Background and Rationale:

The American Dream is an American social ideal which accentuates egalitarianism, the opportunity for material prosperity, and the idea that success and upward social mobility can be achieved through hard work. As a national ethos, the American Dream must be ingrained in most of the people living on the land of the United States. Everyone has their own version of American Dream, even for those immigrants who may have just arrived in this country and hold an optimistic expectation for a better life. Winter Dreams by F. Scott Fitzgerald is a masterpiece and a short story which eloquently depicts the destructive nature of the American Dream and the Roaring Twenties, a time of hedonism for the rich. By exploring the themes and characters in Winter Dreams, students will gain a deeper understanding of Fitzgerald’s satire of materialism and the striking contrast between reality and idealism. Finally, they will start to think about their own American Dreams and how the story of Winter Dreams changes their perception of themselves and the society. Furthermore, because of its parallels with The Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s greatest accomplishment, Winter Dreams serves as a perfect introduction to this novel and stimulation for students to read more about literatures on American history.

Context:

45min 9th Grade English Language Arts Session

NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

11. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.

Content and Language Objectives:

Students will ...
✓ Analyze *Winter Dreams* for what is suggested about the historical period in which it was written

✓ Analyze literary elements, including setting, plot, theme, and characters (e.g. Dexter and Judy)

✓ Comprehend figurative language (metaphors and similes) in the text

**Plan for Instruction**

1. **Hook Activity** (15 min):
   1) Ask each student to quickly write down their own definition of the American Dream on a small sheet of paper, collect them, and share with the whole class. While the teacher is reading those definitions, let students think about how others’ interpretation is similar with and different from their own. Then, ask several students to give their evaluation of others’ definitions. The teacher should pay more attention to the ELL students and encourage them to share their thoughts on the topic. (After class, the teacher will upload students’ definitions of the American Dream onto the class blog for students to return to their own definitions after they finish *Winter Dreams* and see if their opinions have changed. They will be required to leave a comment, writing about how the text influences them.)
   2) The teacher will briefly introduce the author of *Winter Dreams*- F. Scott Fitzgerald, using the author’s career timeline found online ([http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/database/fitzgerald_f_timeline_flash.html](http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanmasters/database/fitzgerald_f_timeline_flash.html)). Then, in order to build students’ background knowledge, the class will watch a clip of a documentary on Fitzgerald whose life path was quite similar to the character created by him ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCWCcU8VNVw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wCWCcU8VNVw)).

2. **Silent Reading** (8 min)
   Students read the first chapter of *Winter Dreams* silently and independently, sitting in their heterogeneous discussion groups of four. A box filled with small pieces of paper (“hints”) with key vocabulary definitions, text-related pictures, essential questions, and useful tips for understanding and problem-solving on them will be placed at the center of each group table. Students each will pick up several hints from the box and start reading. During their reading, they should write down their questions about the text in notebooks and highlight the words that they think important and that they don’t know.

   Essential Questions:
   1) What is the significance of the title? Why do you think Fitzgerald used “winter” in the title?
   (Tips for this question: a. think about the feelings that winter evokes in you; b. find the depiction of winter in the text and pay attention to the use of similes)
   2) Describe Judy Jones at the age of eleven. How do you feel about her treatment of the nurse?
   (Tips: Notice that Dexter paused when he was telling Mr. Jones why he quit)
   3) Why do you think Dexter quit?
   (Tips: Notice that Dexter paused when he was telling Mr. Jones why he quit)
   4) Discuss the significance of this line: “… Dexter was unconsciously dictated to by his
winter dreams”. What do you think Dexter’s winter dreams are? 
(Tips: a. Find the paragraph that Dexter imagine himself defeating Mr. Hedrick b. Find Dexter’s reactions when he saw Judy)

3. Small Group Activity—“We are on the same boat” (15 min)
Since each student has only several hints in his/her hands, which might not be enough for them to “survive” the text, they need help from other group members and face the challenges together. Students will share their own questions about the text first. When they have any questions regarding certain words, the ones with the hints to solve the questions should share them. Then, they will discuss the essential questions, using the tips if necessary. After their discussion, each group will report their answers in front of the class. The teacher will write the key words in their answers on the board and look at them with the whole class.

4. Exit Ticket: Read and Response (7 min)
Students will read the first five paragraphs of Chapter 2, Winter Dreams and write a short response. In the response, they must do one of the following: 
(1) Compare Dexter’s winter dreams with your American Dreams;
(2) Was Dexter truly happy when he made lots of money and played golf with Mr. Hedrick? Use evidence from the text to prove your point of view.
After they finish their responses, they will exchange their writing with a partner and write down comment for each other. Later, the teacher will collect their responses.

5. Projects
(1) individual project: Create a page for Dexter on Fakebook. When students are creating Dexter’s profile, they will notice that the short story is an emotional history of Dexter rather than his biography and that Fitzgerald’s writing focuses on only several significant events that shape Dexter’s winter dreams and cause his emotional traumas.
(2) small-group project: Select songs and create a soundtrack for Winter Dreams.

Assessment:
Assessment evidence include: (1) the questions that students write down in their notebooks; (2) students’ performance in group discussions; (3) students’ answers to essential questions; (4) students’ reading response at the end of the lesson; (5) Projects.
I will pay close attention to the performance of ELL students in group discussions, because their way of thinking may be much different from their English-speaking peers, thus, their thoughts and opinions will probably bring about new perspectives of interpreting the text, which may benefit everyone in the classroom.

Material and Resources:
Copies of the first two chapters of Winter Dreams by F. Scott Fitzgerald
Resources online: Fitzgerald’s career timeline, American Masters documentary on F. Scott Fitzgerald
Introducing the Concept of Satire

*Shrek* by DreamWorks

**Background and Rationale:**

Satire is a literature genre widely used in print and non-print texts, with main purposes of social criticism and cultural critique. Understanding the concept of satire helps students become active and critical readers and improves their interpretation of the self and the world and their sensitivity to power and ideology. *Shrek* (2001) by DreamWorks is a reivisionist fairy tale film which recombines and satirizes typical fairy tales, including *Snow White*, *Robin Hood*, *The Three Little Pigs*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, *The Gingerbread Man*, etc. Featuring a hideous green monster as the hero, *Shrek* hilariously retells the story of *Beauty and the Beast* as well as revives and inverts people’s childhood memories of fairy tales. Furthermore, using this animation film to teach satire can truly engage adolescents who immerse themselves in multimodal texts in pop culture, seeking pleasure and enriching their literate lives.

**Context:**

45min 7th grade English Language Art session

**NCTE/IRA Standards for the English Language Arts**

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound–letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

**Content and Language Objectives:**

Students will...

✓ Understand the concept of satire

✓ Identify the satirical elements in *Shrek* by contrasting the characters and plots of it with typical fairy tales
Plan for Instruction:

1. Before Class:
   Students will be heterogeneously grouped and each group will include at least one ELL student. The teacher will give each group a list of fairy tales and ask students to find these tales on the Internet or in the school library and bring them to the next class. As for the ELL students, the teacher will meet with them in a group to get to know their prior knowledge about fairy tales from the Western culture and their own culture, and encourage them to translate fairy tales from their home culture and bring them to the next class.

2. Hook Activity (10 min):
   Students will look at the fairy tales they bring to class within their small groups, brainstorm the universally common elements in fairy tales across cultures, which include plot, theme, setting, and stereotypical characters, and fill in the left column of the Fairy Tales vs. Shrek chart (See Appendix). After their discussion, each group will report their findings and the teacher will record them on the board.

3. Watch and Discuss (20 min):
   The teacher will briefly introduce the plot of Shrek and show the students the following clips from the movie:
   (1) Shrek breaks into the highest room in the tower to rescue Princess Fiona (35:10-37:22)
   (2) Princess Fiona realizes that the knight who rescues her is an ogre (40:15-44:18)
   (3) Talk between Shrek and Donkey: people judge you before they even know you (46:00-47:54)
   (4) Shrek barges in Princess Fiona and Lord Farquaad’s wedding (76:10-80:50)
   While students are watching the clips, they should pay attention to the common elements that Shrek share with typical fairy tales and the differences between them. Later, they will share their observations within their small groups and complete the Fairy Tales vs. Shrek chart with their group members. While students are having their discussions, the teacher will show some of the significant lines in the movie script on the PowerPoint to help students recall what they have just seen in the clips and facilitate their discussion.

4. Introduce the Concept (8 min):
   The teacher will discuss the Fairy Tales vs. Shrek chart with the class as a whole and introduce the concept of satire - a literary work that ridicules its subject in order to make a comment or criticism about it. The discussion on satire should focus on the reversal of plot and stereotypical fairy tale characters, effects of humor, and the concept of beauty and ugliness.

5. Prepare to create your own satire of fairy tales (7 min)
Students will choose one or several fairy tales as the base of their creative writing and use the amount of time given to them to work out an outline for their satires of fairy tales. Students can either work independently or collaborate with a partner (shared writing). The teacher should encourage the ELL students to incorporate unique elements from their culture into their stories. After the class, students will hand in their outlines, which should include the fairy tales chosen as the base, how they will remold the original characters, and a short summary of the design of plot.

**Assessment:**

Evidence: (1) Fairy Tales vs. Shrek chart; (2) Students’ performance in group and class discussions; (3) Outlines of fairy tale satires.

I will use the Rubric for a Narrative Writing Piece (http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson116/NarrativeRubric.pdf) to grade students’ adapted fairy tales. For students who choose shared writing, I will let them write a reflection on their pair work to see whether they are taking responsibilities and what they gain from collaborative work.

**Resources and Preparation:**

*Shrek* on DVD

Copies of *Fairy Tales vs. Shrek* chart

![Fairy Tales vs. Shrek Chart](image)
"Out of the Dust" by Karen Hesse

**Background and Rationale:**

The NCTE standards demands that students should read widely to develop an understanding of texts, self, and culture. As a powerful historical novel, *Out of the Dust* by Karen Hesse tells about the life and struggles of a young teenage girl named Billie Jo against the backdrop of the Dust Bowl and the Great Depression. It is not only a story about how extreme weather and disasters can destroy people’s homes and their hope but a story of forgiveness and healing of the soul. In addition, the unique structure of this novel, namely free verse, injects life into its language and adds to students’ understanding. The author, Karen Hesse, once said, "I never attempted to write this book any other way than in free verse". Indeed, the characteristics of poetic language, such as line breaks, repetition, metaphors, and similes, make reading experiences more vivid and help to build strong connections between readers and the text. Therefore, *Out of the Dust* is capable of engaging students and encouraging them to explore history through reading and even to use language in a creative way.

**Context:**

45 min 7th/8th Grade English Language Art Session

**NCTE/IRA Content Standards Addressed:**

1. Students read a wide range of print and nonprint texts to build an understanding of texts, of themselves, and of the cultures of the United States and the world; to acquire new information; to respond to the needs and demands of society and the workplace; and for personal fulfillment. Among these texts are fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary works.

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound–letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

6. Students apply knowledge of language structure, language conventions (e.g., spelling and punctuation), media techniques, figurative language, and genre to create, critique, and discuss print and nonprint texts.

10. Students whose first language is not English make use of their first language to develop competency in the English language arts and to develop understanding of content across the curriculum.

**Instructional Goals:**

Students will...

- Analyze the main characters in *Out of the Dust*: Billie Jo and her father
- Explore how the text reflects the themes of forgiveness and healing
Identify the characteristics of free verse poems, including its lack of musical pattern (i.e. free verse poems don't rhyme), word placement, repetition, similes, and metaphors

Understand how the structure of a specific genre (free verse) contributes to the expression of meaning

Plan for Instruction:

1. Hook Activity
   1) Each student will bring to class one photo he/she finds about the Great Depression or the Dust Bowl and share it within their small groups of three or four. This activity allows students to explore more about the setting and the historical context of the novel independently and broaden their understanding of these important facts by exchanging information with each other. After their small group discussions, students will stick their photos on a poster on the classroom wall and the whole class will look at them together to see: 1) Is there any photo that is chosen by more than one student? If so, ask students to explain why they choose that photo; 2) Which photo interests you? The students that bring those interesting photos will describe what is happening in the photos and how the photos might have helped them to understand something in the novel.
   2) The teacher will show the titles of the poems that the students will read today on the overhead projector and let the students predict what will happen next in the story based on these titles and what they have read previously.

2. Silent Reading and Discussion
   Students will be placed in heterogeneous groups in which group members vary according to language proficiency and background. After the teacher distribute worksheets which include key vocabulary (with L1 translation for ELL students), word definitions, and text-related pictures, the students will read the chapter Summer 1935 (p. 193-206) silently and independently, underlining their favorite lines, circling unfamiliar words, and questioning the text. After their reading, they will participate in group discussions, share their questions and favorite lines, and try to answer each other’s confusions. Later, each group will report their unsolved questions and the teacher will record them on the board.

3. Reading aloud and Raising Questions
   The teacher will show the essential questions concerning the chapter Summer 1935 on the overhead projector and read aloud the text to the students. This can not only model accurate and fluent reading but also give students the chance of going back to the text again, familiarizing themselves with the text, and finding answers to the questions raised by their peers and the teacher.
   Essential Questions:
   1) If you were Billie Jo, would you run away?
   2) Consider the poem Something Lost, Something Gained. What did Billie Jo lose and gain? How is the man she met on the train different from her father?
   3) Can you find the metaphors about Billie Jo’s mother and father? Why does Billie Jo
make such comparisons?

4. Numbered Heads Together
   Procedure (based on Dr. Pendergrass’ class materials):
   1) Think Time: Everyone thinks how to answer the question.
   2) Write Answer: Everyone privately writes his/her own answer on his/her own sheet of paper.
   3) Heads Together: Teammates share their answers and try to reach consensus (for Question 1, consensus is not necessary)
   4) Who Answers: Use a dice to decide who is the first student on each team to stand up and answer.
   5) Answer Question: Each standing student share the answer offered by his/her own team.
   This procedure will be repeated for each of the three essential questions. After students share all of their answers, the class as a whole will evaluate them together under the guidance of the teacher.

5. Exit Tickets:
   1) Students will continue to work on the Billie Jo’s Barometer (graphic organizer) which shows the character’s emotional changes throughout the book;
   2) Students will identify one of the following characters of poetic language in the text: line breaks, repetition, metaphor, and simile, and write down their analysis of its functions on a sheet of paper.

6. Projects
   Students can choose two projects from the following options:
   (1) Select their favorite lines and combine them with images;
   (2) ELL: translate their favorite lines into their home language;
   (3) Transcribe one piece of their narrative writing into free verse;
   (4) Transcribe texts written by other people, including fairy tales, short stories, part of a novel or film, etc. into free verse.

Assessment:

Evidence: (1) the text-related photos that students bring into class; (2) students’ performance in group and class discussions; (3) exit tickets; (4) projects

Materials and Resources:

Copies of Summer 1935 in Out of the Dust, Billie Jo’s Barometer (graphic organizer), blank sheets of paper
Appendix

(Title of the poem)
(words to describe Billie Jo’s emotion)

(what triggers the change?)

(what triggers the change?)

(what triggers the change?)