

Email: hengland@flintriveracademy.com

Summer Reading Assignment – AP Literature

Students will read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Students are required to purchase a **printed** copy of the book. The class will use this book extensively during the first grading period.

Students will answer reading comprehension and reader response questions about each chapter over summer. These questions are included in this document and may be download using the following link <https://tinyurl.com/dsfcr6b>. or from Google Classroom. All responses must be written in complete sentences using Standard American English. This work must be handed in on the first day of school. Responses may be written in a new green, college ruled composition notebook or typed in a Google Doc. Students may make a copy of the Google Doc with the questions and type responses after each question.

Note: These questions require close reading and time for reflection, so this work cannot be completed in a few hours.

Sample comprehension question:

According to *Gatsby*, where in the Midwest was he born? What does this claim suggest about him?

Sample response:

On page 70, *Gatsby* states that he was born in San Francisco. As San Francisco is in California and not in the Midwest, it is clear to Nick and to the reader that *Gatsby* does not know where the Midwest is or does not know where San Francisco is. This suggests that he is lying about where he was born and possibly about his education.

Sample Reader Response Question:

After *Gatsby* produces the war medal and the Oxford photograph, Nick concludes that “it was all true.” Do you agree?

Sample response:

On page 70, Nick didn’t believe that *Gatsby* story about living “like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe” and he has to try hard to not laugh at the ridiculous story. Then just a few minutes later *Gatsby* shows him a photograph of him holding a cricket bat in a place that could be Oxford. The photograph is probably real but doesn’t prove *Gatsby* was a student at Oxford University. The war medal is from a little-known country, and it would be hard to authenticate. It’s a little too convenient that *Gatsby* has it in his pocket along with the photograph to show Nick. In this moment, Nick seems to be naïve and too ready to overlook discrepancies in *Gatsby*’s earlier story.

Email Mrs. England if you have any questions: hengland@flintriveracademy.com

The Great Gatsby: Chapter 1

Comprehension

1. What does Nick mean when he says about his father's advice, "as my father snobbishly suggested and I snobbishly repeat"?
2. According to Nick, why has he been "privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men"?
3. What does Nick mean when he says that "the intimate revelations of young men or at least the terms in which they express them are usually plagiaristic"?
4. What does Nick see as the defining characteristic of Gatsby?
5. How has Nick been affected by his service in the war?
6. Describe the class status of Nick's family and compare it to what we learn about Tom's class status and attitude.

Reader Response

1. Describe Tom Buchanan.
2. What does Nick mean when he says Jordan sits "with her chin raised a little as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall"?
3. How does Nick seem to feel about his family? Give examples. Do you feel his opinion is justified? Why or why not?
4. What is your first impression of Tom, given Nick's description of him? Why?
5. Does Nick's portrayal of Tom as contemptuous, aggressive, and restless seem justified? Why or why not?
6. What is your impression of Daisy?
7. How does Nick feel about Daisy? Try to be as specific as possible and quote passages from the text in support of your response.

The Great Gatsby: Chapter 2

Comprehension

1. What does Nick mean when he says, "This is a valley of ashes—a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens, where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air"?
2. In actuality, what are the eyes of Doctor Eckleburg?
3. What seems to be Nick's opinion of Myrtle Wilson?
4. What does Mrs. McKee mean when she confesses, "I almost married a little kike who'd been after me for years. I knew he was below me"? What does Myrtle mean when she replies, "At least you didn't marry him ... Well I married him ... And that's the difference between your case and mine"?
5. Does Mr. McKee produce high art (addressed to connoisseurs) or low art (addressed to the masses)? How do you know?
6. What happens from the time Nick leaves Myrtle's apartment to the time he wakes up in Penn Station?

Reader Response

1. After reading the first three paragraphs of this chapter, what mood do you feel? What word choices or phrases create that feeling?
2. How do you feel about Tom after he leaves the garage? After learning Tom's reasons for not getting a divorce from Daisy? What passages create these responses?
3. Myrtle's party is the second of three parties Nick attends in the first three chapters of the book. Which group of people can you relate more to, those at the Buchanans' or those at Myrtle's? Why? What is your reaction to the other group? Why?
4. What is your reaction to the scene in which Mrs. McKee suggests that her husband should make a "study" of Myrtle? Which of the author's descriptions of her and the other characters in the scene color your reaction?

5. What is your reaction to the last three paragraphs of the chapter?

The Great Gatsby: chapter 3

Comprehension

1. How often does Gatsby have his parties during the summer? How do you know? How much work goes into throwing the parties? Give examples.
2. How does Jordan's group differ from the other guests? Under what circumstances and for what reasons does it disband?
3. What does Nick mean when he says that the guests at the party "conducted themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with amusement parks"? In comparison, how does Nick himself behave?
4. Besides the rumors, in what ways is Gatsby an enigma?
5. In describing the behavior of Jordan's date, the undergraduate, Nick uses the euphemism "obstetrical conversation." What does that phrase mean?
6. Nick says that he went to Gatsby's parties only "three nights several weeks apart." List the various things Nick does most nights.
7. Why doesn't Nick engage in the Jazz Age activities that he observes other people enjoying when he is walking around New York City at night?

Reader Response

1. Whose party—the Buchanans', Myrtle's, or Gatsby's—does Nick seem to enjoy most? How do you know? Do you feel he is justified in preferring the one he does? Why?
2. What is your impression of Jordan's group when you first read about them? Did it change by the end of the chapter? Why?
3. What had you expected Gatsby to look like? Why?
4. What is your response to the end of the party? Why?
5. What is your impression of the way Nick spends most nights? What details lead you to this impression?

The Great Gatsby: chapter 4

Comprehension

1. According to Gatsby, where in the Midwest was he born? What does this claim suggest about him?
2. Why does Nick find it so hard not to laugh at Gatsby's claim about how he lived immediately after the War?
3. What is Nick's reaction to seeing a limousine driven by a white chauffeur that contains three African-Americans who look at Gatsby's car in "haughty rivalry"?
4. Characterize Mr. Wolfsheim. What is his ethnicity? Occupation? Connection to Gatsby?
5. In this chapter, what do we learn from Jordan about Daisy and Gatsby's past? Daisy and Tom's?

Reader Response

1. After Gatsby produces the war medal and the Oxford photograph, Nick concludes that "it was all true." Do you agree?
2. How do you feel about Nick as a narrator after you hear him accept Gatsby's story as "all true"?
3. How do you feel about Nick's response to the limousine that drives by them on the Queensboro Bridge?
4. How do you feel about Nick's characterization of Mr. Wolfsheim, a Jewish gentleman?
5. How seriously do you take Mr. Wolfsheim? Why?
6. How do you feel about Daisy after hearing Jordan's story?
7. How does the information provided by Jordan alter how you feel about Gatsby? Why?
8. Do you think Nick is sincerely interested in Jordan as an individual or do you think Nick is only yearning for love? Why?

The Great Gatsby: chapter 5

Comprehension

1. Why does Gatsby suggest to Nick that they go to Coney Island or take a swim in his pool?
2. When Gatsby offers to let Nick in on a side business, Nick thinks, “because the offer was obviously and tactlessly for a service to be rendered, I had no choice except to cut him off there.” What does Nick mean by “a service to be rendered”? How does he feel about Gatsby’s offer?
3. When Nick, after letting in Daisy, opens the door to answer Gatsby’s knock, he describes his guest as “standing in a puddle of water glaring tragically into my eyes. ... With his hands in his pockets he stalked by me into the hall...” Why was Gatsby outside? Why is he upset with Nick?
4. What is Nick’s attitude toward “the colossal vitality of [Gatsby’s] illusion”?
5. What does Nick mean in the chapter’s last paragraph when he says, “they looked back at me, remotely, possessed by an intense life?”

Reader Response

1. What is your reaction to Gatsby’s changed and changing demeanor in this chapter?
2. What is your reaction to Daisy’s changed demeanor in this chapter?
3. What is Nick’s attitude toward Gatsby in this chapter? How does that make you feel about Nick? Why?
4. Is Nick’s role in arranging this reunion for Gatsby and Daisy consistent with what we have come to believe about his character? How does it alter your perception of Nick?

The Great Gatsby: chapter 6

Comprehension

1. What difference does Nick imply between “really” and “legally” when he says, “James Gatz—that was really, or at least legally, his name”?
2. Why is Mr. Sloane so rude to Gatsby? Does Gatsby seem to notice the rudeness?
3. Now that he has reunited with Daisy, what more does Gatsby want from her? In Gatsby’s mind, what will these actions amount to?

Reader Response

1. What is your reaction to Dan Cody’s taking Jay Gatsby aboard the Tuolomee?
2. Do you find Gatsby to be “appallingly sentimental[]” in relating the moment when he first kissed Daisy?
3. What is your reaction to what Gatsby wants from Daisy? Do you think that he really loves her? Why or why not?

The Great Gatsby: chapter 7

Comprehension

1. How does Nick characterize the new people working at Gatsby’s house?
2. Why is Gatsby no longer holding his usual Saturday parties?
3. Why is Gatsby troubled by the presence of Daisy’s child?
4. What does Tom imply by saying that Gatsby is not an Oxford man because “‘He wears a pink suit!’” and by facetiously suggesting that Gatsby is from “Oxford, New Mexico”?
5. How does Daisy react when Tom accuses Gatsby of the affair? What might her behavior suggest?
6. What does Daisy mean when she tells Gatsby that he wants “too much!”?
7. What is the clear implication of Nick’s observation that Gatsby “began to talk excitedly to Daisy, denying everything, defending his name against accusations that had not been made”?
8. What are the circumstances leading up to Myrtle’s death?
9. Why does Nick include Jordan in the group of people of whom he has had enough that day?

Reader Response

1. How do you feel about Daisy after reading this chapter? Explain the reason for your response.

2. How do you feel about Tom after reading this chapter?
3. By the end of the chapter do you share Nick's opinion of the other main characters ("I'd had enough of all of them for one day, and suddenly that included Jordan too")?
4. What were your thoughts when you first read the paragraph beginning "The young Greek, Michaelis, who ran the coffee joint ..."? When you read the paragraph after that?

The Great Gatsby: chapter 8

Comprehension

1. What about Daisy does Gatsby find "excitingly desirable"?
2. What does Nick mean when he says, "at any moment the invisible cloak of his [Gatsby's] uniform might slip from his shoulders"? In what sense is Gatsby's uniform a cloak? Why is the cloak invisible?
3. What does Nick imply when he says, "So he [Gatsby] made the most of his time. He took what he could get, ravenously and unscrupulously—eventually he took Daisy one still October night, took her because he had no real right to touch her hand"?
4. What does Fitzgerald mean when he writes about Gatsby "but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail"?
5. Nick reports that "After the Armistice he tried frantically to get home but some complication or misunderstanding sent him to Oxford instead." Here, Nick seems to be portraying Gatsby in an artificially positive light, especially since Gatsby is able to return to the States right after Daisy and Tom are married. Given his past with Daisy, what might be Gatsby's real reason for not returning immediately to Louisville?

Reader Response

1. Based on this chapter, do you think Gatsby was ever sincerely in love with Daisy? Why or why not?
2. Do you think Nick is a reliable narrator in this chapter?
3. Is Gatsby's death inevitable, or is it a surprise? Why?
4. Is the way that Fitzgerald has Gatsby die appropriate? Can you imagine other ways that Fitzgerald could have had Gatsby die?
5. What do you think of Daisy's decision to marry Tom?

The Great Gatsby: chapter 9

Comprehension

1. What is Wolfsheim's response to Nick's request that he come to the funeral?
2. Who was the only one of the partygoers to attend Gatsby's funeral? Where have we previously seen him? What is his response to the lack of attendees?
3. What role does Tom Buchanan play in Gatsby's death? How is Tom's role ambiguous?
4. Describe Nick's personal impression of the "Middle West."

Reader Response

1. Do you view Gatsby's "Schedule" and "List of Resolves" with admiration or irony? Why?
2. What is your opinion of Nick in this chapter?
3. Do you agree with Nick's assessment of Wolfsheim in this chapter? Of Daisy? Of the partygoers?
4. What could Tom have done to prevent Gatsby's death if George Wilson was armed when he came to the Buchanans?
5. What is your opinion of Mr. Gatz?
6. How does the following sentence contribute to the characterization of Nick: "I was responsible because no one else was interested—interested, I mean, with that intense personal interest to which everyone has some vague right at the end"? How willing does Nick sound to attend to Gatsby's affairs?
7. How does Nick's verbatim repetition of the phrase "it just shows you" contribute to the tone of his reaction to Mr. Gatz?