

Required Summer Reading – AP English IV/GTAP English IV – Literature and Composition

Rationale For Assignment/Explanation for How the Assignment will be assessed in class:

Welcome to GTAP/AP English Literature and Composition. This summer, in preparation for an in-depth study of literature, you will read a collection of five pieces of short fiction that are all interconnected as “origin stories” - that is, stories that illustrate a backstory, or established background narrative, that informs the identity and motivations behind a character becoming a protagonist or antagonist in the future. You will be held accountable for annotating your text in a way that shows close-reading skills. After you finish reading, complete the following assignment on ONE document for EACH of the five short stories. The learning objective of this assignment is to study in-depth the elements of fiction and how these can be used as analytical tools in critical written literary analysis. You will complete individual graded reflective and critical analysis writing assignments based on the novel and other collaborative activities to show your knowledge and insight about this literary work. As a point of reference, please see the attached example for the level of content detail that is expected.

Due Date:

In order for you to be prepared and set yourself up for success in the lessons on the elements of fiction that I will be teaching with this unit, you will need to complete this assignment for each of the five short stories in this collection by no later than Tuesday, August 23rd. Your work will assist you in our lessons.

Short Story Collection: (All Copies are linked here in a Google Folder):

“The First Day,” Edward P. Jones

“Girl,” Jamaica Kinkaid

“The Moths,” Maria Helena Viramontes

“The Thing Around Your Neck,” Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

“A&P,” John Updike

Time Frame for Completing The Assignment:

Post-reading, this assignment should take between three and four hours to complete. This timeframe takes into consideration drafting, planning, editing/revision, and breaks.

The directions for this assignment begin on page two of this document, after the listed College Board Learning Standards and Objectives.

College Board Standards and Learning Objectives covered in this unit:

1.A Identify and describe what specific textual details reveal about a character, that character's perspective, and that character's motives.

1.B Explain the function of a character changing or remaining unchanged.

2.A Identify and describe specific textual details that convey or reveal a setting.

3.E Explain the function of a significant event or related set of significant events in a plot.

3.F Explain the function of conflict in a text.

3.C Explain the function of structure in a text.

4.B Identify and explain the function of point of view in a narrative.

5.C Identify and explain the function of a symbol.

7.B Develop a thesis statement that conveys a defensible claim about an interpretation of literature and that may establish a line of reasoning.

Literary Work Analysis Guide for the Assignment:

1. **Title**
 - Provide commentary about the significance of the title as it relates to the novel as a whole.
2. **Author**
 - Identify the author(s) of the work and his or her relevant context, including cultural and social norms at play during the writing of the novel.
3. **Characters**
 - For each of the main characters, compile a list of relevant character/personality traits and identify character type (protagonist, antagonist, dynamic, static, foil, etc.), and explore character motivations. Consider how the character(s) handles conflict (internal and external) in the novel, his or her past, and relationships with other characters.
4. **Setting(s)**
 - Describe the setting(s) of the novel and provide commentary about its significance to the meaning of the work as a whole. Be sure to include not just geographical settings but cultural and social norms as well.
5. **Themes Supported by Quotes**
 - Identify three prominent thematic ideas present throughout the novel and support them with quotes.
 - For each thematic idea, write a thematic statement that captures the importance and significance of the theme to the work as a whole.
6. **Highlighted Scenes**
 - Choose two pivotal scenes in the work and explain their importance to the characters involved and its significance to the meaning of the work as a whole.
7. **Symbols, Motifs, and Archetypes**
 - Choose at least three major literary devices that hold significance to the novel and provide commentary about the use of the device as it relates to the novel as a whole.
8. **Elements of Structure and Style**
 - Identify stylistic and structural choices and how they contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole.

EXAMPLE Literature Work Analysis Guide and Study Sheet: The Great Gatsby

1. Title: *The Great Gatsby*

- This title sets the reader up for a show. Similar to a magician who is introduced as “The Great Houdini”, *The Great Gatsby* seems like a flashy description of the true Jay Gatsby. While Gatsby is great in the sense that he throws weekly lavish parties, buys the most expensive items, and invites the most exclusive people, Gatsby’s greatness is also an allusion. His life is a sham from the “old money” point-of-view, and his friends simply take advantage of him because of his riches. The ambiguity of the title prompts readers to ask questions such as: Who is this “Great Gatsby”? Is he truly great or ironically great? What encompasses his greatness? Such questions invite the reader to dive into the life of Jay Gatsby and figure out the not-so-clearly defined answers to these questions.

2. Author: F. Scott Fitzgerald

- Relevant context. Several of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s life circumstances appear in *The Great Gatsby*:
 - o Like Nick Carraway, Fitzgerald is from Minnesota and educated at an Ivy League School (for Nick, it was Yale)
 - o Carraway and Fitzgerald moved to New York after the War (WWI)
 - o Gatsby and Fitzgerald both fall in love with a beautifully young woman while stationed at a military camp in the South
 - o Fitzgerald also displays some of Gatsby’s opulence with trying to satisfy his own wife, Zelda
- Cultural and social norms at play during the writing of the novel:
Lost Generation Characteristics:
 - o Disillusionment after WWI
 - o Alienation and Isolation
 - o Aesthetic originality and rebellion
 - o A determination to shatter taboos in order to express physical or psychological actuality
 - o A mystical hunger for meaning or spiritual enlightenment
 - o Uncertainty, meaninglessness in life, small-town mentality
 - o Underlying themes include the luxuriance of excess gratification (both monetary and sexual), the impact of the past, the desire for reciprocated love, and the rejection of conservative and time-worn values.
- Fitzgerald’s purpose in *The Great Gatsby* is to entertain the reader with a conflict-strewn love story taking place during the Roaring Twenties. The entire novel is set up almost as if it appears on a stage, with the central act in the play going to “the great, the magnificent, Jay Gatsby.” While the story should not be taken literally, Fitzgerald does include some autobiographical references (see bullet point four), which serve as the starting point for his fictional plot.

3. Characters:

1. Nick Carraway: represents the quiet Midwesterner of Fitzgerald’s existence. He travels to New York in his late 20’s to learn about the bond business and resides in West Egg (the place of “new wealth”). He is next door neighbors to Jay Gatsby, and Nick is also Daisy’s cousin, which helps him

kindle the relationship between Jay and Daisy. He also serves as the cool-tempered narrator, providing a first person point of view that borders on third considering his keen sense of discerning other's feelings (although at times, he is not the most reliable, particularly when he is drunk). In general, Nick pretends not to be embroiled in the central action of the plot, which allows him to serve as Fitzgerald's voice.

2. Jay Gatsby: an extremely wealthy West Egg inhabitant. However, his wealth is based on several illustrious activities, such as bootlegging and trading stolen goods. Growing up poor in North Dakota, Jay Gatsby aspired to rising himself out of his family's socioeconomic class. This desire to become rich was compounded by the fact that Jay Gatsby also desired a large fortune to lure the love of Daisy Buchanan, whom he met in Louisiana when he was on duty for WWI. Daisy, while promising to wait for him throughout the war, grew impatient for Gatsby's love and ended up marrying Tom Buchanan. Gatsby, who was at the time pursuing an education at Oxford, vowed he would win Daisy back. Fitzgerald enshrouds Jay Gatsby in mystery, delaying his characterization until the third chapter to emphasize the extent to which other's perceptions of Gatsby amount to providing him with a larger than life appearance. In general, Gatsby represents the archetype of a young man with unfulfilled dreams, and Fitzgerald parallels Gatsby's dream with the disintegrating American dream in the 1920's, crumbling under the excesses of consumption and capitalism. Gatsby serves as a foil to Nick Carraway: both Gatsby, who is vigorously passionate, and Nick, who is calmly collected, both represent aspects of Fitzgerald's personality.

3. Daisy Buchanan: Based on Fitzgerald's wife, Zelda, Daisy is Nick's cousin who grew up in Louisville, KY. She won over many military officer's hearts while stationed down South, including Jay Gatsby's. Gatsby lied about having a lot of money, and Daisy and he made love before Gatsby left for the war. However, instead of waiting for him to come back, Daisy chose to marry Tom Buchanan, who came from aristocratic origins, to ensure she would have a lifetime of wealth. Daisy represents the best of Gatsby's dreams, as he projects his love and aspirations on her to morph her into the symbol of all that he desires. The real Daisy falls short of Gatsby's ideals, considering she is shallow, sardonic, fickle, and bored. She not only chooses Tom over Jay, but also allows Gatsby to take the blame for killing Myrtle Wilson when it was actually herself driving the car. Also, instead of attending Gatsby's funeral, she quickly moved away with Tom. Daisy, in total, is a representation of the Roaring Twenties: everything about her is individualistic and impatient, and she cares little to nothing about what lies outside of the small world that revolves around her.

4. Settings:

- **Geographical settings:**

- New York represents the center of economic prosperity and the allusion of the American Dream. East coast is viewed as sophisticated and genteel, as opposed to the "rugged" Midwest. Moral values are loose and almost non-existent. It is the epitome of roaring 20's excess. Relationships here are often shallow, and there is a lack of real human connection.
 - East Egg: the playground of old money, where no one works or deals with life's problems. The help is hired and there is no responsibility for one's actions or consequences thereof.
 - West Egg: the "less fashionable" of the Eggs, where new money lives; Wealth is often ill-gotten, but no one asks questions as long as the parties are lively and the alcohol is flowing.
 - Valley of Ashes: located in between NYC and the Eggs, representing the working class struggle and rejection associated with attempting to better

one's station in life. The Valley is a literal ash heap of broken dreams and people, where Dr. T.J. Eckleburg watches in judgment.

- o Midwest represents simple, traditional values and an escape from the obsession with appearance and materialism. The contrast with New York is reflected in Nick's outlook – initially allured by NYC's opportunity and then repulsed by its "careless" inhabitants and their self-serving depravity.

- **Cultural and social settings:**

- o The novel takes place during the Modernist movement, which includes ideas about responding to the destruction shown in WWI, seeing the world as fragmented, a detached point of view, and questioning the meaning of life (if there was any at all).
- o The Jazz Age, or Roaring Twenties, was a time at which the American economy soared to unprecedented heights. Prohibition was also taking place, but as many people were rebelling from established rules and customs, the illegal selling of alcohol in violation of 18 th Amendment occurred. Speakeasies, or secret clubs that sold liquor, became the go-to places for gangsters or other big-business dealers. Furthermore, the chaos brought by WWI left America in a state of shock, which is why war veterans turned towards instant gratification to compensate for the emotional trauma they had to endure. Conservatism was a thing of the past, and the only thing that mattered was the here and now of another party, another drink, another girl, another car, etc.

5. Themes with Textual Support:

1. The Shallow Upper Class: Reflected in the separation of West Egg and East Egg, the schism between new money and old money resonate deeply within society. The new rich are portrayed as ostentatious, gaudy, showy, and lacking social norms, such as how Gatsby's mansion is monstrously luxuriant, filled with opulent delicacies in every room. In contrast, the old aristocracy represents grace and charm in outward appearance, yet are cold and senseless inside. For instance, after Gatsby died, Daisy and Tom Buchanan immediately left without even attending his funeral. The shallowness of such an action reflects the emptiness of the upper class, which is characteristic of the time period.

- o "I hope she'll be a fool – that's the best thing a girl can be in the world, a beautiful little fool" (17).

Spoken by Daisy Buchanan, the above quote hints not only at her pessimistic outlook of parenting a child but also is in line with gender inequality stereotypes that portray a woman as a naïve object. By talking about her infant daughter and hoping she will be a fool, Daisy reveals her own foolishness to a certain extent. Daisy, as a product of her social environment, does not value the intelligence of other women, which is reflective of the old generation of women who desire docility and proper conduct. Daisy, instead, is more in tune with the recklessness of the flapper ladies of the Roaring Twenties. By aspiring her daughter to becoming a fool, Daisy implies she wants her daughter to become more like the newer generation of women as opposed to the older generation.

Thematic Statement: The emptiness of the upper class suggests the negative consequences of the Roaring Twenties, whereby excess consumption and capitalism funnel into an individualistic lifestyle where old money prevails.

2. The Decline of the American Dream in the 1920's: While the novel superficially focuses on Jay Gatsby's love for Daisy Buchanan, at a deeper level, the story is a metaphor for the decline of the American dream due to hedonism. By greedily pursuing sexual and monetary pleasure, the people of the 1920's have corrupted what it means to be an American citizen, choosing to dissociate themselves from all expectations of previously proper conduct. Drunk by the soaring heights of the stock market and the overwhelming amounts of illegal alcohol, the people of the 1920's had not a care in the world for the collective American identity, which in turn, resulted in the land of opportunity morphing in to the land of corrupted excess.

- o "Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter – tomorrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms further . . . so we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" (193).

By concluding the novel with these words, the novel reveals the significance of the past dreams of the future. The connection of Gatsby with the green light suggests how they both embody the American ideal of pursuing one's dream, however distorted it may be. Furthermore, by using such phrases as the future that "year by year recedes" and stating how people are "borne back ceaselessly into the past," Fitzgerald purposely intermingles with past with the future to ascertain how the former affects the latter and vice versa. For instance, as time goes up, our past memories sometimes become more inaccurate, and as our future is based on our past experiences, our path towards the future becomes wrongfully directed, similar to a boat going against a current. These images suggest how sometimes it is important to forget the past so that one can pursue the future unhindered by previous thoughts and desires.

Thematic Statement: Instant gratification, reflected in both the desire to make easy money and the hope of immediate love, paves the way towards corruption, as both destroy the ideal American dream of collective, altruistic, hard-working citizens.

3. Unrequited Love: It hurts to not be loved back, and Jay Gatsby bears the brunt of this pain while he longs for Daisy Buchanan. After leaving her to go off to war, Gatsby could not take his mind off her, and he was considerably distraught once he found out she was married to someone else when he returned. However, he resolved to win her back, and reoriented his life so that it was centered on her. Every action he made was so that he could be one step closer to winning her over. From amassing large amounts of wealth to throwing his grand parties every weekend, he hoped to attract her attention, but to no avail. Indeed, his obsession of her love could potentially be viewed as the sole cause of its destruction, because he inevitably built her up to be a larger-than-life character much different than her true, shallow self.

- o "For half a minute there wasn't a sound. Then from the living room I heard a sort of choking murmur and part of a laugh, followed by Daisy's voice on a clear artificial note: 'I certainly am awfully glad to see you again'" (86).

Told in the point of view of Nick, the above quote displays the surprising emptiness of in the meeting between Gatsby and Daisy. Instead of embracing or laughing with joy, they both stand in awkward silence, Gatsby silent because he is awestruck at the sight of his long lost love and Daisy silent in ignorant awkwardness. Finally, Daisy breaks the sound to ease her discomfort, but what she says is superficial. Her statement reveals for the first time that she does not carry the weight of true love for Gatsby in the way he has for her throughout the

past 5 years. By stating how she is “certainly” and “awfully glad” to see Gatsby, it seems as if her exaggerations are deceptive, and the qualifiers are a superfluous addition to the fact that her feelings toward Gatsby are purely convenience-motivated, rather than vulnerable or emotional.

Thematic Statement: The pains of enduring unrequited love often result in individuals taking extreme actions to satisfy such emotional cravings.

6. Highlighted Scenes:

1. Gatsby's and Daisy's reunion at tea: After years of separation, Jay Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan finally meet in the house of Nick Buchanan. However, considering how infatuated Jay is with Daisy, the reader would assume such an interaction would be ideally romantic. Such was not the case. Considering how Gatsby has spent years meticulously crafting his life so he could once again confront Daisy, having the opportunity arrive so quickly is too much for Gatsby to handle. Instead of engaging in a conversation with her, he stares lovestruck and dumfounded. By letting his guard down for the first time, the reader suddenly senses the dangers of Gatsby's extreme infatuation with Daisy, and furthermore shows how Gatsby's extravagance is just a superficial layer to hide the lover boy mentality that exists beneath. Such a startling revelation warns the reader for the destruction yet to come in their relationship.

2. The Car Accident: Tom Buchanan's mistress, Myrtle Wilson, was struck by the car in that Daisy drove. Since Gatsby was in the passenger's seat, he took the blame for the accident, which revealed his bravery and Daisy's cowardice. Serving as their last interaction together, it is quite sad how Daisy remains true to her narcissistic self and Gatsby remains true to his obsessive love. Both are distorted characters who lack the universal values of honesty, even-temperedness, reflection, and caution. Furthermore, this is the last event in which Jay Gatsby sees Daisy, so by having it enshrouded in the death of another person, it seems Fitzgerald is metaphorically suggesting the fruitlessness of their relationship, and how it hurts more than harms each other and outsiders. Such a bold implication resonates throughout the entire novel, where Gatsby destroys himself for his love of Daisy and envelops all those around him in the optical illusion of his dream of Daisy, which is dangerous in its enticing inaccuracy.

7. Symbols, Motifs, and Archetypes

1. Symbolism: The Green Light at the end of Daisy's East Egg dock is the light at which Gatsby stares so longingly at every night before he retires. His obsession with the light parallels his obsession with Daisy and, in a larger sense, the obsession every American has with his or her dream. In representing hopes for the future, the green light acts as an unnatural beacon, suggesting its exaggerated idealization. Such distortion is prevalent in the items it symbolizes, including Gatsby's obsessive love and American's capitalistic intensity.

2. Motifs: The motif of the weather is universal in all genres of literature, and Fitzgerald does not hold back in using this reservoir of metaphorical power. Every weather change in the book parallels the emotional journey of the novel. For instance, when Daisy and Gatsby first reunite, it is pouring down rain, which enshrouds the atmosphere in melancholy. However, towards the end the sun appears, indicating how their love has been rekindled. Furthermore, Gatsby's confrontation with Tom occurs on the hottest day of the year, which parallels the emotional heatedness of the situation at stake: Gatsby's attempts of winning Daisy over from Tom. Wilson kills Gatsby on the first day of autumn, and the chill in the air is symbolic of the chilling death of the central character to the novel. Gatsby, who is floating in the pool despite the coldness, seems to resist the weather just as he resists

time: no matter how far into the past his previous relationship with Daisy was, he will always try to win her back.

3. Point of View: Fitzgerald's experimentation with point of view helps provide The Great Gatsby with another layer of meaning. By having Nick Carraway introduce the story, Fitzgerald uses him as fill-in narrator, retelling the events of Gatsby's life as Nick views them. The selection of Nick is ideal, for he embodies several qualities of Fitzgerald and he is far enough removed from the plot to be considered impartial in the story. However, some critics believe he is biased, considering how his cousin is the object of Gatsby's infatuation. In general, however, Nick represents an equilibrium of narrator and character, for he is far enough away to remain mostly impartial and yet close enough to know what is at stake. Furthermore, Fitzgerald delays the introduction of Gatsby until the third chapter, which builds up the character of Gatsby and establishes his enigmatic and grandiose appearance. By choosing to have Nick retell the rumors swirling around Gatsby and his extravagant parties first, Fitzgerald provides the distorted image of Gatsby of which he is most known for. Such reflections in point of view deepen the characterization of Gatsby and question who the true Gatsby is.

8. Elements of Structure and Style:

- **Flashback/reflection**
The story is told as a reflection by Nick in order to reestablish his credibility as a narrator. Distance from the actual events provides reflective moments of clarity on Gatsby and his "extraordinary capacity for hope." Knowing the outcome of the events, Nick sets Gatsby up as a tragic figure and the parallels to the collective idea of the American Dream are established. The reader gets the sense that Nick has learned from this experience and provides the benefit of that maturity in his recollection.
- **Flowery prose**
Fitzgerald's elaborate, drawn-out sentences, rich with imagery serve to underscore the grandeur of NYC (particularly East Egg) and the captivation all characters experience under a spell so powerful it clouds their morality. This style has the effect of dazzling the reader in conjunction with Nick who is at once, "enchanted and repelled."
- **Final Line**
The entire novel is based on the extended indoctrination of the reader that the American Dream, and by extension, all ambitions are fruitless and that our aims are delusional and misplaced. However, in the last line, which offers a literal lifeboat of hope, Fitzgerald suggests that just maybe we are the ones that will overtake the current and against all odds achieve our desires. This technique has the effect of first demoralizing the reader and then reassuring him that even singular obsession is better than apathy.