

## Analyzing Tone

### Activity 1--Chapter 7 of The Great Gatsby

1) Record three quotations from Chapter 7 below that reveal Nick's changing opinions about the people and situations around him.

a.) ""Then I turned back to Gatsby--and was startled at his expression. He looked--and this is said in all contempt for the babbled slander of his garden--as if he had 'killed a man.'"--Shocked

b.) "Tom talked incessantly, exulting and laughing, but his voice was as remote from Jordan and me as the foreign clamor on the sidewalk or the tumult of the elevated overhead. Human sympathy has its limits and we were content to let all their tragic arguments fade with the city lights behind." Cynical

c.) "I was feeling a little sick and I wanted to be alone. But Jordan lingered for a moment more. 'It's only half-past nine,' she said. I'd be damned if I'd go in; I'd had enough of all of them for one day and suddenly that included Jordan, too."--Disgusted

2) Use the Tone Words Handout to identify the tone that is created in each of these lines. Identify the tone next to the quotation. Highlight the portions of the quotation that create this tone.

3) What does the change in Nick's tone reveal about his opinion of high-society and the people who exist within it?

Nick has moved from embracing Tom, Daisy, and Gatsby--all part of high class society--to being shocked and then disgusted by their behavior. The scene in the hotel room and the subsequent death of Myrtle has made Nick realize the selfishness of these people. The events of this chapter serve as a "wake-up call" for Nick as he starts to really see the truth behind the facades of the upper class.

### Activity 2--"The Fallacy of Success" by G.K. Chesterton

Read
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<p>(1) There has appeared in our time a particular class of books and articles which I sincerely and solemnly think may be called the silliest ever known among men. They are <u>much more wild than the wildest romances of chivalry and much more dull than the dullest religious tract.</u> Moreover, the romances of chivalry were at least about chivalry; the religious tracts are about religion. But these things are about nothing; they are about what is called Success. On every bookstall, in every magazine, you may find works telling people how to succeed. They are books showing men how to succeed in everything; they are written by men who cannot even succeed in writing books. To begin with, of course, <b>there is no such thing as Success.</b> Or, if you like to put it so, there is nothing that is not successful. That a thing is successful merely means that it is; a millionaire is successful in being a millionaire and a donkey in being a donkey. Any live man has succeeded in living; any dead man may have succeeded in committing suicide. But, passing over the bad logic and bad philosophy in the phrase, we may take it, as these writers do, in the ordinary sense of success in obtaining money or worldly position. These writers profess to tell the ordinary man how he may succeed in his trade or speculation—how, if he is a builder, he may succeed as a builder; how, if he is a stockbroker, he may succeed as a stockbroker. They profess to show him how, if he is a grocer, he may become a sporting yachtsman; how, if he is a tenth-rate journalist, he may become a peer; and how, if he is a German Jew, he may become an Anglo-Saxon. This is a definite and business-like proposal, and I really think that the people who buy these books (if any people do buy them) <b>have a moral, if not a legal, right to ask for their money back.</b> <u>Nobody would dare to publish a book about electricity which literally told one nothing about electricity; no one would dare to publish an article on botany which showed that the writer did not know which end of a plant grew in the earth.</u> Yet our modern world is full of books about Success and successful people which literally contain <b>no kind of idea</b>, and scarcely any kind of verbal sense.</p>	<p>Underline two places in the text that use repetition.</p> <p>Summarize this paragraph.</p> <p>There are many books written about how to become a successful person, but the author feels these types of books are worthless; no man can teach another man to be a “Success”.</p> <p>What is the connotative meaning of the word “success” in this paragraph? Highlight the terms and phrases that the author uses to establish this connotation. Success seems to have a negative connotation in this paragraph. The author is skeptical that it exist and thinks that books about success are worthless.</p>
<p>(2) It is perfectly obvious that in any decent occupation (such as bricklaying or writing books) there are only two ways (in any special sense) of succeeding. One is by doing very good work, the other is by cheating. Both are much too simple to require any literary explanation. If you are in for the high jump, either jump higher</p>	<p>Underline two places in the text that use repetition.</p>

than any one else, or manage somehow to pretend that you have done so. If you want to succeed at whist, either be a good whist-player, or play with marked cards. You may want a book about jumping; you may want a book about whist; you may want a book about cheating at whist. But you cannot want a book about Success. Especially you cannot want a book about Success such as those which you can now find scattered by the hundred about the book-market. You may want to jump or to play cards; but you do not want to read wandering statements to the effect that jumping is jumping, or that games are won by winners. If these writers, for instance, said anything about success in jumping it would be something like this: "The jumper must have a clear aim before him. He must desire definitely to jump higher than the other men who are in for the same competition. He must let no feeble feelings of mercy (sneaked from the sickening Little Englanders and Pro-Boers) prevent him from trying to do his best. He must remember that a competition in jumping is distinctly competitive, and that, as Darwin has gloriously demonstrated, THE WEAKEST GO TO THE WALL." That is the kind of thing the book would say, and very useful it would be, no doubt, if read out in a low and tense voice to a young man just about to take the high jump. Or suppose that in the course of his intellectual **rambles** the philosopher of Success dropped upon our other case, that of playing cards, his **bracing advice** would run—"In playing cards it is very necessary to avoid the mistake (commonly made by maudlin humanitarians and Free Traders) of permitting your opponent to win the game. You must have grit and snap and go in to win. The days of idealism and superstition are over. We live in a time of science and hard common sense, and it has now been **definitely proved that in any game where two are playing IF ONE DOES NOT WIN THE OTHER WILL.**" It is all very stirring, of course; but I confess that if I were playing cards I would rather have some decent little book which told me the rules of the game. Beyond the rules of the game it is all a question either of talent or dishonesty; and I will undertake to provide either one or the other—which, it is not for me to say.

Summarize this paragraph. You cannot teach someone how to be a "Success. You can teach them the fundamentals of a job, but success is determined by hard work. It cannot and should not be attempted to be taught.

What is the connotative meaning of the word "success" in this paragraph? Highlight the terms and phrases that the author uses to establish this connotation.

The connotative meaning of success in this paragraph is negative. The author speaks of success and books about success in a sarcastic manner, stating rather than learning how to be successful, people should just focus on learning to do occupations or endeavors the right way. How does the capitalization of the word "success" contribute to the central idea of the text? Capitalizing "success" transforms a common noun into a proper noun. Chesterton is giving added importance to this word in order to make it appear to be revered. This false reverence adds to the sarcasm of the piece

(3) Turning over a popular magazine, I find a queer and amusing example. There is an article called "The Instinct that Makes People Rich." It is decorated in front with a formidable portrait of Lord Rothschild. There are many definite methods, honest and dishonest, which make people rich; the only "instinct" I know of which does it is that instinct which theological Christianity crudely describes as "the sin of avarice." That, however, is beside the present point. I wish to quote the following exquisite paragraphs as a piece of typical advice as to how to succeed. It is so practical; it

What is the author inferring about the text he is referencing? The author is inferring that the text is useless, stating that the advice is "typical" and "practical." This suggests that

leaves so little doubt about what should be our next step—	the book is useless in helping people learn to succeed.
<p>(4) "He had the money-making instinct. He seized his opportunities, the opportunities that were given by the application of the steam-engine to ocean traffic, and by the birth of railway locomotion in the wealthy but undeveloped United States of America, and consequently he amassed an immense fortune.</p> <p>(5) "Now it is, of course, obvious that we cannot all follow exactly in the footsteps of this great railway monarch. The precise opportunities that fell to him do not occur to us. Circumstances have changed. But, although this is so, still, in our own sphere and in our own circumstances, we can follow his general methods; we can seize those opportunities that are given us, and give ourselves a very fair chance of attaining riches."</p> <p>(6) Speaking about the instinct that makes people rich, the same writer remarks---</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">"In olden days its existence was fully understood. The Greeks enshrined it in the story of Midas, of the 'Golden Touch.' Here was a man who turned everything he laid his hands upon into gold. His life was a progress amidst riches. Out of everything that came in his way he created the precious metal. 'A foolish legend,' said the wiseacres of the Victorian age. 'A truth,' say we of to-day. We all know of such men. We are ever meeting or reading about such persons who turn everything they touch into gold. Success dogs their very footsteps. Their life's pathway leads unerringly upwards. They cannot fail."</p>	<p>Summarize what is stated in this referenced text.</p> <p>Even though circumstances are completely different, by seizing similar opportunities anyone can be as successful as this person, and thus become like Midas, turning everything we touch into gold.</p>
<p>(7) Unfortunately, however, Midas could fail; he did. His path did not lead unerringly upward. He starved because whenever he touched a biscuit or a ham sandwich it turned to gold. That was the whole point of the story, though the writer has to suppress it delicately, writing so near to a portrait of Lord Rothschild. The old fables of mankind are, indeed, unfathomably wise; but we must not have them expurgated in the interests of Mr. Vanderbilt. We must not have King Midas represented as an example of success; he was a failure of an unusually painful kind. Also, he had the ears of an ass. Also (like most other prominent and wealthy persons) he</p>	<p>What is the effect of the author's use of parentheses in this paragraph?</p> <p>They allow him to comment, rather humorously, on the situation, thus increasing the sarcasm in the paragraph.</p>

<p>endeavoured to conceal the fact. It was his barber (if I remember right) who had to be treated on a confidential footing with regard to this peculiarity; and his barber, instead of behaving like a go-ahead person of the Succeed-at-all-costs school and trying to blackmail King Midas, went away and whispered this splendid piece of society scandal to the reeds, who enjoyed it enormously. It is said that they also whispered it as the winds swayed them to and fro. I look reverently at the portrait of Lord Rothschild; I read reverently about the exploits of Mr. Vanderbilt. I know that I cannot turn everything I touch to gold; but then I also know that I have never tried, having a preference for other substances, such as grass, and good wine. I know that these people have certainly succeeded in something; that they have certainly overcome somebody; I know that they are kings in a sense that no men were ever kings before; that they create markets and bestride continents. Yet it always seems to me that there is some small domestic fact that they are hiding, and I have sometimes thought I heard upon the wind the laughter and whisper of the reeds.</p>	<p>Summarize this paragraph. Though Midas may have appeared successful, he wasn't really. The author leaves out his failures to try to make success seem attainable.</p>
<p>(8) At least, let us hope that we shall all live to see these <b>absurd books</b> about Success covered with a proper <b>derision and neglect</b>. They do not teach people to be successful, but they do teach people to be snobbish; they do spread a sort of <b>evil poetry of worldliness</b>. The Puritans are always denouncing books that inflame lust; what shall we say of books that inflame the viler passions of <b>avarice and pride</b>? A hundred years ago we had the ideal of the Industrious Apprentice; boys were told that by thrift and work they would all become Lord Mayors. This was fallacious, but it was manly, and had a minimum of moral truth. In our society, temperance will not help a poor man to enrich himself, but it may help him to respect himself. Good work will not make him a rich man, but good work may make him a good workman. The Industrious Apprentice rose by virtues few and narrow indeed, but still virtues. But what shall we say of the gospel preached to the new Industrious Apprentice; the Apprentice who rises not by his virtues, but avowedly by his vices?</p>	<p>What is the connotative meaning of the word "success" in this paragraph? Highlight the words used to establish this connotation. The connotation of the word "success" in this paragraph is negative. The author seems to relate only negative words to the word "success" in this paragraph.</p>

### Activity 3:

- 4) In your own words, write a statement that communicates Chesterton's argument. Chesterton's argument in this text that the true route to success comes from an individual's hard work and not through any instruction. He also suggests that oftentimes success is only a facade that hides the faults of people.
- 5) How does the structure of the text develop Chesterton's argument? Chesterton uses repetition of words and phrases to contribute to his argument. The repetition of phrases reinforces his sarcastic attitude toward books about success and their effect on people's actual successes. He repeats the phrase "you may want a book" twice and then contrasts these scenarios with "but you cannot," which supports his argument that success cannot be learned from a book.

Chesterton also uses parentheses within his text. These parentheses allow him to comment, rather humorously, on the idea of using books to learn how to be successful. This use of parentheses and the sarcasm inherent within their use supports Chesterton's argument that success is not something that can be learned or taught. The use of the parentheses makes that whole notion seem ridiculous.

Finally, Chesterton uses unusual capitalization. Capitalizing "success" throughout the text transforms a common noun into a proper noun. Chesterton is giving added importance to this word in order to make it appear to be revered. This false reverence adds to the sarcasm of the piece and his overall argument that success is only achieved through hard work and is not a skill that can be learned or taught through books.

6) How does the author use and refine the word "success" throughout the course of this text?

Chesterton develops and refines the word "success" throughout the text. At first, he seems skeptical about the term success, stating that there is no such thing. As the text moves on, the author further refines the term by introducing sarcasm and discussing success mockingly stating that books about success are "rambling" and sarcastically stating that they have "bracing advice." Finally, the last paragraph discusses success in an entirely negative manner, establishing success as the root of evils such as "avarice" and "worldliness." So while the text appears to be about the ridiculous nature of books about success, it is actually about the dangers of success itself.

7) What is similar about Nick's opinion of high-society in chapter 7 of *The Great Gatsby* and Chesterton's argument about success and successful people in "Fallacy of Success"?

Nick and Chesterton seem to be making similar arguments about success and those who portray that they are a success. Nick's tone in chapter 7 is frustrated as he realizes the ugly truth behind the polished facade of the East Egg. He states, "I'd had enough of all of them for one day and suddenly that included Jordan, too." Tom, Daisy, Jordan, and, even Gatsby, all appear to be quite successful. They have large houses, fancy cars, and lots of money. However, this success masks immorality and selfishness as evidenced by the conversation in the hotel room and the murder of Myrtle. Like Nick, Chesterton argues that success is not always positive. One of the ways he establishes this argument is to reveal how success is portrayed in books and, therefore, in the public's mind. He uses negative connotation to discuss success and those who attempt to "learn" success through books. Chesterton states that the books written about success "literally contain no kind of idea, and scarcely any kind of verbal sense." He extends his sarcastic criticism to wealthy people in general when he states that Midas "was a failure of an unusually painful kind. Also, he had the ears of an ass. Also (like most other prominent and wealthy persons) he endeavoured to conceal the fact." He uses a story from mythology to illustrate the issue with those who appear to teach success or who appear to be a success--it often hides imperfections and flaws. He also capitalizes the word "success" creating a proper noun where there should be a common noun. He is sarcastically heightening the respect shown to this idea of success just as those who read and write about success seem to do. Neither Nick nor Chesterton seem to have an issue with honest success; rather they both see the errors in attempting to interpret success at face value.

