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GENDER ISSUES, CORE CURRICULUM, AND STATEWIDE
CONTENT STANDARDS

A Thesis

Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition:
English Literature

by

Scott Douglas Godwin

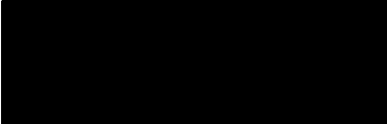
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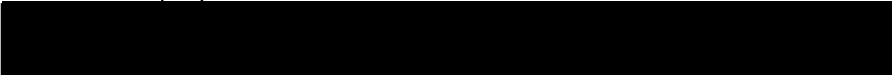
by
Scott Douglas Godwin
June 2002

Approved by:


Dr. Renée Pigeon, Chair, English


Date


Dr. Mary Boland


Dr. Rong Chen

ABSTRACT

This project is a discussion of the continuing need to address gender issues while teaching core curriculum in English classes at the secondary level. While works written by female authors do now appear on extended reading lists for many districts, educators still need to make a concerted effort to address gender issues in their classrooms. Statewide content standards, such as those imposed by the State of California upon every public school, are broad enough to address issues of gender if the educator so desires. In this study, the pedagogical history of high school English is reviewed, including overviews of the Phonics, "look-say," and Whole Language approaches, as well as the historical, New Critical, and Reader Response schools of literary analysis. Three works are used to represent core, required reading in American Literature classes: *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Crucible*, and *The Great Gatsby*. Five high school English teachers are interviewed regarding the topics covered and strategies used when teaching these three works. Nine novel guides (three for each work) are also reviewed to establish the dominant topics and techniques suggested for teaching these pieces. Based on these studies, gender issues appear to be

underrepresented at best. The statewide content standards for reading are then summarized and applied to the pedagogical techniques of the teachers interviewed and the strategies suggested by the nine novel guides. The project concludes with analyses of all three works, concentrating on issues of gender and ways of meeting the content standards for the State of California.

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CHAPTER ONE
FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH

Need to Address Gender

English class in high school is a place few of us will ever forget. In my case, it was a class which prompted me to consider ideas I normally would never have thought about while being exposed to some of the greatest works I have ever read. For others, it was a daily torture chamber in which boring, inaccessible material was shoved down their throats, followed by pointless, difficult essays that were brutally corrected and again shoved down their throats. In either case, the literature we read seldom related to our own lives and, if it did, it usually required some explaining by the teacher. Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky had something to say to me, but I could not always explain what it was on my own. I simply enjoyed language, the art of storytelling, and thinking about things foreign to my adolescent world. This was in the mid-1980s, and since I became an English teacher in 1993, core curricula of districts have undergone significant changes. In Riverside Unified School District, where I have been employed for the past nine years, works written in the recently completed

century, by authors who are still living, have become required reading as of 1994. Issues of racism and injustice are often the main ideas of the works being taught. Unfortunately, as has been the case since the beginning of compulsory education at the secondary level, gender issues are not sufficiently addressed in the teaching of core curriculum.

Whether the texts themselves minimize women or whether teachers are missing opportunities to address gender issues, the result is detrimental to students. Because of the dominance of the Whole Language Approach in the 1990s, which emphasized "acceptance of all learners, cultures and the experiences they bring to education" (NCTE), students were exposed more frequently to works dealing with feminine protagonists and the struggles of women. However, with the current emphasis on statewide content standards and standardized testing, it is essential that teachers address issues of gender within the confines of the standards. The consequences of ignoring or minimizing gender issues may include female students who see traditional portrayals of passive, domesticated women as the norm and male students who assimilate these views after seeing uncritical acceptance of these models by their teachers. Lower self-

esteem, lower achievement, and possibly a decreased interest in attending a university on the part of female students are all possible side-effects (Fine 96).

Fortunately, the goals proposed by feminist theorists and researchers can be achieved by addressing gender within the framework of the "standards and benchmarks" California teachers are required to follow.

Pedagogical History

Literary study at the secondary level has followed the trends of both literary criticism and reading pedagogy.

To begin to understand literature, students must be effective readers. Since the beginning of mass schooling in the mid-nineteenth century, the traditional approach to teaching reading has been to teach children to associate sounds with the individual letters that make up words, an approach now more commonly known as "Phonics" (Gale 1).

Students learn the smaller components of language before they move on to the larger; decoding first, understanding later. By the time they reach high school, ideally, students should have little problem decoding and can engage in literary analysis. Through the end of the nineteenth century and into the first half of the

twentieth, students were exposed to classic pieces of literature, (the proverbial "canon"), given the historical context of the work, biographical information about the author, and taught the methods most useful in discovering the author's intent (Sheridan 4).

In the middle part of the century, the traditional approach to reading was challenged as were the standard methods of literary criticism. For approximately 30 years, between 1940 and 1970, the "look-say" reading method, which focuses on the memorization of sight words, was widespread (Cromwell 2). The attempt to make reading less tedious, with more emphasis on context, coincided with the advent of New Criticism. Instead of being fed background and worrying about author's intent, students were taught to "closely read" texts, viewing them as "objective entities" (Zancanella 292). With the help of the teacher, students could engage in objective analysis and discover the "proper" interpretation of the work.

Although phonics enjoyed a resurgence in popularity in the 1970s, it was the emergence of the Whole Language Approach in conjunction with the Reader-Response school of literary criticism that revolutionized the teaching of literature at the secondary level. Louise Rosenblatt, in

1966, published an essay in *English Journal* entitled "A Performing Art" which was a precursor to the "reader-response" approach to literature. In it, Rosenblatt challenged the New Critics who disregarded author and reader, setting a piece of literature up as an "objective reality." She called for students to become personally involved in the literature; to relate works and themes of works to their own lives. In their responses to texts, students need simply to justify their opinion with evidence from the text (Rosenblatt 31-32). In short, literature was supposed to "become an event in the life of each reader as he or she recreates it" (31).

In the 1980s, concepts and methods made popular by reader-response critics began to dominate the teaching of literature at the secondary level. Teachers were encouraged to do whatever necessary to involve their students personally with the literature (Sheridan 32). Whatever past experiences or knowledge the student possessed was to be used in his or her "recreation" of the text into a relevant piece of his or her life. The teacher's job was to help the student develop his or her own reading of the text instead of arriving at "the meaning" as explained by a teacher's guide, the teacher,

or even the author (32). This shift of emphasis away from the teacher and toward the reader was designed to actively involve the student in a piece of literature instead of treating him or her as an empty vessel waiting to be filled with the "truth" as determined by someone other than himself or herself.

This attempt to bring the student closer to what he or she is reading was manifested in the Whole Language Approach to reading and the teaching of reading.

Proponents of whole language believe that, if children are immersed in a print-rich environment from an early age, reading and writing will develop naturally (Gale 1). In contrast to phonics-based programs, the whole language method emphasizes whole-word recognition skills instead of sound-letter associations (1). Teachers in kindergarten classrooms would often read aloud from oversized children books, pointing to each printed word as it was spoken, helping the students to learn to recognize whole words in context (1). Whole language proponents claimed that phonics made learning to read a chore instead of an enjoyable experience.

By 1987, a literature-based approach to the teaching of reading had been adopted by the state of California.

The goal, at the secondary level, was to provide students with interesting, comprehensible texts, and the job of the teacher was to help students read these texts and make them "comprehensible" (Krashen 1). Direct teaching of skills was only required if it aided in the student's "comprehension" of the text (1). Correct spelling and grammar were not as important as problem-solving, critical thinking, authenticity, personalized learning, and developing a love of literature (3).

It was during this era that gender issues started to take center stage at the university level. Feminist educational theory of the 1970s began to make a difference to educational practice (McLeod 15). The goal of feminist educational reforms was to reform gender identities and scrutinize the patterns of traditional sexist socialization (2). Schools were supposed to create an atmosphere in which the making of new identities could be facilitated (5). In the 1960s and 1970s, attention of educators was increasingly called to the way women were portrayed in textbooks, predominantly as housewives or in the few traditional female occupations - nurse, teacher, secretary (Hamlin 49). On the whole, women and girls were most frequently shown in passive, subservient roles (49).

These reformers asserted that by presenting only persons in traditional roles in reading materials, we as educators limit role models and present students with an inaccurate concept of humanity (Sheridan 14). As Michelle Fine explained in her 1993 essay "Sexuality, Schooling and Adolescent Females: The Missing Discourse of Desire," traditional methods of "what it means to be a woman-- remaining subordinate, dependent, self-sacrificing, compliant, ready to marry, bear children-- are hazardous to the economic, social, educational, and sexual development of young women" (98). The goal of education should then be to contradict pupils' sexist perceptions, call into question their validity, and institute equal and fairer educational practices (McLeod 12). Goals outlined by Virginia Woolf in 1938 in her "Three-Step Passage for Daughters of Educated Men" became part of the agenda for feminist reformers: a university education and admission to the professional world, the power of independent opinion supported by independent income, and the creation of new words and methods to help men break the vicious cycle of domination and violence (Gilligan 147).

Though higher education incorporated a great deal of feminist educational reforms, secondary schools gave

them less attention (Carlson 30). Readers of the 1980s presented role models for children both through biographical material about authors from diverse backgrounds and through fiction written by authors from various ethnic groups (Hamlin 62). However, a survey of anthologies used in high school classrooms, conducted in 1986, revealed a strong predominance of male to female authors (Carlson 31). One example given by Margaret Carlson in her 1989 article "Guidelines for a Gender-Balanced Curriculum in English, Grades 7-12," was Harcourt's 1986 edition of *Adventures in American Literature*, which contained more than ninety selections by male authors compared to eight written by women (31).

As concerns raised by the feminist theorists seeped into pedagogical practices at the secondary level during the 1990s, and reader-response and Whole Language became entrenched as the acceptable methods of teaching English and literature, the core curricula of many districts throughout California began to manifest the change. The emphasis on personal interpretation of literature led to the revamping of many districts' core curriculum in an attempt to provide texts that related more directly to students' lives. In my district, in tenth grade World

Literature, teachers could choose to teach Amy Tan's *Joy Luck Club* or Victor Villasenor's *Rain of Gold* instead of the standard *Lord of the Flies* or *All Quiet on the Western Front*. In eleventh grade American literature, Walker's *The Color Purple* or Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God* were acceptable substitutes for *The Scarlet Letter* or *The Great Gatsby*. Even at the ninth grade level, *Great Expectations* could be replaced by Sandra Cisneros' *House on Mango Street*. Naturally, these more relevant texts provided opportunities to discuss issues and consider perspectives that had not previously been addressed.

The 1990s was a time when many students were exposed to powerful literature by authors who were not only still living but had lived lives very similar to their own. One of the reasons I chose to become a high school English teacher in 1992 was the opportunity I had to teach literature that I loved to students who were willing to listen if I could somehow relate the material to their lives. However, the emphasis on personal interpretation and lack of emphasis on structure and rules had its consequences to which I now turn.

A New Era - Content Standards

In the 1990s, a "back to basics" movement in education cited lower reading scores among U.S. students as evidence that whole language was failing (Gale 2). The lack of emphasis on grammar and spelling in the lower grade levels followed students into middle school and high school and though the content of the writing might have been impressive, the mechanics and style were often embarrassingly flawed. Some claimed that children from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds were not being adequately served in whole language classrooms due to the lack of informal letter-sound instruction given by parents at home (Gale 2). Given the variations of teacher styles and approaches and the individual learning patterns of students, it was hard to document exactly what each student "learned" at each grade level. Education began to be used as a political tool, as evidenced by President George Bush's call, in April 1991, for the development of a system of national achievement tests (Zancanella 283), and American high schools, especially those in California, came under heavy scrutiny. As a result, the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and the International Reading Association (IRA) were

awarded federal contracts to develop "standards" for what students in English classes should know and be able to do (Burke 18). By 1998, English teachers in California public schools had a list of content standards and benchmarks to which they were held accountable. In the lower levels, mastering of letter sounds, shapes, and names have been incorporated as well as grammar and punctuation. At the secondary level, skills such as word analysis, vocabulary development, literary response and analysis, and reading comprehension have become the standards for teaching literature (CDE). (See Appendix A for Content Standards and Benchmarks) Standardized tests, namely the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT9) and the California High School Exit Exam (HSEE) have been established to judge the competence of students as well as teachers.

With the institution of statewide standards and standardized tests, it should not be said that Whole Language and reader-response concerns (feminist ones included) have been abandoned. Many of their objectives can be found in the standards as well as many emphasized in traditional, phonics-based approaches. What has happened, though, is that teachers and students are now

being judged by performance on standardized tests; tests which do not necessarily reflect the objectives of reader response critics, or Whole Language proponents. As a result, many of the instructional minutes in the classroom must be geared toward preparing students for these tests. If the gender implications of texts are to be addressed, it must be within the framework of the standards and in a way which will lead to positive results on the SAT 9 and the HSEE.

Although districts' core curricula offer more variety than ever before, the fact remains that there are only so many instructional minutes available to high school teachers (largely as a result of standardized testing given during the school year, such as the Golden State Exam, SAT 9, High School Exit Exam, and Advanced Placement Exams). Classics such as *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Crucible*, and *The Great Gatsby* are still staples and practical options for teachers because of the ancillary materials that most English departments undoubtedly possess: novel guides, standardized tests, and old units developed by faculty. These texts also contain a wealth of material that will be found on the SAT 9 and HSEE, and one can easily meet the statewide standards by teaching

them the way they have traditionally been taught. What I believe needs to happen is for canonized pieces such as these to be taught in a manner that covers the conventional topics and themes, fulfills statewide content standards, but also addresses issues of gender.

CHAPTER TWO
THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH
TO CORE CURRICULUM

Core Curriculum

Some may automatically assume that canonized works and issues of gender are philosophical adversaries, but that is simply not the case. Although standards like *The Scarlet Letter* may have been taught in a manner that has overlooked gender issues, the text itself is ripe with opportunities for discussion. In fact, most texts written by "white males," now deceased, portray women in ways that need to be discussed as we read these works in the twenty-first century. As the demands on teachers' instructional minutes increase, and the opportunities to cover novels or significant pieces of literature become fewer, there is no need to hold back or eliminate discussing topics dealing with gender. As beneficial as it is to have students read works written by women, the ideas these female authors propose can actually be found in many of the works written by their male predecessors.

American literature, in most districts throughout the state of California, is given a year of emphasis in the

high school English curriculum. Some districts, like Riverside Unified, call the class American Literature and Composition, while others simply designate English 2 or 3 as the year American literature is primarily covered. Since the time period is relatively short compared to other genres (World or English literature for example), a chronological approach is often taken by textbooks and individual teachers. Even if a thematic or topical approach is used, certain works will always be covered. For this study, I have chosen Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Miller's *The Crucible* and Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* as representations of canonized pieces of American literature that can be found on most districts' curriculum lists. Few would argue the importance of these works in relation to the history of American literature, and the wealth of instructional materials makes them a practical choice for many teachers. They are also used as referential texts for standardized tests like the SAT 9, SAT 1 and 2, and Advanced Placement. Furthermore, the manner in which women are portrayed in all three of these works provides a springboard for discussion of gender issues that some other "classics" may not.

Field Research

Throughout the years, the approaches to teaching these three works have undoubtedly varied, but certain topics and skills have remained constant. To ascertain just what these topics and skills were, I conducted interviews with five experienced high school English teachers, and consulted novel/play guides about all three works. During the interviews, I simply asked each teacher to explain to me which issues/areas he or she felt needed to be covered when teaching *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Crucible*, and *The Great Gatsby*, respectively. I made no mention of gender issues or standards, but simply let each teacher give his or her own philosophy as to how the work should be taught. My interviewees were: Jerry Stinson, a 15-year veteran of Poly High School and Arlington High School in Riverside, California; Carole Johnson, an 18-year veteran of Arlington who previously taught at Loma Linda University in California; Jeano Miller, a 30-year veteran of Chemawa Middle School and Arlington High in Riverside; Stephanie Nichayev, a sixth year teacher at Arlington; and Riley Shinefield, a veteran of 31 years at Arlington. Realizing that even the most experienced teachers sought pedagogical

advice from somewhere at some time, I obtained novel/play guides on each work; one batch of guides were published in the late 1980s and the other two groups in 2000.

The Scarlet Letter - Hawthorne

Due to its difficulty, some high school teachers are wary of teaching *The Scarlet Letter*. Those who teach Honors, Advanced Placement or who have confidence in their college preparatory students are the ones that normally embrace the challenge. Since my five interviewees all come from not only the same district but the same school, their approaches are not universal. However, since many of their strategies were also found in novel guides designed to aid adolescent readers in the comprehension and analysis of texts, I do believe they are representative. Tables 1 and 2 document the topics covered by the five teachers interviewed and the three novel guides, respectively.

Table 1. Scarlet Letter Feedback

Teacher	Irony	Vocab	Puritan beliefs	Symbols	Theme/Adultery	Role of Women	Hypocrisy
Stinson	X				X		X
Johnson	X	X		X	X	X	
Miller	X	X		X	X	X	
Nichayev		X	X		X		
Shinefield		X	X		X		X

Obviously, each teacher incorporates his or her own biases into teaching of the work. For example, Johnson and Miller usually teach Honors American Literature. In order to prepare students for the SAT 1 and 2, AP English exams and college English in general, they spend a significant amount of time on vocabulary and literary terms such as irony. Both of these teachers also have personal issues they like to address dealing with issues of gender. Miller was a civil rights activists who used to teach a "Women in Literature" class, and Johnson was involved in a relationship that was condemned by her religious circle and sympathizes with Hester's plight. The two of them both admitted that they probably teach the novel much differently from others. Stinson began his tenure in the early years of Whole Language, and has always taken a truly literature-based approach, encouraging students to "closely read" the text. He emphasizes setting, theme and characterization instead of literary terms and vocabulary. Both Nichayev and Shinefield had only taught the novel once and take a more historical, straightforward approach. Getting their students to simply understand the setting and language was their priority.

The topics covered by these five teachers and the techniques they employed can be found in the three novel guides I consulted: *Prentice-Hall's Novel Study Guide of The Scarlet Letter* from 1989, *A Teacher's Guide to The Scarlet Letter*, published in 2000 by Novel Units, Incorporated, and *Lesson Plans* found on teachervision.com.

Table 2. Scarlet Letter Novel Guides

Topics Covered	<u>Prentice-Hall</u>	<u>Novel Units, Inc.</u>	<u>Teachervisio</u> <u>on.com</u>
History	X	X	X
Study Questions	Recall, Interpreting, Summarizing	Critical thinking, recall	"Before, During, and After Reading" Activities
Vocabulary	Included with summaries of chapters	More extensive, lists covered 3 chapters at a time	No lists given
Characterization	X	More creative assignments	X
Grammar/Usage	X		
Literary Terms	X	X	X
Gender Issues		"Trial" of Hester, "T" Chart	Point of view assignments
Writing Topics	Imaginative, Rewriting from Dimmesdale's point of view, importance of symbols, portrayal of religion, Hawthorne's portrayal of New England, the supernatural, Relating The Custom House to novel.	Single motherhood, adultery, society vs. individual, first impressions, religious beliefs, character development, theme, symbolism, setting, Puritan beliefs	Based on various themes: alienation, appearance vs. reality, breaking society's rules. Also based on literary elements such as setting, characters, mood, symbolism, irony, and allusions.

All three novel guides cover similar subjects and seem to mirror the approaches of the five interviewees. The Prentice-Hall guide is a product of the Whole Language

Approach, most notably in the use of excerpts from the text itself to provide instruction in grammar. The writing topics are quite conventional and the New Criticism emphasis on "close reading" can be seen in the worksheets on literary terms and characterization. Gender issues, in this novel guide, are simply not addressed; not in study questions, worksheets, or writing topics. Novel Units, Inc.'s *Teacher Guide*, published in 2000, allows opportunities to explore gender, if the teacher is willing. It employs a Reader Response approach, encouraging the teacher to help students connect the text to their own lives. Writing topics dealing with more relevant issues are helpful, as are the more creative characterization assignments. A "T-Chart," or two-columned table, tracking the development of Hester throughout the novel could lead to discussions of gender, as could the suggested "trial" of Hester Prynne (complete with judge, jury, and lawyers). If a teacher is unwilling or uncomfortable with such an assignment, however, the opportunities to address gender are sparse. Of the ten suggested writing topics, only one relates to issues of gender, ("analyze how a main character overcomes his or her main problem") if the right character is chosen. The Teachervision.com guide explores a variety

of themes and literary elements. Lists of study questions and vocabulary words are not given, and the only opportunity to address gender issues comes by way of characterization of Hester, Pearl, or Mistress Hibbins.

The Crucible - Miller

I asked the same question, "When teaching *The Crucible*, which areas or issues do you feel you must cover?" to the same five teachers. Tables 3 and 4 show how the responses again seemed to mirror the topics emphasized in the novel guides.

Table 3. Crucible Feedback

Teacher	Theocracy	McCarthyism	Vengeance	Salem Trials	Hysteria	Characters	Gender Issues
Stinson	X	X	X	X			
Johnson	X	X		X			
Miller		X		X	X	X	
Nichayev	X	X	X	X			
Shinefield		X		X		X	

Although not often covered on the AP exam (Johnson and Miller have not taught the play in years), *The Crucible* is a standard for most eleventh grade classes because of its accessibility and historical basis. Usually taught early in the year, the play coincides with material many students are studying in U.S. History class and lends itself to a

historical approach. All five teachers that I interviewed said they covered the history of the Salem witch trials as well as the Communist "witch hunt" led by Senator Joseph McCarthy in the 1950s. Thematic issues like vengeance, mass hysteria, and integrity are also covered, but none of the teachers mentioned gender in their responses at all. The two novel guides again seem to act as a backdrop for the teachers' approaches.

Table 4. Crucible Novel Guides

Topics Covered	<u>Prentice Hall</u>	<u>Novel Units, Inc</u>	<u>Teachervision .com</u>
Character Description	X	X	X
History	X	X	X
Vocabulary	X	X	
Characterization	X	X	X
Mass hysteria		X	X
Gender issues	"Diary" of Abigail, Mary's development	Admiration scales, "motives" for characters	Analysis of Mary Warren, Abigail, Elizabeth
Writing Topics	Salem, John Proctor, Parris and Hale comparison, McCarthyism.	Dynamic/static character, character motives, Freedom and repression, jealousy, Puritan definition of "sin," integrity/theme, description	Community, Puritanism, Order vs. Individual freedom, irony, paradox, McCarthyism, modern relevance

All three novel guides emphasize historical background, characterization, and theme, but *Novel Units* again emphasized connections to students' lives and presented more creative assignments. The "T-Charts" and "Character Admiration Scales" presented new ways of covering characterization, but it was the Prentice-Hall guide that called for students to acknowledge a female character's point of view. By asking students to write pages from what they think Abigail's "diary" would have been, the guide necessitates consideration of gender issues. By getting into Abigail's mind, alternate explanations of the events of the play can be given. This assignment, as well as the "Character Admiration Scale" applied to the female characters, presents an opportunity to address issues of gender in the classroom. Teachervision.com's guide provides extensive study questions but most are designed to help students track the plot of the play. The writing assignments follow the various themes, and gender is only addressed indirectly through characterization assignments. Given the responses from the five interviewed teachers, it is quite possible to overlook gender with the wealth of more "conventional" assignments available.

The Great Gatsby - Fitzgerald

Tables 5 and 6 document the teacher responses and approaches offered by the three novel guides.

Table 5. Gatsby Feedback

Teacher	Theme	1920s	Sym-bols	Char-acters	Old/New Money	Ameri-can Dream	Gender Issues
Stinson	X				X	X	
Johnson	X	X	X	X	X		
Miller		X	X	X			
Nichayev	X	X			X		
Shinefield							

History and theme seemed to be the two topics emphasized. Questions about the novel have appeared on the AP English test, so it is a standard for Honors classes. Shinefield, due to the level of his eleventh grade classes, has never taught *Gatsby*. The Honors teachers, Johnson and Miller, both mentioned characterization as a priority, specifically the motivations behind the characters' actions. When asked, as a follow-up question, if they deal with issues of gender in these character discussions, both said that they do not.

Table 6. Gatsby Novel Guides

Topics Covered	<u>Permabound</u>	<u>Novel Units, Inc.</u>	<u>Teacher's Pet</u>
Novel Synopsis	X	Chapter Plot Summaries	None, but novel broken down into twenty "lessons"
Author Biography	X	X	X
Symbolism	X		X
Vocabulary		X	X
Gender Issues	Analysis of Fitzgerald's portrayal of women	One discussion question, indirectly	Compare/contrast Myrtle and Daisy, written assignment on stereotypical characters
Writing Topics	Dramatizing scenes from novel, biographical, use of symbolism, the "American Dream," portrayal of women	Responses to incidents in novel, dreams vs. reality, theme	Characters' social position, life goals, letters of persuasion, stereotypes, setting, compare/contrast characters, personal response

The ten-page Permabound guide is much shorter than the others I examined, but has been used by our English department at Arlington for as many years as it has been available. Although it lacks the creativity of assignments provided by *Novel Units, Inc* or the quantity of assignments *Teacher's Pet* gives to choose from, this concise novel guide actually asks students to analyze the novel from a feminist perspective as one of its four suggested essay topics. Despite its creative "improvements," the second

novel guide fails to address gender in any of its components, and the third again presents only indirect opportunities. The "stereotype" assignment, however, found in the *Teacher's Pet Unit Guide* can allow students to analyze how Fitzgerald portrayed women in the novel.

Room for Improvement

The approaches of these five teachers, as well as the nine novel guides reviewed, suggest that gender may not be sufficiently addressed in high school English classrooms. The problem is not with the core curriculum, but with the pedagogy. As secondary education shifts from Whole Language to a skill-based approach guided by "standards," teachers must be even more cognizant of the need to address these issues. Fortunately, this will not require any drastic retooling of methodology or ideology. The standards, as will soon become evident, are easily met by techniques conscientious teachers have employed for years. Practically every issue, topic, and method revealed by the five teachers interviewed addresses the standards that every California high school educator must meet. Educators need simply to address gender issues, in these same core texts, in ways that also meet the state standards.

Following is a brief introduction/discussion of the Content Standards and Benchmarks for the State of California and how the approaches I have discussed measure up.

Content Standards and Benchmarks

For grades eleven and twelve, four broad standards exists, although each contains several "benchmarks" for clarification:

1. Reading
2. Writing
3. Written and Oral English Language Conventions
4. Listening and Speaking

(See Appendix A for complete list of standards and benchmarks)

Although elements of each of these standards can be found in a high school English classroom, my study is concerned with how literature is and has been taught. Therefore, I will be looking primarily at the Reading and Writing standards.

Reading: Word Analysis, Fluency and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Both the teachers' responses and the novel guides reflect a similar concern for vocabulary development. The

main difference is that the standards call for more detailed knowledge of each word. Benchmarks 1.1 and 1.2 call for knowledge of etymology and Anglo Saxon, Greek, and Latin roots and affixes, while benchmark 3.2 requires that students "discern the meaning of analogies encountered, analyzing specific comparisons as well as relationships and inferences" (CDE). Teachers who use SAT 1-type exercises in conjunction with words found in the text are probably meeting this standard, but the commonly used "vocabulary lists" appear to fall short.

Reading: Comprehension

This standard calls for students to "read and understand grade-level-appropriate material" (CDE). Students need to be able to paraphrase, analyze author intent, recognize patterns of organization, and identify any rhetorical devices utilized. Most of the teachers interviewed mentioned paraphrasing and summarizing among the techniques they employ to help students comprehend what they are reading. Assignments that require students to infer author's intent, or to identify themes, also address this standard quite well.

Reading: Literary Response
and Analysis

The Whole Language Approach that high school educators have followed for years meets this standard more overtly than all others. Students are required to "read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature" from a wide range of eras, perspectives, and cultures" (CDE). Genre, theme, and literary terms such as irony, tone, mood, style, imagery, personification, satire, allegory, and pastoral are all specifically mentioned in the benchmarks (CDE). The manifestations of New Criticism found in the novel guides address these benchmarks, and the emphasis on theme espoused by Reader Response critics throughout the years complement the "close readings." The chronological or thematic method of covering American literature also meets benchmark 3.5, which calls for analysis of chronological development, contrast of major periods and themes, and the philosophical/political/social influences on American (and British) literature. Without realizing it, high school teachers have undoubtedly addressed each one of the first seven benchmarks of this standard. It is the last subset of benchmark 3.5, however, that presents an opportunity for discussions of gender

issues to enter the classroom. The "philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of a period" do "shape characters, plots, and settings" (CDE). The philosophical, religious, and social attitudes regarding gender and the role of women are not prevalent in the responses of the teachers I interviewed, or in the suggestions of the novel guides I examined. Given the wealth of material high school teachers are allowed/required to cover, it would not be difficult to add this approach to their pedagogy.

Writing Applications: Responses to Literature

Every essay that requires a response to literature necessarily must address one of the subsets of this benchmark. A "comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas," the identification of "universal themes," and the realization of the "ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text," (CDE) however, are skills that can easily be applied to gender analysis. If one of the significant ideas deals with the treatment of women or their role in society, this benchmark is addressed. If the "nuances" or "ambiguities" add to a gender-sensitive reading of the text, this benchmark is

addressed. If one of the universal themes deals with gender, again it is addressed.

In this final section, I will analyze *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Crucible*, and *The Great Gatsby*, focusing solely on issues of gender. At the close of these analyses, it should be clear how a combination of foundational methods, traditional approaches, and gender-based analyses will meet and surpass the Content Standards and Benchmarks instituted by the State of California.

CHAPTER THREE
ANALYSES OF CORE WORKS

The Scarlet Letter

While Hawthorne's gem is a penetrating analysis of Puritan ideology and hypocrisy as well as a timeless tale of guilt and redemption, the novel can also be read as a sympathetic account of the suffering of women at the hands of Puritanical oppressors (Last 349). Hawthorne definitely employs a voice which supports Puritan morality and admires the social order of the colony, but he also takes time to acknowledge the "motivations and feelings" of characters who have sinned or broken ranks with the community (354). Suzan Last, in her 1997 article, "Hawthorne's Feminine Voices: Reading The Scarlet Letter as a Woman," asserts that by telling the story of the scarlet letter, Hawthorne is telling a woman's story, inviting the reader to acknowledge a female perspective (353). This is evident as early as "The Custom House" when the narrator, Hawthorne himself, holds the actual scarlet letter up to his own breast.

It seemed to me—the reader may smile, but must not doubt my word—it seemed to me than that I experienced a sensation not altogether physical, yet almost so, as of burning heat; and

as if the letter were not of red cloth, but red-hot iron. I shuddered, and involuntarily let it fall upon the floor (Hawthorne 31).

Beside implying the "A" possesses supernatural powers, Hawthorne, according to Last, is relating the horrors any man would feel if he attempted to live, even for a moment, the life of a woman (Last 353). By continuing with the story, Hawthorne asks the reader to consider the viewpoint and plight of women in Puritan society. Hawthorne's portrayals of the Puritan women in chapter one, as well as Hester Prynne, and her daughter Pearl, give readers ample opportunity to identify with the world in which these women lived.

Prior to Hester's entrance into the marketplace, Hawthorne gives us a glimpse of the "matrons" of the town.

There was, moreover, a boldness and rotundity of speech among these matrons, as most of them seemed to be, that would startle us at the present day, whether in respect to its purport or its volume of tone. "Goodwives," said a hard-featured dame of fifty, "I'll tell ye a piece of my mind. It would be greatly for the public behoof, if we women, being of mature age and church members in good repute, should have the handling of malefactresses as this Hester Prynne" (49).

It has been my experience that high school students are always interested in the descriptions of the Puritan "matrons" waiting outside the prison door for Hester. "Was

this what Puritan women were really like?" they ask. "Why were they so upset?" If students can imagine the emotions running through these women as they see the young, attractive adulteress emerge from the prison door, they can possibly understand the severity of the matrons' reactions. They see Hester's sexuality as a threat and as a result become more "male" in their behavior: harsh, critical, condemning (Last 357). After one of the women suggests branding Hester on the forehead with a hot iron (Hawthorne 49), Hawthorne softens their harshness by interjecting the kind words of a young mother in the crowd.

"Ah, but let her cover the mark as she will, the pang of it will always be in her heart" (49).

Hawthorne undermines the critique offered by the "autumnal" women by giving a young, attractive mother (other than Hester) a voice. He therefore avoids characterizing all Puritan women as "robust," "manlike," and harsh and prepares the reader for a sympathetic portrayal of Hester.

Although Hawthorne refrains from excusing Hester's sin, he does challenge the stereotype of the "fallen woman" (Last 358). While Hester does harbor opinions that conflict with Puritan ideology, she appears to acknowledge

her sin. When her husband Chillingworth reappears on the scene and meets with Hester in the jail cell, she admits that she has "greatly wronged" him (72). She also stays in New England after her sentence is served partly out of a feeling of obligation to serve penance for her sin (77). She admits to Pearl, ultimately, that she had "met the Black Man and the scarlet letter was his mark" (182). All of these instances seem to demonstrate a repentant sinner, willing to live with the consequences of her actions. However, Hawthorne refrains from portraying Hester as an "adulteress," (the term is never used to describe Hester), endowing her with extraordinary qualities.

Sometimes the red infamy upon her breast would give a sympathetic throb, as she passed near a venerable minister or magistrate, the model of piety and justice, to whom that age of antique reverence looked up as to a mortal man in fellowship with angels. "What evil thing is at hand?" would Hester say to herself. Lifting her reluctant eyes, there would be nothing human within the scope of view, save the form of this earthly saint! Again, a mystic sisterhood would contumaciously assert itself as she met the sanctified frown of some matron, who, according to the rumor of all tongues, had kept cold snow within her bosom throughout life. That unsunned snow in the matron's bosom, and the burning shame on Hester Prynne's—what had the two in common? Or, once more, the electric thrill would give her warning—"Behold Hester, here is a companion!"—and looking up, she would detect the eyes of a young maiden glancing at the scarlet letter, shyly and aside, and quickly averted, with a faint, chill

crimson in her cheeks as if her purity were somewhat sullied by that momentary glance (84).

Hawthorne devotes nearly an entire page of text to communicating the "sixth sense" Hester possesses which allows her to be cognizant of the sins, or hypocrisy, of her fellow townspeople. Instead of sinking into an abyss of ignominy, Hester is elevated to nearly omniscient status. It is, of course, Hester's sin that enables her to detect and sympathize with the iniquity of others, but it is the immensely favorable light in which Hawthorne casts Hester that is significant. Hester transcends her accusers, peering into the most hidden regions of their soul: not exactly a conventional portrayal of a "fallen woman."

Hester's refusal to reveal the name of the father gives her nearly heroic status. Not only is she protecting the man she loves, but her defiance gives her complete individuality, allowing her to break the mold of womanhood (Last 360) Puritan society had created. Deborah Gussman, quotes Alexis DeToqueville in her 1995 article "Inalienable Rights: Fictions of Political Identity in *Hobomok* and *The Scarlet Letter*" to communicate the plight of women in not only Puritan but American society.

"In America, a woman loses her independence forever in the bonds of matrimony... the American woman never gets caught in the bonds of matrimony as in a snare set to catch her simplicity and ignorance. She knows beforehand what will be expected of her, and she has freely accepted the yoke. She suffers her new state bravely, for she has chosen it" (Toqueville 592-93).

Hester avoids the shackles of marriage, but does submit to the demands of motherhood and the Puritan way of life. By fulfilling the roles of mother and townspeople (barely), Hester sacrifices her own desires, her innate sense of womanhood (Egan 2).

...There seemed to be no longer anything in Hester's face for Love to dwell upon; nothing in Hester's form, though majestic and statue-like, that Passion would ever dream of clasping in its embrace; nothing in Hester's bosom to make it ever again the pillow of Affection. Some attribute had departed from her, the permanence of which had been essential to keep her a woman (Hawthorne 160).

Hawthorne captures the sacrifice that accompanies parenthood, and to an extent, religion, in this description of Hester's emotional state. Part of the penance for her sin, it seems, is a life void of passion, of desire or fulfillment. Her womanhood has been robbed by her sin, or at least by her adherence to Puritan ideals. As every human being does, Hester needs an outlet through which she

can express herself, and she finds it through her embroidery.

The Scarlet Letter (was) so fantastically embroidered and illuminated upon her bosom (that) it had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity and enclosing her in a sphere by herself (52).

Through her needlework, Hester defies the shame intended by the magistrates and expresses her innermost emotions, while still adhering to the regulations of the colony. The design of the scarlet letter has such an impact that her embroidery is used on the clothes of the governor, the clergy, the military, and in practically every occasion of "pomp" and circumstance (80). While maintaining a subservient role in society, Hester is able to release her passion and repressed emotions in the luxuriant and extravagant designs of her clothing.

After seven years of living a life of outward submission, Hester and her "A" assume a radically different identity in the minds of the townspeople.

The letter was a symbol of her calling. Such helpfulness was found in her—so much power to do and power to sympathize—that many people refused to interpret the scarlet "A" by its original signification. They said it meant "Able"; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength (158).

Granted, Hester has found strength in a conventional role, but she is still being portrayed in a heroic light. The townspeople turn to the "fallen woman" for guidance and support. Hawthorne is allowing an adulteress to minister to a community of needy, struggling Christians, who, in turn, are eradicating the stigma of her sin. It is essential that students are aware of the heroic manner in which Hester is being presented. In a scene dripping with irony, as well as heartfelt emotion, Dimmesdale, the minister, asks Hester, the adulteress, for support and guidance.

"Think for me, Hester! Thou art strong.
Resolve for me! ...Be thou strong for me! Advise
me what to do" (192-93).

Although Dimmesdale is the "hero" of the climactic scaffold scene, it is Hester, the "malefactress," who is portrayed in the most positive light throughout the novel. Her valor in confession, grace in sacrifice, and strength of character allow readers, in this case, adolescent readers, to understand the plight of women in this period of history as well as the resilience every female in America shows or has shown.

If Hester is the example of strength through sacrifice and accountability for actions, Pearl represents the

essence of every woman, just waiting to be released. Not only is she the personification of the scarlet letter, Pearl is the acting out of Hester's private rebellion against Puritanism (Last 363). Because Pearl is so assertive, Hester can remain passive. Possibly for this reason, Hester refrains from scolding Pearl for some of her most offensive behavior: throwing rocks at mocking schoolchildren (90), answering Governor Bellingham insolently (108), teasing/torturing Dimmesdale during his midnight vigil (153) and washing off his kiss in the forest (209). It is probable that Hester allows Pearl to carry out this "unacceptable" behavior, because Hester desires so much to carry it out herself. Hawthorne implies that those who see Pearl, throughout the novel (including her mother), as a "demon offspring" are simply under the influence of the Puritan mindset. While Hawthorne plays with the idea of the supernatural, he characterizes Pearl as an extraordinary but not malevolent child (Last 364).

In the mere exercise of the fancy, however, and the sportiveness of a growing mind, there might be little more than was observable in other children of bright faculties; except as Pearl, in the dearth of human playmates, was thrown more upon the visionary throng which she created (Hawthorne 92).

Pearl is natural innocence misinterpreted by Puritan minds. It is actually Pearl who relentlessly urges Dimmesdale to confess. It is Pearl who refuses to allow her mother to be untrue about the origin of the scarlet letter. It is Pearl who bestows the final kiss on the lips of her dying father, who finally acknowledges her as his own. Pearl is the agent of change in the novel, and it is because of Pearl's ability to express herself that readers can accept Hester's return to submission at the end of the story. By returning to the colony from England years after Dimmesdale's death, Hester relinquishes her potential role as "agent of change, consenting to her own submission" and living out her penitence (Gussman 16). Hawthorne can reconcile this decision with his sympathetic portrayal of women in Puritan society because Pearl will be able to enjoy the fruits of Hester's sacrifices.

Earlier in life, Hester had vainly imagined that she herself might be the destined prophetess, but had long since recognized the impossibility that any mission of divine and mysterious truth should be confided to a woman stained with sin, bowed down with shame, or even burdened with a lifelong sorrow. The angel and apostle of the coming revelation must be a woman, indeed, but lofty, pure and beautiful; and wise, moreover, not through dusky grief, but the ethereal medium of joy; and showing how sacred love should make us happy, by the truest test of

a life successful to such an end! (Hawthorne 258).

In the next paragraph, Hester dies and joins Dimmesdale under the tombstone bearing only the scarlet letter "A." Hawthorne's vision is clear: a "sacred love" that "establishes the whole relation between man and woman on a surer ground of mutual happiness" (258). Hester and Dimmesdale's love is true, but it is not sacred. Therefore, Hester cannot be the "angel" that shatters the encasement of Puritan patriarchy. However, as the innocent child of adultery, Pearl represents a new era, one in which divinely inspired love can bring happiness to both man and woman. As profound as are Hawthorne's critiques of Puritan society, and as relevant as Hawthorne's "Be true! Be true! Be true!" remains today, students must not miss the revolutionary dream of gender equality Hawthorne espouses in this classic novel.

Through class discussion, study questions such as the novel guides offer, or essay assignments, students can explore the gender issues addressed in Hawthorne's text while meeting the state's standards. As subset "a" of benchmark 2.2 of the Writing standard demands, students need to "demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the

significant ideas" in a work or passage while assessing the style and techniques of the author. By simply inserting gender into these time-tested assignments, teachers can meet a standard of the state without creating any new method of assessment.

More innovative assignments could, however, meet several standards simultaneously. For example, a research paper (of reasonable length) examining the American archetype of the submissive woman and exploring how and if Hawthorne adheres in his portrayal of Hester and Pearl addresses both Literary and Writing standards. Benchmark 3.6 of the Literary Response and Analysis standard calls for analysis of the use of "archetypes drawn from myth and tradition in literature, film, political speeches, and religious writings" (CDE). The research component of the paper is an analysis of the history of this type of portrayal of women in America and the student's contribution consists of excerpts from *The Scarlet Letter* which either challenge or uphold this archetype. This type of paper would also meet benchmark 2.4 of the Writing standard which calls for "investigation of historical reports" (CDE). The secondary sources students draw upon to explain a woman's place in Puritan society would have to

be historical reports of some type. By weaving this information into an essay that answers the research prompt, students use "exposition" to "support the main proposition," meeting the exact language of subset "a" of benchmark 2.4. Since students are responding to literature, they would be meeting many requirements of benchmark 2.2 of the Writing standard. Subset "b" of this benchmark requires that students "analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text" (CDE). One would have to look closely at Hawthorne's language in passages dealing with Hester or Pearl to determine whether he supports or challenges the archetype of the submissive woman.

Less formal characterization assignments documenting passages that describe Hester and Pearl also address Writing benchmark 2.2 by showing how important Hawthorne's language is in his portrayal of the two main female characters. The "Character Attribute Web" explained in the *Novel Units Teacher Guide to The Scarlet Letter* is a fine example of a less formal writing assignment that calls for a careful analysis of Hawthorne's language. Students are to gather words and phrases from the novel that describe what the character "does, feels, looks, and says" (Dennis

16). The name of the character is placed in the middle of the page and the four lists of attributes branch out like a web. By comparing Hester and Pearl (instead of Dimmesdale and Chillingworth possibly), students gain an understanding of how Hawthorne portrayed women in *The Scarlet Letter*. These "character webs," if shared with the class, could easily provoke a discussion of a woman's role in Puritan society and, in turn, cause students to consider what role a woman should play in modern society.

Hawthorne's portrayal and depiction of women in *The Scarlet Letter* is definitely an integral component of the development of his theme. His classic text provides ample opportunities for students to consider gender issues while overtly meeting statewide content standards.

The Crucible

Arthur Miller's *Crucible* is one of the most widely taught pieces of American literature in high schools today. The themes of hypocrisy, persecution, individual freedom and personal morality work amazingly well with high school students. What teachers normally stress is the obvious connection between the anti-Communism hysteria of the 1950s and the Salem witch trials as well as the idea of a

personal "crucible," or test which allows an individual to show what he or she is made of. What is hardly ever emphasized is the actual gender minimalization that occurs in the play's dialogue and structure.

Miller's play, though poignant, reinforces stereotypes that were not only in effect in Puritan society, but also during the 1950s when his play was published. Miller uses femme fatales, cold, unforgiving wives, and "voiceless" slaves to convey the "universal truths" the play is so known for (Schissel 461). The underlying cause may be what led to the witch trials themselves: gynecophobia, or the fear and distrust of women (461). Miller's readers, past and present, live in a male-dominated society: what is criminal in women may actually be admirable in men, especially in the sexual arena. John Proctor, the clear protagonist of the play, is referred to, numerous times, as a lecher: a word that has a negative connotation but is rather euphemistic compared to Abigail's label of "whore." Not only is this distinction not noticed or emphasized by readers and instructors, it is practically accepted. Why is that? The answer lies in the shared ideology of the author and his readers.

According to Barry Brummett and Detine Bowers, ideology "uses the fabrication of images and the processes of representation to persuade us that how things are is how they ought to be and that the place provided for us is the place we ought to be (Brummett 120)." The world Miller dramatizes in the play as well as his own mid-20th century society is androcentric: positions of power and authority are held by males (Flynn 142). This androcentrism produces an "ignorance of women's epistemological perspectives and subordinate position in society" (143). Therefore, it is no surprise that the female characters of *The Crucible* are portrayed as hysterical, submissive or downright evil because many males, and possibly females, felt this was an accurate interpretation of society's women. Such a mindset must be pointed out to adolescent, high school readers of *The Crucible*. If this characterization of women is overlooked in the literary analyses prompted by the classroom teacher, the stereotype can become an assumption of truth. I have found through my experience that high school students, contrary to opinions held by teachers I have worked with, are quite impressionable when it comes to ideology. If classroom teachers use a piece of literature

to help refute a harmful generalization, many students are receptive.

The idea of malevolence in *The Crucible* is represented by the devious Abigail who fuels the hysteria by virtue of her "sheer evil" (Bloom 30). Though Proctor was equally as guilty as his teenage counterpart, Abigail clearly takes the brunt of the blame for the scandal. Any reader can easily remember her conniving, delusional antics, and her lust for Proctor; but what few ask is why she began acting this way. As Wendy Schissel pointed out in her 1994 feminist reading of *The Crucible*, the reader is led to believe that Abigail's sexual knowledge is simply inherent in her gender. How else could a seventeen-year old girl raised in the household of a Puritan minister come to act in such a manner? (463). The answer that few conclude is actually quite obvious: John Proctor. Abigail herself tells us that John Proctor "took her from her sleep and put knowledge in her heart" when she was living with the Proctors (Miller 24). Instead of focusing on Proctor actually waking Abigail from her sleep to fornicate with him, Miller chooses to paint Proctor as a good man who gave in to his lustful desires for a sultry young woman. Who is more to blame in these circumstances? The sexually-

repressed teenage girl or the Puritan farmer whose wife is supposedly "frigid"? Miller makes sure that his readers sympathize with the hard-working, tempted farmer. It would not require in-depth analysis to help students examine the perspective of the female not emphasized in the text.

Proctor's sin is seen as a "weak moment of passion" in which he simply couldn't resist the sensuality of young Abigail, who just happens to be the embodiment of evil in the play (Bhatia 61). Proctor appears remorseful and has vowed to "cut his hand off before he reaches for Abigail again" (Miller 23), while Abigail is unwavering in her feelings for Proctor. Most readers fully buy into this portrayal. What they overlook is the admission by Proctor himself that he still "thinks softly about Abigail from time to time," and "may have looked up" to Abigail's window as she stared at him lustfully (22-23). The fact that she is a young girl physically and emotionally captivated by possibly her first sexual relationship is also overlooked as a cause of her unremorseful attitude towards her sin. We readers simply assume that Abigail is evil, or that sexual desire is itself evil, especially in a female, an issue clearly relevant to the lives of American high school students today.

This sympathy readers feel for John Proctor is no accident. The alterations that Miller makes to either the original account or his initial script are evidence of his desire to shift the blame away from Proctor to Abigail. To begin with, Abigail's age is raised from twelve to seventeen (Schissel 464). Surely this is done to ease the shock of the affair on the play's readers; but as the shock is decreased, so is the blame we place on John Proctor. Any farmer in his middle thirties who becomes sexually involved with a 12-year old girl is unworthy of any heroic qualities. The act is simply too perverted for a 1950s audience, or a 21st century one for that matter. If the reader does not sympathize with Proctor, how does Miller get across the incredible bravery and integrity of a man who refuses to confess to a lie to save his life? He could emphasize Giles Corey's story, the eighty-year old man who is pressed to death with rocks because he refuses to confess, but his account does not carry the dramatic qualities that the Proctor/Elizabeth/Abigail love triangle does. Another choice would be to concentrate on the story of one of the valiant women who endures the same persecution and makes the same choice to die because of her principles. This, however, would not jibe with the role

women played in not only Puritan society, but in the society of Arthur Miller and his audience.

The second scene of Act 2, which appears as an Appendix in some editions of the play, was cut for possibly the same reason: it gives Abigail too much credibility and damages the heroic status of Proctor. In this scene, Proctor meets Abigail alone in the forest, and is far from hostile until the very end of the conversation. The previous scene (Act Two) has John screaming at Mary Warren, "My wife will never die for me! I will bring your guts into your mouth but that goodness will not die for me!" (Miller 80). A husband that set on defending his wife's honor and life should not be sneaking away to the forest for a friendly conversation with his ex-lover. The secret meeting does end with Proctor throwing Abigail to the ground as he calls her a "mad, murderous bitch!", but Abigail's verbal contribution to the scene is not so easily interpreted.

"Why you taught me goodness, therefore you are good. It were a fire you walked me through, and all my ignorance was burned away. It were a fire, John, we lay in fire. And from that night no woman dare call me wicked any more but I knew my answer. I used to weep for my sins when the wind lifted up my skirts; and blushed for shame because some old Rebecca called me loose. And then you burned my ignorance away. As bare as

some December tree I saw them all - walking like saints to church, running to feed the sick, and hypocrites in their hearts! And God gave me strength to call them liars, and God made men to listen to me, and by God I will scrub the world clean for the love of Him! Oh John, I will make you such a wife when the world is white again!" (150).

As Schissel points out, this scene that Miller cut is problematic because it damages Proctor's credibility and lessens Abigail's evil (465). In fact, Abigail's religiosity makes her more pathetically deluded than evil (Welland 64). Abigail does seem to believe she is doing the work of the Lord, and she sees her love for Proctor as the sanctifying element. It is not difficult for a reader to see the effect a wildly physical relationship has on a young girl. Her insatiable feelings for Proctor, combined with the newfound respect and awe she is receiving from the townspeople, have a truly destructive effect on Abigail's psyche. She is definitely delusional, but appears at close look to be more a victim than a conduit of evil. Such a portrayal, as Miller probably realized, upsets the balance of gender roles in society, and had to be altered.

Not only is Proctor battling with Abigail for sympathy from the readers, but he also has to fight off his wife Elizabeth. Elizabeth Proctor is the clearest victim of

misogyny in the play. Her story is so heroic Miller choose to have her become pregnant in order to keep her from taking the same stand that John Proctor later does (Schissel 469). This Christian mother of two, as Schissel pointed out, is forced to "concede a fault which isn't hers" (461). Miller actually has her tell her adulterous husband "it needs a cold wife to prompt lechery" (Miller 137). After being falsely accused of witchcraft by her husband's ex-lover, who is able to gain credibility because her husband is too slow in exposing her, Elizabeth admits this "sin" to Proctor just before he plans to confess. As if Proctor's "crucible" is not admirable enough, Elizabeth has to discredit herself to embellish his heroism. Throughout the play, she is portrayed as cold, submissive, judgmental and even "lofty." When we first meet her in Act Two, she is justifiably aloof. Her husband has seven months earlier admitted to having an affair with the teenage girl who lived in their house, and Elizabeth has yet to fully forgive the incident. She cooks a meal for her husband, like a "good wife" should, feels bad when it lacks seasoning, and is chastized for not decorating the house with enough "life" (50-51). When she finds out that Proctor was alone yet again with Abigail and had attempted

to conceal the fact from her, she "suddenly loses all faith in him." Upon this, Proctor unleashes a diatribe against her coldness and judgmentalism.

"You will not judge me more, Elizabeth. I have good reason to think before I charge fraud on Abigail, and I will think on it. Let you look to your own improvement before you go to judge your husband any more..."(Miller 54)

"Spare me! You forget nothin' and forgive nothin'. Learn charity, woman. I have gone tiptoe in this house all seven month since she is gone. I have not moved from there to there without I think to please you, and still an everlasting funeral marches round your heart. I cannot speak but I am doubted, every moment judged for lies, as though I come into a court when I come into this house!"...(54)

"Oh, Elizabeth, your justice would freeze beer!"(55)

Elizabeth is clearly justified in her mistrust of Proctor as well as with her aloof attitude towards him. But after reading Proctor's responses to Elizabeth's accusations, most readers may tend to sympathize with him. Elizabeth, the victim, is taking the blame, just as Abigail, the victim, takes the blame (Schissel 468). Though a loving wife willingly cares for her husband, the fallacy lies in the idea that a woman who shirks her domestic duties, including having a "warm heart" towards her husband, regardless of the circumstances, deserves to be admonished. By reacting this way, Elizabeth has added

two more sins to her first sin of frigidity, being judgmental and unforgiving. Although she is greatly wronged, Elizabeth has been forced back into her societal role where she stays for the duration of the play.

Miller's portrayal of women in the play in contrast to his male characters is a perfect example of subject and object positioning within a text. Brummett and Bowers claim that "texts call to readers to accept certain stances, roles or interpretive strategies." (118). Readers look for what they called "subject positions": characters, themes, or images in the text with which they identify, or wish to identify (118). Just as readers seek subject positions, authors often "create" subjects in an attempt to identify a group of people (120). Sometimes, these subjects are constructed in so damaging and repressive a manner that they become *objects* (122). Subjects and objects actually have characteristics which distinguish them from each other in a text. Subjects have an origin of motive, and control over self, while objects display anonymity; subjects have a distinctive verbal and non-verbal style while objects are voiceless; subjects are normally fully realized characters, while objects are undeveloped (122). A character who is a subject makes his

or her own decisions, has a recognizable, usually pleasing style to his or her speech, and has his or her motives explained to the reader. These are the characters we know the most about. Objects, on the other hand, have very little control over their decisions, are more talked about than actually heard, and are not developed as characters within the plot (124-125). In *The Crucible*, the women seem to stand for an idea rather than personify it, while the men seem more vivid and alive (Bloom 30-31).

John Proctor is fully in control of his decisions. His decision to not disclose his privileged information about Abigail to the court right allows the hysteria of the witch trials to begin. His eventual decisions to expose Abigail as a fraud and confess to adultery win the hearts of readers and help him discover the "good" within himself. He also has a definite style to his dialogue, being given most of the play's memorable lines. From start to finish, he is a fully realized character.

Reverend John Hale is another character with whom readers identify: a man full of authority, he controls not only himself, but most characters in the play. He begins as a rigid, slightly pompous participant in the witch trials and evolves into an impassioned defender of human

integrity who finally attacks the proceedings. His motives are made clear and he too has some very impressive lines.

The women, however, are not characters with whom many readers identify or wish to identify. With the exception of Abigail, they are normally told what to do, and rarely do we see the motives behind their actions. As hard as she tries, Elizabeth cannot act the way she wants. Society will not permit her to dispose of her husband, she is unable to attack Abigail, her attempt to save her husband backfires because John has said she "will never lie" (Miller 111), and her pregnancy even prevents her from dying a heroic death like her husband. Instead of being allowed to fully develop as a character, Elizabeth is relegated to the role of a voiceless woman. Even in Abigail's case, the reader is not given any motives for her behavior aside from lustful jealousy. The women of *The Crucible* are textbook examples of characters who fill the object position.

Tituba, the slave from Barbados, is a character who is objectified not only by gender but also by race. Being a woman in *The Crucible*, she is underdeveloped, not allowed to explain herself, told what to do, forced to submit, and blamed for the evil in society. Tituba is of another race,

and is therefore given the burden of shouldering the entire blame for bringing witchcraft into Salem. From the onset of the play, the reader is never presented her side of the story. We are told through Abigail, gradually, that Tituba sang "her damn Barbados songs" and eventually conjured up spirits. When Tituba is dragged in to confess to Parris and Hale, she assures them that she "don't truck with no Devil," but after being given the option to confess or be "beat to death" by Parris, she admits to having seen the Devil (Miller 44-45). It seems obvious that she changes her mind in order to prevent this possibly fatal beating, but this idea is never confirmed. Tituba never gets a chance to explain what truly happened. In fact, she is practically told by Mrs. Putnam that she saw Goody Good and Goody Osburn with the Devil (Miller 46). The scene ends with Abigail and the girls screaming out who they "saw" with the Devil and Tituba rocking back and forth and weeping: a picture of total humiliation. The last the reader sees of Tituba is when she is being moved from her cell with Sarah Good.

We goin' to Barbados, soon the Devil gits here with the feathers and the wings...

I'll speak to him for you, if you desires to come along, Marshal...

Oh, it be no Hell in Barbados. Devil, him be pleasure-man in Barbados, him be singin and dancin' in Barbados. It's you folks - you riles him up 'round here; it be too cold 'round her for that Old Boy. He freeze his soul in Massachusetts, but in Barbados he just as sweet and--... (Miller, 122).

In Act One, the reader probably believes Tituba is innocent of trafficking with "The Devil," but in this scene one cannot be sure. Tituba is one of the most talked about characters in the play, yet she is a stranger to us. She is thrown into one of the most disturbing scenes of the play and forced to confess, yet not heard from for another 86 pages. This is the definition of anonymity. Tituba has to have had a story to tell. Why doesn't the reader hear it? Apparently, Miller didn't feel his 1950s audience was too interested in her side of the story. She was an ignorant, heathen slave, so the fact that she is reduced to a babbling enigma by the end of the play may have actually been a relief to many of his original readers. Someone needs to be responsible for the madness, so why not the African slave woman? Readers of the 1950s certainly did not wish to be like Tituba, but they may have created subjects like Tituba in their minds, objectifying an entire race of people. The fact that Miller "corrected" this diminishing of Tituba's character in the 1996 screenplay of *The*

Crucible shows the contrast between his two audiences. The latter version begins with the actual dramatization of the forest scene with Tituba and the girls. Tituba is clearly against Abigail's apparent desire to put a charm on Elizabeth Proctor but is unable to stop Abigail from grabbing the live chicken, bludgeoning it on the soup kettle and smearing the blood all over her own face. Why is this scene in the 1990s version and not the 1950s version? Modern audiences are simply more aware of the play's only Black character being stripped of her voice and reduced to a symbol of heathen ignorance. The language of the play contributes substantially to the objectification and minimalization of Tituba's character.

While *The Crucible* is a well-crafted, moving, and relevant play, it is disconcerting that the objectification of entire groups of people within the text itself is rarely brought to attention. Hypocrisy, paranoia, and integrity are still important themes that need to be brought out when *The Crucible* is taught, but to overlook the stereotypes that are perpetuated within the play is irresponsible. When readers identify the objectification found in the text, they can more fully understand the gender inequality that occurred and continues to occur within society.

As far as the state standards are concerned, objectification, as well as subject and object positions, falls under subset "c" of benchmark 3.5. of the Literary Response and Analysis standard which requires students to "evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings" (CDE). Miller's relegation of Elizabeth to a submissive role and Abigail to a malevolent force reflect the tendency of both the Puritan and 1950s societies to dichotomize females into one of these two extremes. By explaining objectification to the students and having them point out or record instances found in the text or even in their own society, teachers make gender a topic for genuine discussion and address an essential state standard.

Aside from formal essays dealing with Miller's treatment of women in the play, two informal writing assignments which would address gender and also meet specific standards are: characterizations of Abigail and Elizabeth, complete with quotes and examples from the text, and a fictional diary, as suggested by the Permabound study guide, providing Abigail's account of the events of the play. The objective behind the characterizations would be

to document Miller's portrayal of women as either vindictive (Abigail) or submissive (Elizabeth). After students have provided examples from the texts, they could easily hypothesize as to what Miller is trying to say through the excerpts they have chosen. As a result, students will have made "warranted and reasonable assertions about the author's arguments using elements of the text to defend and clarify" their interpretations, as benchmark 2.4 of the Reading standard reads (CDE). A diary in which students have to imagine what Abigail might have been thinking or provide a motive explaining her seemingly evil behavior allows students to address benchmark 2.1 of the Writing standard which calls for the "writing of fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives" (CDE). By assuming the persona of Abigail, they would be creating a "fictional," "autobiographical narrative" and investigating a point of view not offered by the author. By considering Abigail's perspective, students are clearly addressing gender and developing skills the state of California feels are essential. By making gender one of the significant issues of Miller's text, classroom teachers also help deconstruct misogynistic attitudes still being perpetuated, especially among adolescents, today.

The Great Gatsby

Possibly the ultimate example of an author writing about the shortcomings of a society in which he is completely engulfed, *The Great Gatsby* portrays the decadence of America in the 1920s, a society of wrecked hopes and desires, and an atmosphere of hopelessness and helplessness (Sipiora 201). The entire period is characterized by dissipation, loneliness, and moral bankruptcy (201), and the women of the novel play a pivotal part in the characterization. The three significant female characters, Daisy, Jordan, and Myrtle, are portrayed as either egotistical, manipulative, individuals possessing an underlying desire to be dominated, or as objects to be conquered, attained, or used for pleasure.

Self-Absorbed "Sirens"

Daisy's egotistical behavior, as chronicled throughout the novel, takes on the quality of a siren (211). From the beginning of the novel, Daisy's voice enchants despite the insincerity of her words. When Nick first encounters Daisy and Jordan in the Buchanan's home, Daisy "attempts to rise," but then laughs "an absurd, charming, little laugh" before proclaiming that she is "p-paralyzed with happiness" upon seeing Nick again (Fitzgerald 9). The reader does not

have to be Daisy's cousin (as is Nick) to recognize the insincerity of these words, but the narrator assures the readers that Daisy is "charming." As dangerous and deadly as a siren, men cannot resist Daisy's wiles, and she knows it. Her "murmur" (also "charming") is described by some as a ploy to get people to "lean toward her" (9). Daisy uses her irresistible voice to draw men in, promising excitement and fulfillment, but primarily for herself.

It was the kind of voice that the ear follows up and down, as if each speech is an arrangement of notes that will never be played again. Her face was sad and lovely with bright things in it, bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth, but there was an excitement in her voice that men who had for her found difficult to forget: a singing compulsion, a whispered "Listen," a promise that she had done gay, exciting things just a while since and that there were gay, exciting things hovering in the next hour (9-10).

While men remember this voice for years, Daisy remembers the men as long as is convenient. Even in talking to her cousin Nick, she employs these methods of flirtation seemingly for her own sake. The act of exciting men excites Daisy. If she desires to engage in "gay, exciting things," she indulges; if she wants the men to simply think she desires to engage in "gay, exciting things," then this in itself is gratifying. This

characterization of the woman as a manipulative, self-indulgent tease is a stereotype that many males like to employ as an excuse for being rejected by a female. In the world of high school courtship and sexuality, this attitude can lead to behavior ranging from rumors being spread to reputations being sullied to date rape, and is definitely worth discussing.

Daisy's actions throughout the story, while completely selfish, show a dependence on whoever she is with, and her decisions are always made on the basis of exigency (Sipiora 211). Daisy's acquiescence to Gatsby five years earlier, when he "took what he could get, ravenously and unscrupulously" (Fitzgerald 149), is a precursor to her decision to marry the "brutal" Tom. Her desire becomes a desire to be dominated, which in turn leads to more impetuous behavior. Daisy has the documented affair with Gatsby but cannot deny "loving" Tom, and eventually returns to her husband after killing Myrtle, leaves town, and begins the cycle all over again. Daisy, as much as any character, represents the decadence, selfishness, and moral irresponsibility of the rich, but her capricious, manipulative demeanor portrays the female of the time in a quite pejorative manner.

Jordan Baker's attitude towards men is one based on advantage and deceit (Sipiora 214). While more independent than Daisy, she is even more egotistical in her motives.

Jordan Baker instinctively avoided clever men, shrewd men, and now I saw that this was because she felt safer on a plane where any divergence from a code would be thought impossible. She was incurable dishonest!
(Fitzgerald 59)

Much like Daisy uses her enthralling voice and beauty to lure men in, Jordan seeks to gain an advantage even if it means being "dishonest." This self-centered approach to life is evidence when Jordan nearly runs over a workman on the street. She dismisses her reckless driving by assuring Nick that "they'll get out the way; it takes two to make an accident" (59). The expectation that the world will accommodate her every desire permeates her entire being. By the end of the novel, Nick identifies her as belonging to the same category as Tom and Daisy. Jordan has remained a static character and actually chastises Nick for "not being nice to her" the night Myrtle was killed (155). Like Gatsby, Tom, and Daisy, Jordan is thinking mostly about herself the night Myrtle is killed; but Jordan's approach to the world, and especially men, bulwarks the characterization of women as egotistical and manipulative.

Myrtle Wilson appears to be one of the victims of the novel, but her actions are often as self-centered as Jordan's and as superficial and codependent as Daisy's. Before Tom broke her nose for mentioning Daisy's name, Myrtle was actually reveling in her acquired status during Tom's party in the apartment:

With the influence of the dress her personality had also undergone a change. The intense vitality that had been so remarkable in the garage was converted into impressive hauteur. Her laughter, her gestures, her assertions became more violently affected moment by moment, and as she expanded the room grew smaller around her, until she seemed to be revolving on a noisy, creaking pivot through the smoky air (31).

Myrtle is willing to endure Tom's physical abuse in order to enjoy his riches and luxuriance. When she is with Tom, she is elevated, however superficially, to his status, and she can become "haughty" without reprehension. She can "raise her eyebrows in despair at the shiftlessness of the lower orders" (32) since she, however brief a time it may be, is actually in a position to be served. For Myrtle, getting physically abused by Tom is worth the elevation in social status he gives her, making Myrtle as self-centered as either Jordan or Daisy. The portrayal of women as ambitious, superficial opportunists who will endure even domestic abuse to enjoy the benefits of material wealth is

a dangerous one, for both male and female readers who accept its validity.

Women as Objects

Fitzgerald also uses women as symbols of achievement, conquest, or simply objects used for gratification. Myrtle is a woman of raw sensuality with whom Tom can enjoy the pleasure of a physical, non-committal relationship.

Fitzgerald describes her not as a woman of especial beauty, but one whose sexuality "smoulders."

She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face, above a spotted dress of dark blue crepe-de-chine, contained no facet or gleam of beauty, but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering (25).

Tom then orders her to "get on the next train."

Myrtle not only lacks beauty, but she seems to lack the character to even be asked on a date. Tom uses her as he wishes, when he wishes, and she demurs. Myrtle is more a mass of harnessed sensuality than an actual human being. Tom's treatment of Myrtle sets a standard for the objectification of women by men, and high school students need to be aware of this.

For Gatsby, Daisy is the object of everything he has never been able to possess: a "continent of mystery and rich promise" (Shrubbs 102). From his first encounter with Daisy five years prior to the events of the novel, Daisy is a symbol of romantic fulfillment (McCarthy 52). The fact that Daisy was wealthy and "sought after by many men" (52) makes her even more desirable. He, of course, fabricates his way into her heart initially, but after their one month affair ends and "James Gatz" is sent off to war, Daisy becomes a symbol of all that was unattainable. After Daisy marries Tom and moves to East Egg, Jay Gatsby begins his venture to win back the "green light" of his youth.

He stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light...(Fitzgerald 21-22).

Probably without fail, the "green light" is explained by high school teachers as the irretrievable past that Gatsby is trying to recreate. As true as this may be, the green light is also the objectification of a woman who represents what he cannot have. Gatsby certainly has a desire to be wealthy, but it is Daisy that Gatsby actually longs for: Daisy, whose voice is "full of money" (120), who

represents all that Gatsby was never allowed to possess. It is this obsession with Daisy that turns her into an object instead of a lost lover. By obtaining Daisy, Gatsby enters into the world of the wealthy, the elegant, and the beautiful. He also proves that he always was worthy of her despite his earlier poverty, relatively speaking. Daisy ceases to be a person and becomes an ideal, or worse yet, a trophy, that Gatsby must attain to achieve personal fulfillment.

Aside from the customary discussion of "flappers" and the suffrage movement of the 1920s, high school English teachers need to bring the issue of how women are portrayed in *The Great Gatsby* to students' attention. From my experience, I have found that both the objectification of women and the assumption that they are flirtatious, materialistic, opportunists are prevalent among adolescent males. For many, girls are "chicks" (or worse) that need to be "pimped," (conquered and possessed), and if they are unwilling, they are "teases" who simply exist to torture young males. Fortunately, not all teenage boys think this way, but the mindset exists. If students of this persuasion happen to read *The Great Gatsby*, at the urging of their English teacher, and confront these same type of

misogynistic attitudes without being informed of their unacceptability, their persuasion could very easily solidify into a mindset that could dictate behavior for years to come. Likewise, if young females have lived a life of submission, the characterizations of Daisy, Jordan, and Myrtle do not provide very helpful examples of women asserting themselves.

Consequently, classroom teachers need to bring these issues to the forefront through assignments that encourage the students to seriously consider the female perspective while specifically addressing the state standards. A traditional, research paper relating women's suffrage and the political climate of the 1920s to Fitzgerald's portrayal of women in *The Great Gatsby* is a formal piece of writing which would accomplish all of these objectives. Benchmark 3.5 of the Literary Response and Analysis standards, one notably not addressed in the teachers and novel guides I researched, calls for evaluation of "philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences that shaped the characters, plots, and settings" (CDE). By researching the political climate of the 1920s, students inform themselves of these influences and the challenge becomes relating this information to Fitzgerald's

novel. Such analysis then fulfills benchmark 3.7 of the same standards. Subset "b" requires that students "relate literary works and authors to the major themes and issues of their eras" (CDE). The textual evidence students provide, in turn, become examples of Fitzgerald's "language" or "style," and lead to an analysis of the ways in which they help the author achieve his "specific rhetorical purpose" as called for in benchmark 3.3 of the Literary Response and Analysis standard. In gathering the necessary information and synthesizing it into an appropriate response to the research prompt, students are forced to consider issues of gender. If students were to discuss in small groups, at any stage of the writing process, how women's suffrage related to Fitzgerald's portrayal of women, this conventional writing assignment forces students to organize their thoughts on the subject and share them verbally with their peers.

A less formal assignment that addresses Benchmark 2.2 of the Writing standard (Writing Responses to Literature) requires students to document and analyze the actual words spoken by the three female characters, Daisy, Jordan, and Myrtle. Such a "quotation log" could be written in outline form or arranged in columns or tables, but in addition to

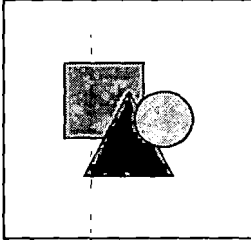
recording the lines, students would need to make a comparison between the characters and eventually arrive at an interpretation of Fitzgerald's portrayal of women. The comparison could also be written, or verbally shared with the class. By examining the exact words of Fitzgerald's characters, students address almost every subset of benchmark 2.2. They "analyze the author's language," they provide support through "detailed references to the text," they identify dialogue as a "stylistic device," and they "assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities" found in the words of the three female characters (CDE).

As a culminating assignment for the entire school year, students could also write an essay comparing the portrayal of women in *The Great Gatsby* to either *The Scarlet Letter* or *The Crucible*. Such an assignment would clearly "trace the development of American literature from the colonial period forward" as subset "a" of the Literary benchmark 3.5 requires, and would prepare students aptly for the comparison/contrast essay that most Freshman Composition classes require at the college level.

The opportunities to meet the standards while reading curricular staples like *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Crucible*,

and *The Great Gatsby* are abundant. The approaches traditionally used to teach these works, as I pointed out earlier, address a number of the benchmarks. It would not take a great effort, or even a significant deviation from standard pedagogical practices, to include discussions of gender in one's novel or play unit. Not only would such discussions raise the interest level of many of the students in the classroom (the females at least), they would hopefully encourage adolescents to transcend gender stereotypes and create an academic atmosphere which allows all students to thrive. It is entirely possible that these same adolescents may someday realize how detrimental objectification, misogyny, and stereotypes are to humanity, and effect a change. Educators will then be using the statewide content standards in a manner that enhances and sharpens students' skills while refining their consciences as well. It simply takes educators who are willing to adapt their time-tested, socially responsible strategies to the latest, standardized demands of the state.

APPENDIX A:
GRADES ELEVEN AND TWELVE ENGLISH-LANGUAGE ARTS CONTENT
STANDARDS FOR THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA



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Grades Eleven and Twelve English-Language Arts Content Standards

[Curriculum](#) > [Standards](#) > [Reading](#) > Grades 11 & 12

Reading

1.0 Word Analysis, Fluency, and Systematic Vocabulary Development

Students apply their knowledge of word origins to determine the meaning of new words encountered in reading materials and use those words accurately.

Vocabulary and Concept Development

1.1 Trace the etymology of significant terms used in political science and history.

1.2 Apply knowledge of Greek, Latin, and Anglo-Saxon roots and affixes to draw inferences concerning the meaning of scientific and mathematical terminology.

1.3 Discern the meaning of analogies encountered, analyzing specific comparisons as well as relationships and inferences.

2.0 Reading Comprehension (Focus on Informational Materials)

Students read and understand grade-level-appropriate material. They analyze the organizational patterns, arguments, and positions advanced. The selections in *Recommended Readings in Literature, Grades Nine Through Twelve* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students. In addition, by grade twelve, students read two million words annually on their own, including a wide variety of classic and contemporary literature, magazines, newspapers, and online information.

Structural Features of Informational Materials

2.1 Analyze both the features and the rhetorical devices of different types of public documents (e.g., policy statements, speeches, debates, platforms) and the way in which authors use those features and devices.

Comprehension and Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

2.2 Analyze the way in which clarity of meaning is affected by the patterns of organization, hierarchical structures, repetition of the main ideas, syntax, and word choice in the text.

2.3 Verify and clarify facts presented in other types of expository texts by using a variety of consumer, workplace, and public documents.

2.4. Make warranted and reasonable assertions about the author's arguments by using elements of the text to defend and clarify interpretations.

2.5 Analyze an author's implicit and explicit philosophical assumptions and beliefs about a subject.

Expository Critique

2.6 Critique the power, validity, and truthfulness of arguments set forth in public documents; their appeal to both friendly and hostile audiences; and the extent to which the arguments

anticipate and address reader concerns and counterclaims (e.g., appeal to reason, to authority, to pathos and emotion).

3.0 Literary Response and Analysis

Students read and respond to historically or culturally significant works of literature that reflect and enhance their studies of history and social science. They conduct in-depth analyses of recurrent themes. The selections in *Recommended Readings in Literature, Grades Nine Through Twelve* illustrate the quality and complexity of the materials to be read by students.

Structural Features of Literature

3.1 Analyze characteristics of subgenres (e.g., satire, parody, allegory, pastoral) that are used in poetry, prose, plays, novels, short stories, essays, and other basic genres.

Narrative Analysis of Grade-Level-Appropriate Text

3.2 Analyze the way in which the theme or meaning of a selection represents a view or comment on life, using textual evidence to support the claim.

3.3. Analyze the ways in which irony, tone, mood, the author's style, and the "sound" of language achieve specific rhetorical or aesthetic purposes or both.

3.4. Analyze ways in which poets use imagery, personification, figures of speech, and sounds to evoke readers' emotions.

3.5. Analyze recognized works of American literature representing a variety of genres and traditions:

- a. Trace the development of American literature from the colonial period forward.
- b. Contrast the major periods, themes, styles, and trends and describe how works by members of different cultures relate to one another in each period.
- c. Evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and settings.

3.6 Analyze the way in which authors through the centuries have used archetypes drawn from myth and tradition in literature, film, political speeches, and religious writings (e.g., how the archetypes of banishment from an ideal world may be used to interpret Shakespeare's tragedy *Macbeth*).

3.7 Analyze recognized works of world literature from a variety of authors:

- a. Contrast the major literary forms, techniques, and characteristics of the major literary periods (e.g., Homeric Greece, medieval, romantic, neoclassic, modern).
- b. Relate literary works and authors to the major themes and issues of their eras.
- c. Evaluate the philosophical, political, religious, ethical, and social influences of the historical period that shaped the characters, plots, and, settings.

Literary Criticism

3.8 Analyze the clarity and consistency of political assumptions in a selection of literary works or essays on a topic (e.g., suffrage, women's role in organized labor). (Political approach)

3.9 Analyze the philosophical arguments presented in literary works to determine whether the authors' positions have contributed to the quality of each work and the credibility of the characters. (Philosophical approach)

Writing

1.0 Writing Strategies

Students write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument. The writing demonstrates students' awareness of the audience and purpose and progression through the stages of the writing process.

Organization and Focus

1.1 Demonstrate an understanding of the elements of discourse (e.g., purpose, speaker, audience, form) when completing narrative, expository, persuasive, or descriptive writing assignments.

1.2 Use point of view, characterization, style (e.g., use of irony), and related elements for specific rhetorical and aesthetic purposes.

1.3 Structure ideas and arguments in a sustained, persuasive, and sophisticated way and support them with precise and relevant examples.

1.4 Enhance meaning by employing rhetorical devices, including the extended use of parallelism, repetition, and analogy; the incorporation of visual aids (e.g., graphs, tables, pictures); and the issuance of a call for action.

1.5 Use language in natural, fresh, and vivid ways to establish a specific tone.

Research and Technology

1.6 Develop presentations by using clear research questions and creative and critical research strategies (e.g., field studies, oral histories, interviews, experiments, electronic sources).

1.7 Use systematic strategies to organize and record information (e.g., anecdotal scripting, annotated bibliographies).

1.8 Integrate databases, graphics, and spreadsheets into word-processed documents.

Evaluation and Revision

1.9 Revise text to highlight the individual voice, improve sentence variety and style, and enhance subtlety of meaning and tone in ways that are consistent with the purpose, audience, and genre.

2.0 Writing Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students combine the rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description to produce texts of at least 1,500 words each. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

Using the writing strategies of grades eleven and twelve outlined in Writing Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Write fictional, autobiographical, or biographical narratives:

a. Narrate a sequence of events and communicate their significance to the audience.

b. Locate scenes and incidents in specific places.

c. Describe with concrete sensory details the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene and the specific actions, movements, gestures, and feelings of the characters; use interior monologue to depict the characters' feelings.

d. Pace the presentation of actions to accommodate temporal, spatial, and dramatic mood changes.

e. Make effective use of descriptions of appearance, images, shifting perspectives, and sensory details.

2.2 Write responses to literature:

a. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas in works or passages.

b. Analyze the use of imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text.

c. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text and to other works.

d. Demonstrate an understanding of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.

e. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.

2.3 Write reflective compositions:

a. Explore the significance of personal experiences, events, conditions, or concerns by using rhetorical strategies (e.g., narration, description, exposition, persuasion).

b. Draw comparisons between specific incidents and broader themes that illustrate the writer's important beliefs or generalizations about life.

c. Maintain a balance in describing individual incidents and relate those incidents to more general and abstract ideas.

2.4 Write historical investigation reports:

- a. Use exposition, narration, description, argumentation, exposition, or some combination of rhetorical strategies to support the main proposition.
- b. Analyze several historical records of a single event, examining critical relationships between elements of the research topic.
- c. Explain the perceived reason or reasons for the similarities and differences in historical records with information derived from primary and secondary sources to support or enhance the presentation.
- d. Include information from all relevant perspectives and take into consideration the validity and reliability of sources.
- e. Include a formal bibliography.

2.5 Write job applications and resumés:

- a. Provide clear and purposeful information and address the intended audience appropriately.
- b. Use varied levels, patterns, and types of language to achieve intended effects and aid comprehension.
- c. Modify the tone to fit the purpose and audience.
- d. Follow the conventional style for that type of document (e.g., resumé, memorandum) and use page formats, fonts, and spacing that contribute to the readability and impact of the document.

2.6 Deliver multimedia presentations:

- a. Combine text, images, and sound and draw information from many sources (e.g., television broadcasts, videos, films, newspapers, magazines, CD-ROMs, the Internet, electronic media-generated images).
- b. Select an appropriate medium for each element of the presentation.
- c. Use the selected media skillfully, editing appropriately and monitoring for quality.
- d. Test the audience's response and revise the presentation accordingly.

Written and Oral English Language Conventions

The standards for written and oral English language conventions have been placed between those for writing and for listening and speaking because these conventions are essential to both sets of skills.

1.0 Written and Oral English Language Conventions

Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions.

- 1.1 Demonstrate control of grammar, diction, and paragraph and sentence structure and an understanding of English usage.
- 1.2 Produce legible work that shows accurate spelling and correct punctuation and capitalization.
- 1.3 Reflect appropriate manuscript requirements in writing.

Listening and Speaking

1.0 Listening and Speaking Strategies

Students formulate adroit judgments about oral communication. They deliver focused and coherent presentations that convey clear and distinct perspectives and demonstrate solid reasoning. They use gestures, tone, and vocabulary tailored to the audience and purpose.

Comprehension

- 1.1 Recognize strategies used by the media to inform, persuade, entertain, and transmit culture (e.g., advertisements; perpetuation of stereotypes; use of visual representations, special effects,

language).

1.2 Analyze the impact of the media on the democratic process (e.g., exerting influence on elections, creating images of leaders, shaping attitudes) at the local, state, and national levels.

1.3 Interpret and evaluate the various ways in which events are presented and information is communicated by visual image makers (e.g., graphic artists, documentary filmmakers, illustrators, news photographers).

Organization and Delivery of Oral Communication

1.4 Use rhetorical questions, parallel structure, concrete images, figurative language, characterization, irony, and dialogue to achieve clarity, force, and aesthetic effect.

1.5 Distinguish between and use various forms of classical and contemporary logical arguments, including:

- a. Inductive and deductive reasoning
- b. Syllogisms and analogies

1.6 Use logical, ethical, and emotional appeals that enhance a specific tone and purpose.

1.7 Use appropriate rehearsal strategies to pay attention to performance details, achieve command of the text, and create skillful artistic staging.

1.8 Use effective and interesting language, including:

- a. Informal expressions for effect
- b. Standard American English for clarity
- c. Technical language for specificity

1.9 Use research and analysis to justify strategies for gesture, movement, and vocalization, including dialect, pronunciation, and enunciation.

1.10 Evaluate when to use different kinds of effects (e.g., visual, music, sound, graphics) to create effective productions.

Analysis and Evaluation of Oral and Media Communications

1.11 Critique a speaker's diction and syntax in relation to the purpose of an oral communication and the impact the words may have on the audience.

1.12 Identify logical fallacies used in oral addresses (e.g., attack *ad hominem*, false causality, red herring, overgeneralization, bandwagon effect).

1.13 Analyze the four basic types of persuasive speech (i.e., propositions of fact, value, problem, or policy) and understand the similarities and differences in their patterns of organization and the use of persuasive language, reasoning, and proof.

1.14 Analyze the techniques used in media messages for a particular audience and evaluate their effectiveness (e.g., Orson Welles' radio broadcast "War of the Worlds").

2.0 Speaking Applications (Genres and Their Characteristics)

Students deliver polished formal and extemporaneous presentations that combine traditional rhetorical strategies of narration, exposition, persuasion, and description. Student speaking demonstrates a command of standard American English and the organizational and delivery strategies outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0.

Using the speaking strategies of grades eleven and twelve outlined in Listening and Speaking Standard 1.0, students:

2.1 Deliver reflective presentations:

- a. Explore the significance of personal experiences, events, conditions, or concerns, using appropriate rhetorical strategies (e.g., narration, description, exposition, persuasion).
- b. Draw comparisons between the specific incident and broader themes that illustrate the speaker's beliefs or generalizations about life.
- c. Maintain a balance between describing the incident and relating it to more general, abstract ideas.

2.2 Deliver oral reports on historical investigations:

- a. Use exposition, narration, description, persuasion, or some combination of those to support the thesis.
- b. Analyze several historical records of a single event, examining critical relationships between elements of the research topic.
- c. Explain the perceived reason or reasons for the similarities and differences by using information derived from primary and secondary sources to support or enhance the presentation.
- d. Include information on all relevant perspectives and consider the validity and reliability of sources.

2.3 Deliver oral responses to literature:

- a. Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the significant ideas of literary works (e.g., make assertions about the text that are reasonable and supportable).
- b. Analyze the imagery, language, universal themes, and unique aspects of the text through the use of rhetorical strategies (e.g., narration, description, persuasion, exposition, a combination of those strategies).
- c. Support important ideas and viewpoints through accurate and detailed references to the text or to other works.
- d. Demonstrate an awareness of the author's use of stylistic devices and an appreciation of the effects created.
- e. Identify and assess the impact of perceived ambiguities, nuances, and complexities within the text.

2.4 Deliver multimedia presentations:

- a. Combine text, images, and sound by incorporating information from a wide range of media, including films, newspapers, magazines, CD-ROMs, online information, television, videos, and electronic media-generated images.
- b. Select an appropriate medium for each element of the presentation.
- c. Use the selected media skillfully, editing appropriately and monitoring for quality.
- d. Test the audience's response and revise the presentation accordingly.

2.5 Recite poems, selections from speeches, or dramatic soliloquies with attention to performance details to achieve clarity, force, and aesthetic effect and to demonstrate an understanding of the meaning (e.g., Hamlet's soliloquy "To Be or Not to Be").

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