

Summer Assignment- The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald

AP Literature and Composition

Assignment Overview

Welcome to AP Literature and Composition! This summer, you will read F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, a masterpiece of American literature that explores themes of the American Dream, wealth, love, and moral decay in the Jazz Age. This assignment will prepare you for our in-depth study of the novel in the fall. I recommend you purchase your own book of *The Great Gatsby* so that you may annotate it while reading. However, you may also borrow a book from your local library.

Due Date: First day of school August 6, 2026

Part 1: Reading Comprehension Questions

As you read, answer the following questions in complete sentences. Provide specific textual evidence (with page numbers) to support your responses.

Chapters 1-2

1. How does Nick describe himself at the beginning of the novel? What does this reveal about his character and reliability as a narrator?
2. Describe the contrast between East Egg and West Egg. What might this geographical distinction symbolize?
3. What is your first impression of Daisy and Tom Buchanan? How does Fitzgerald characterize their lifestyle and marriage?
4. Analyze the setting of the Valley of Ashes. What does it represent in the context of the novel?
5. Who is Myrtle Wilson, and what is her relationship with Tom? What does this reveal about Tom's character?

Chapters 3-4

6. Describe Gatsby's party in Chapter 3. What do you notice about the guests and their behavior?
7. What rumors circulate about Gatsby at his party? Why do you think Fitzgerald includes these conflicting stories?
8. How does Nick finally meet Gatsby? What is surprising about their first encounter?
9. What does Jordan Baker reveal to Nick about Gatsby and Daisy's past relationship?

10. What is significant about Gatsby's connection to Meyer Wolfsheim? What does this suggest about Gatsby's wealth?

Chapters 5-6

11. Describe the reunion between Gatsby and Daisy in Chapter 5. How does Gatsby behave, and what does this reveal about his feelings?
12. What is the significance of Gatsby showing Daisy his house and possessions, particularly the shirts?
13. What is the truth about Gatsby's background as revealed in Chapter 6? How does this contrast with the rumors?
14. Analyze the quote: "Can't repeat the past? Why of course you can!" What does this reveal about Gatsby's character and motivations?

Chapters 7-9

15. What happens during the confrontation between Gatsby and Tom at the Plaza Hotel? What does Tom reveal about Gatsby?
16. Describe the hit-and-run accident. Who is driving, and who is killed? Why is this significant?
17. What does Nick discover about Tom and Daisy after Myrtle's death? What does he mean when he calls them "careless people"?
18. How does Gatsby die? Who is responsible, and why?
19. Describe Gatsby's funeral. What is significant about who attends and who doesn't?
20. What is the meaning of the novel's final lines about boats and the current? How does this relate to the novel's themes?

Part 2: Literary Analysis Essay

Write a 3–4-page **essay** (typed, double-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, MLA format) on **ONE** of the following prompts:

Essay Option 1: The American Dream

Analyze how Fitzgerald presents and critiques the American Dream through the character of Jay Gatsby. Consider what Gatsby's pursuit reveals about the promise and failure of the American Dream in the 1920s, and how this commentary remains relevant today.

Essay Option 2: Symbolism

Select **three symbols** from the novel (examples: the green light, the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, the Valley of Ashes, Gatsby's mansion, the weather, colors, etc.) and analyze how Fitzgerald uses these symbols to develop the novel's central themes.

Essay Option 3: Class and Social Mobility

Analyze how Fitzgerald portrays social class and the possibility of social mobility in the novel. Consider the distinctions between old money, new money, and the working class, and what the novel suggests about crossing these boundaries.

Essay Requirements

Your essay must include:

- **A clear thesis statement** that makes an arguable claim
- **Textual evidence:** At least 5-7 quotations from the novel, properly cited in MLA format
- **Literary analysis:** Deep analysis of how Fitzgerald's literary techniques (symbolism, characterization, imagery, diction, tone, etc.) develop your argument
- **Sophisticated organization:** Clear topic sentences, smooth transitions, and logical progression of ideas

Submission Guidelines

- Bring a **printed copy** of your comprehension questions and essay on the first day of school
- Be prepared to discuss the novel in class
- All work must be your own; plagiarism will result in a zero and disciplinary action

✓ **Annotate as you read** – Mark important passages, symbols, and character development moments

✓ **Keep a reading journal** – Jot down your thoughts, questions, and observations

✓ **Look up unfamiliar words and historical references** – Understanding the 1920s context enriches your reading

✓ **Start early** – Don't wait until the last week of summer!

✓ **Reread key passages** – Great literature reveals more on second reading

Welcome to AP Literature! I look forward to discussing this remarkable novel with you in the fall.

If you have questions over the summer, please email me at mackka@boe.richmond.k12.ga.us

Happy reading! 📖 ✨