

Explanation of assignment: *The Great Gatsby* essay, 11th grade, 2nd semester

Before students begin reading *The Great Gatsby*, they are provided notes on the Modernist period, archetypes, and important elements of 1920s America. During the course of the reading, students are required to annotate using sticky notes. The sticky notes they place in their novel examine the various archetypes and other literary devices Fitzgerald uses, as well as examples of Modernism. These are meant to prepare them for an in-depth literary analysis essay on the work. Students spend about three weeks reading the novel and completing preparatory work for the essay topics. Topics are provided to students during the early part of the reading, but essays are drafted in class for approximately three days when the novel is completed.

English III
The Great Gatsby

**Modernism, Archetypes, Symbolism, and Themes
in *The Great Gatsby***

If you've been paying attention in class, you already know that *The Great Gatsby* is worth reading and studying for a variety of reasons, regardless of whether or not one enjoys the book. Because we discussed so many different elements of the novel, and how those elements relate to larger concepts like archetypes, symbolism, and literary periods, you will be able to choose from a variety of essay topics. Pick one that interests you, since you will have to write between 1000 and 1250 words about it.

Topics (Pick ONE):

1. *The Great Gatsby* was written during the Modernist period in American literature. How does the book exemplify the style, structure, and themes of Modernism? What is Fitzgerald's purpose for using these techniques?
2. Jay Gatsby is a complex character with multiple defining traits that each contribute to his mystique and appeal. Analyze Gatsby as a combination of several archetypes, pointing out both how he conforms to certain common archetypal traits and challenges others, as well as how those archetypes relate to the book's themes.
3. The definition of symbolism is "giving an item (or event) a meaning or significance beyond the item itself." Identify the most important symbols in *The Great Gatsby* and explain both what they really represent, and how they contribute to both the themes and the dramatic power of the story.
4. Fitzgerald is crazy about color. Explain how he uses colors and their archetypal meanings to enhance the mood in the story. Don't just point out when he uses colors. You must explain how those colors affect the mood of the scene or connect to the book's themes.

Requirements and Checklist:

- _____ 1. At least 1000 to 1250 words (Word Count at end of essay)
- _____ 2. MLA format
- _____ 3. Correct Method Used for Citing Quotations and Paraphrases (see sample below)
 - Tom says, "Don't you call me 'old sport!'" (Fitzgerald 134)
 - Or Fitzgerald writes, "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past" (180).
 - Or Since Daisy's voice is "full of money," she represents the upper class (Fitzgerald 120).
- _____ 4. Introduction Paragraph with Hook, Central idea, and Thesis Statement
- _____ 5. Body Paragraphs analyzing your chosen topic, supported with textual evidence
- _____ 6. Conclusion Paragraph summarizing main points and Answering "So What?"
- _____ 7. Completed Typed Draft with Comments/Edits
- _____ 8. Revised Final Draft