the rubric and criteria for [extended definition essays](#) that are due at the end of next week.

80 minutes: Students will use the rest of class today to work on their essays.

Homework

Remind students that journals and multi-genre piece are due tomorrow. We will also spend time working on multi-genre narratives and presentations in class, so students should bring any materials they may need.

Day 20 (Friday)

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5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups. Teacher will collect journals.

25 minutes: Students will share their items and narratives for the multi-genre project within small groups and respond using the **PEAP** process. The teacher will monitor discussions to assist with participation and collect narratives when finished. The teacher will pass out last week's narrative.

30 minutes: Students may work independently on narratives and presentations.

30 minutes: The teacher will use the [vocabulary list](#) from "The Great Gatsby" for a Jeopardy Trivia Game. Students will compete in small groups for prizes. The teacher will conclude by asking how the students felt when they were successful, and why were they successful.

Homework

A hard copy rough draft of final essays will be due in class on Monday for peer review. The last item and narrative for the multi-genre projects will be due on Monday as well. We will have time in class to work on the final narrative and presentations.

Week 5 _____

Day 21 (Monday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups

40 minutes: Students will share their items and narratives for the multi-genre project within small groups and respond using the **PEAP** process. Students will also work on their final narrative and presentations during this time. The teacher will monitor discussions to assist with participation. The teacher will pass out last week's narrative.

40 minutes: Students will partner with one another in small groups for peer review and editing of extended definition essays. Students may continue working on their essays when they complete the peer review.

5 minutes: Teacher will review schedule for multi-genre presentations

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Day 22 (Tuesday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Arrange classroom for viewing presentations.

85 minutes: Presentations. Each presentation should be approximately ten minutes long. This time includes any questions the teacher or fellow students have for the presenter. Roughly eight students should present per class period. The students should share their individual pieces, their final presentation, and explain their thread of the project. The students should also explain how their perceptions of success and the American Dream evolved over the course of the unit.

Day 23 (Wednesday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Arrange classroom for viewing presentations.

85 minutes: Presentations. Each presentation should be approximately ten minutes long. This time includes any questions the teacher or fellow students have for the presenter. Roughly eight students should present per class period. The students should share their individual pieces, their final presentation, and explain their thread of the project. The students should also explain how their perceptions of success and the American Dream evolved over the course of the unit.

Day 24 (Thursday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Arrange classroom for viewing presentations.

85 minutes: Presentations. Each presentation should be approximately ten minutes long. This time includes any questions the teacher or fellow students have for the presenter. Roughly eight students should present per class period. The students should share their individual pieces, their final presentation, and explain their thread of the project. The students should also explain how their perceptions of success and the American Dream evolved over the course of the unit.

Day 25 (Friday)

5 minutes: Attendance/Housekeeping - Students will sit in small groups. Time will be allotted for any presentation in case someone went over time.

The Rest of Class: [Fun trivia](#): Small groups will compete to answer trivia questions on interesting questions, facts, and information on the American Dream. Prizes are left up to the teacher.

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Appendix

Praise, Express, Address, Press

Praise

Praise is a request by writers to have their work only looked at for positive feedback. Responders give specific feedback on what they liked or thought was strong about the writing.

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Express

Express is a request by writers to have the content of their work responded to. Responders have a dialogue with what is being said rather than how it was said.

Address

Address is a request by writers to have some aspect of their work brought into focus. Responders are asked to focus on things like detail, sentence structure, tone, etc. and they keep their comments directed to just the specified area(s) the writers have requested.

Press

Press is a request by writers to have their work brought into critique. Responders raise questions and cite passages where the writing is unclear, vague, or not focused. A “press” could include everything from word choice to larger issues such as voice, organization, and the like, as well as praise.

(Process adopted from Bob Fecho: <https://sites.google.com/site/lled7420f12/home/resources/beap>)

Opinionaire

Below are some statements that relate to the Unit we are about to begin on “Perceptions of Success”. Circle the answer that BEST fits how you feel. We will discuss these answers as a group, so be prepared to defend your opinions. (credit Blanton, Williams, and Wicker Unit “The American Dream”)

1. Those who try hard enough can achieve whatever they want in life.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree StronglyDisagree

2. We all have the same chances to succeed in America.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree StronglyDisagree

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3. In today's business world, women have the same opportunities for income and advancement that a man does.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
4. Doing well in school is an important thing if you want to succeed in life.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
5. Achieving the American Dream means making a lot of money.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
6. If you are loved and supported you are successful.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
7. Having a family should be an important part of anyone's idea of the American Dream.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
8. If you dress for success, you will be successful.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
9. You are successful if you take care of your family.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree
10. Success is just a matter of perception.
Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

Scenario

Read the following scenario and answer the questions below. We will discuss your ideas as a group, so be prepared to defend your answers.

Willie is 60 years old. He has a loving wife and two sons. He has been a salesman for all of his career. Willy has always believed the goal of life is to be well liked and gain material success like his brother; however, he has realized at the end of his career that he is not popular, well liked, or even good at his job. He believed wholeheartedly in the American Dream of easy success and wealth, but he never achieved it.

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How do you feel about Willie's interpretation of the American Dream and easy success?

What do you believe defines success?

Which do you believe is more important when considering success, material wealth or being well liked? Why?

The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim
Because it was grassy and wanted wear,
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

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And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I marked the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

by: Robert Frost

Success is Counted Sweetest

Success is counted sweetest
By those who ne'er succeed.
To comprehend a nectar
Requires sorest need.

Not one of all the purple Host
Who took the Flag today
Can tell the definition
So clear of Victory

As he defeated--dying--
On whose forbidden ear

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The distant strains of triumph
Burst agonized and clear!

by: Emily Dickinson

Bruce Springsteen Glory Days Lyrics

I had a friend was a big baseball player
Back in high school
He could throw that speedball by you
Make you look like a fool boy
Saw him the other night at this roadside bar
I was walking in, he was walking out
We went back inside sat down had a few drinks
But all he kept talking about was

Chorus:
Glory days well they'll pass you by
Glory days in the wink of a young girl's eye
Glory days, glory days

Well there's a girl that lives up the block
Back in school she could turn all the boy's heads

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Sometimes on a friday i'll stop by
And have a few drinks after she put her kids to bed
Her and her husband bobby well they split up
I guess it's two years gone by now
We just sit around talking about the old times,
She says when she feels like crying
She starts laughing thinking about

My old man worked 20 years on the line
And they let him go
Now everywhere he goes out looking for work
They just tell him that he's too old
I was 9 nine years old and he was working at the
Metuchen ford plant assembly line
Now he just sits on a stool down at the legion hall
But i can tell what's on his mind

Glory days yeah goin back
Glory days aw he ain't never had
Glory days, glory days

Now i think i'm going down to the well tonight
And i'm going to drink till i get my fill
And i hope when i get old i don't sit around thinking about it
But i probably will
Yeah, just sitting back trying to recapture
A little of the glory of, well time slips away
And leaves you with nothing mister but
Boring stories of glory days

EMINEM - LOSE YOURSELF LYRICS

Look, if you had, one shot, or one opportunity
To seize everything you ever wanted, one moment
Would you capture it?
Or just let it slip, yo

His palms are sweaty, knees weak, arms are heavy
There's vomit on his sweater already, mom's spaghetti
He's nervous, but on the surface he looks calm and ready
To drop bombs, but he keeps on forgetting
What he wrote down, the whole crowd goes so loud
He opens his mouth, but the words won't come out
He's chokin' how, everybody's chokin' now
The clock's run out, times up, over, blow!

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Snap, back to reality, oh, there goes gravity
Oh, there goes Rabbit he choked, he's so mad but he won't
Give up that easy, no, he won't have it he knows
His whole back's to these ropes, it don't matter he's dope
He knows that but he's broke, he so stagnant he knows
When he goes back to his mobile home, that's when it's
Back to the lab again, yo
This whole rhapsody better go capture this moment
And hope it don't pass him

You better lose yourself in the music
The moment, you own it, you better never let it go
You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime, yo

You better lose yourself in the music
The moment, you own it, you better never let it go
You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime, yo

His soul's escaping, through this hole that is gaping
This world is mine for the taking, make me king
As we move toward a new world order, a normal life is boring
But superstardom's close to post mortem
It only grows harder, only grows hotter
He blows it's all over, these h**s is all on him
Coast to coast shows, he's known as the Globetrotter lonely roads

God only knows he's grown farther from home, he's no father
He goes home and barely knows his own daughter
But hold your nose cuz here goes the cold water
These h**s don't want him no mo', he's cold product
They moved on to the next schmoe who flows
He nose dove and sold nada, so the soap opera is told it unfolds
I suppose it's old partna, but the beat goes on
Da da dum, da dum da da da da

You better lose yourself in the music
The moment, you own it, you better never let it go
You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime, yo

You better lose yourself in the music
The moment, you own it, you better never let it go

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You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime, yo

No more games, I'ma change what you call rage
Tear this mothaf****n' roof off like two dogs caged
I was playin' in the beginning, the mood all changed
I been chewed up and spit out and booed off stage
But I kept rhymin' and stepped, writin' the next cipher
Best believe somebody's payin' the pied piper
All the pain inside amplified by the fact
That I can't get by with my 9 to 5

And I can't provide the right type of life for my family
Cuz man, these *** damn food stamps don't buy diapers
And it's no movie, there's no Mekhi Phifer, this is my life
And these times are so hard and it's getting even harder
Tryin' to feed and water my seed, plus teeter-totter
Caught up between bein' a father and a prima donna
Baby mama drama's screamin' on and too much for me to wanna

Stay in one spot, another day of monotony's
Gotten me to the point I'm like a snail
I've got to formulate a plot or end up in jail or shot
Success is my only mothaf****n' option, failure's not
Mom, I love you, but this trailer's got to go
I cannot grow old in Salem's lot, so here I go it's my shot
Feet fail me not, this may be the only opportunity that I got

You better lose yourself in the music
The moment, you own it, you better never let it go
You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime, yo

You better lose yourself in the music
The moment, you own it, you better never let it go
You only get one shot, do not miss your chance to blow
This opportunity comes once in a lifetime, yo
You better

You can do anything you set your mind to, man

Bruce Springsteen The River Lyrics

I come from down in the valley where mister when you're young
They bring you up to do like your daddy done
Me and mary we met in high school when she was just seventeen
Wed ride out of that valley down to where the fields were green

Wed go down to the river
And into the river wed dive
Oh down to the river wed ride

Then I got mary pregnant and man that was all she wrote
And for my nineteen birthday I got a union card and a wedding coat
We went down to the courthouse and the judge put it all to rest

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No wedding day smiles no walk down the aisle
No flowers no wedding dress
That night we went down to the river
And into the river wed dive
On down to the river we did ride

I got a job working construction for the Johnstown company
But lately there aint been much work on account of the economy
Now all them things that seemed so important
Well mister they vanished right into the air
Now I just act like I don't remember, Mary acts like she don't care
But I remember us riding in my brother's car
Her body tan and wet down at the reservoir
At night on them banks I'd lie awake
And pull her close just to feel each breath she'd take
Now those memories come back to haunt me, they haunt me like a curse
Is a dream a lie if it don't come true
Or is it something worse that sends me
Down to the river though I know the river is dry
Down to the river, my baby and I
Oh down to the river we ride