

The Great Gatsby (1925)

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

Author Factoids

Setting

Themes

The “American Dream”

The Great Gatsby Reading Guide

Answer the questions to study for the test.

What is the "American Dream"?

Chapter 1

1. What advice did Nick's father give to him?
2. What are some of the advantages given to Nick?
3. What does Nick mean when he says that he became a well-rounded man, or a "limited specialist?"
What does Nick think you need to be successful?
4. What does Nick's background so far tell us about him as a narrator of the story?
5. What is the difference between East Egg and West Egg?
6. Describe Tom's character.
7. Describe Daisy's character.
8. What book as Tom just read? What is it about? What further information does this give us about his character?
9. What piece of gossip does Jordan Baker reveal to Nick?
10. Why does Daisy want her girl to grow up to be a "beautiful fool?"
11. What does Nick mean when Daisy "asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society?"
What is this secret society?
12. Describe the image of Gatsby at the end of the chapter. Why is this almost an awkward situation for Nick?

Chapter 2

13. Describe the Valley of Ashes.

14. Who, or what is Dr. T.J. Eckleburg?

15. Who is George Wilson? What is his profession?

16. Describe Myrtle.

17. What is the difference between George and Myrtle?

18. What arrangements are made during this meeting? Why is this moment tense?

19. What is the first thing that Myrtle does when she gets to the city? What further information does this give us about her character?

20. What does Nick "admit" before giving a description of the party that follows. Again, what does this suggest about his role as a narrator?

21. Why did Myrtle marry George?

22. What happens to Myrtle at the end of the scene? Why did this happen to her?

Chapter 3

23. What does Nick think about his Gatsby's parties?

24. What about Nick is different from the other guests at the party he attends? What can we conclude from this detail?

25. List all the stories and rumors that Nick hears at the party.

26. What is Nick's first impression of Gatsby?

27. What does Nick say about Gatsby's smile? What does this mean exactly about Gatsby's personality?
28. Does Nick believe Gatsby background so far?
29. What are the couples fighting about?
30. What incident occurs while leaving the party?
31. What do these incidents suggest about the other party-goers?
32. What is Gatsby constantly interrupted by at the party?
33. What does Nick tell Jordan? What does Jordan's response say about her?

Chapter 4

34. Why does Fitzgerald go through the process of listing all of the acquaintances at Gatsby's parties?
35. Why does Nick want to laugh at Gatsby's stories?
36. Does Nick end up believing Gatsby? Is there anything odd about the circumstances of his change in opinion?
37. Why do you think Gatsby revealed his life story to Nick then?
38. Why is so much attention paid to Wolfsheim's nose?
39. Who does Wolfsheim mistake Nick for?
40. Again—Gatsby is interrupted—what does suggest about Gatsby's character?
41. What is Wolfsheim infamous for?

42. What is Wolfsheim's purpose in the overall story-telling?
43. Prediction: Where did Gatsby disappear to before meeting Tom?
44. What does Jordan Baker reveal to Nick at tea?
45. What does Daisy's drunkenness suggest about the circumstances of her marriage?
46. Why does Jordan think Gatsby held all of the big parties?
47. Through Jordan, what does Gatsby ask Nick to do?
48. Nick says, "There are only the pursued, the pursuing, the busy and the tired." What does Nick mean? How does each character in the novel fit into this idea?

Chapter 5

49. Why does Gatsby try to offer Nick a job?
50. Why does Gatsby have so many services ordered to Nick's house?
51. What is the weather like during this scene? What does this suggest about the meeting?
52. Describe the meeting between Gatsby and Daisy.
53. What happens with the weather during the reunion? What does this suggest?
54. Why does Gatsby want Daisy to see his house?
55. Why does Daisy start sobbing at the sight of Gatsby's "beautiful shirts?"
56. What do you make of Gatsby's phone call he receives during the tour of his house?

57. Describe Klipsringer.

58. Overall, how did the reunion go for Gatsby?

Chapter 6

59. Why does a reporter show up at Gatsby's house? What new rumors does he share with Nick?

60. Who was Dan Cody? What role did he play in Gatsby's life?

61. Who was Ella Kaye? What happened regarding Cody's death that was suspicious?

62. Why is Tom mad at Gatsby for accepting the invitation to dinner?

63. Why does Gatsby point out all of the celebrities at his party? What is Tom's response?

64. What is Tom's reaction to the dinner seating arrangements? What does he think of the people at his table?

65. What does Tom accuse Gatsby of doing?

66. Why didn't Tom and Daisy like the party?

67. How did Gatsby gauge the success of his party?

68. When Nick told Gatsby that "you can't repeat the past", Gatsby replied, "Why of course you can!" Why does Gatsby think he can repeat the past?

Chapter 7

69. Describe Daisy and Gatsby's new relationship.

70. Why does Gatsby fire all of his servants?

71. What is the weather like in this scene? Think about how that might connect with the events that follow.
72. How did Daisy secretly tell Gatsby that she loved him in Tom's presence?
73. Compare George Wilson and Tom. What did each man learn about his wife and how did they each react?
74. Why does Daisy tell Gatsby that he "wants too much?" What is she referring to in this situation?
75. What has Tom's investigation turned up about Gatsby's businesses?
76. Describe the fight between Gatsby and Tom.
77. Why is it significant that it's Nick's 30th birthday? What does it show us about the characters?
78. What happens to Myrtle?
79. Why does George blame Tom at first?
80. What important detail does Gatsby reveal about this event?
81. What do you think Tom and Daisy were saying to each other in the kitchen? Do you think that Tom knew about Daisy? Why, why not?

Chapter 8

82. How does Fitzgerald achieve a gloomy mood in the beginning of this chapter?
83. Why doesn't Gatsby want to skip town after the accident?
84. Describe the "pressure" Daisy felt while Gatsby was delayed in Oxford.
85. What season is it going to be soon?

86. Why doesn't Gatsby want the servant to drain the pool yet? What does this suggest about his character?
87. What does Nick mean when he tells Gatsby that he is "worth the whole bunch put together?"
88. What does Michaelis find in the drawer at Wilson's garage? What does it suggest?
89. How do T.J. Eckleberg's eyes affect Mr. Wilson?
90. Describe the events leading up to the end of the chapter.

Chapter 9

91. Why did Nick take care of Gatsby's funeral?
92. What does Wolfsheim cite as the reason for not helping with the funeral?
93. Describe Mr. Gatz.
94. How was Jay Gatz's childhood schedule consistent with the adult Gatsby's behavior?
95. Who attended Gatsby's funeral?
96. Why does Owl-eyes call Gatsby a "poor son of a bitch?"
97. What is the purpose of Nick's last meeting with Jordan?
98. Why does Nick call Tom and Daisy "careless people"?
99. What does the last sentence mean to you?

After Reading

100. Does this novel have villains and heroes? Why, why not? If yes, who fits into these categories and why?

101. Nick is both part of the action and acting as an objective commentator. Does this narration style work? Why, why not?

102. How did Fitzgerald use weather to reflect the mood of the story?

103. Again, why are we still reading a book written in the 1920's? What gives a book its longevity? And which of its themes are eternal in the American psyche.

The Secret Society

Analyze what Nick means by "secret society" by looking at teachers.

Things Teachers Wear	Things Teachers Do	Things Teachers Say

So what does the secret society do in the novel that leads Nick to this idea?

Secret Society Wears	Secret Society Does	Secret Society Says

The Great Gatsby: Colors

Fitzgerald uses color throughout his novel as a way to give deeper insight to the images he provides. With your group, complete the following list, identifying the color of each item/image. In some cases, you will need to infer a color as Fitzgerald might not directly state a specific color.

Pg. #	Passage from Text	Related Characters	Analysis

The Great Gatsby: Automobiles

Fitzgerald uses the automobile as an overarching symbol in his novel. Find at least 5 scenes from the novel where automobiles play a significant role. List the scenes below (using page numbers) and identify what role the car played in the scene.

Pg. #	Passage from the Text	Related Characters	Analysis

The Great Gatsby Character Sketch

Draw an outline of your character's body. Find quotations to illustrate at least 5 of the following body parts in preparation for talking to the class about what your character symbolizes. Place the quotations around the character's outline with the page number. Each group will present its sketch to the class. **At the top of the page, write the idea that your group thinks your character symbolizes.**

Head – Intellectual side of the character – What are his dreams? Visions? Philosophies he keeps inside?

Eyes – Seeing through the character's eyes – What memorable sights affect him? How?

Ears – Hearing through the character's ears – What does he notice and remember others saying to him? How is he affected?

Nose – Smelling through the character's nose – What smells affect him? How?

Mouth – The character's communication – What philosophy does the character share/espouse? What arguments/debates? What song would symbolize the character's philosophy of life? What lyrics/images from the song would symbolize his or her philosophy?

Arms – Working – What is the character's relationship to work in general? To specific work?

Hands – The practical side of the character – What conflicts does he or she deal with? How?

Heart – The emotional side of the character – What does he or she love? Whom? How?

Torso – The instinctive side of the character – What doesn't he or she like about himself or herself? What does he or she hide? What brings the character pain? What does he or she fear? (Describe his or her "dark" side.)

Legs – The playful side of the character – What does he or she do for fun? What are his or her avocations?

Feet – The character's mobility – Where has he or she been (literally/figuratively)? How has he or she been affected by travel or setting?

"Wings" – The character's future – Where is he or she going?