

# Book Report on *The Great Gatsby*

*High School Level*

## I. Introduction

*The Great Gatsby*, written by F. Scott Fitzgerald and published in 1925, is a classic American novel set during the Roaring Twenties. It belongs to the genre of literary fiction and is often considered one of the greatest works exploring the American Dream. The novel follows the experiences of Nick Carraway, a young man who moves to Long Island and becomes involved in the mysterious world of his wealthy neighbor, Jay Gatsby. The central themes include wealth, illusion, identity, and the corruption of the American Dream. Fitzgerald uses elegant prose and vivid imagery to portray the dazzling yet hollow lifestyle of the 1920s aristocracy, revealing deep truths about ambition, love, and societal change.

## II. Summary

The story is narrated by Nick Carraway, who rents a modest house in West Egg, a wealthy Long Island community. His neighbor is Jay Gatsby, a mysterious and extremely wealthy man known for throwing extravagant parties that attract people from all over New York. Despite his fame, Gatsby remains an enigma, surrounded by rumors about his past.

Nick reconnects with his cousin Daisy Buchanan, who lives in the more fashionable East Egg with her husband, Tom. Their marriage appears glamorous but is strained by Tom's arrogance and his affair with Myrtle Wilson, the wife of a mechanic in the poorer Valley of Ashes. As Nick becomes more involved in the lives of Daisy and Tom, he gradually learns more about Gatsby.

Gatsby eventually confides in Nick that he is in love with Daisy and has been for years. He built his fortune, partly through illegal activities, to win her back. Gatsby asks Nick to help arrange a reunion, and Daisy soon begins an affair with him. For a short time, Gatsby believes he has finally achieved his dream of recreating the past and winning Daisy's full devotion.

The story reaches its climax when Gatsby, Daisy, Tom, and Nick confront one another at the Plaza Hotel in New York City. Tom exposes Gatsby's illegal business connections, and Daisy becomes overwhelmed, ultimately rejecting Gatsby in favor of the safety and status Tom provides.

Tragedy follows when Daisy, driving Gatsby's car, accidentally hits and kills Myrtle Wilson. Gatsby decides to take the blame to protect Daisy. Myrtle's husband, George Wilson, is manipulated by Tom into believing that Gatsby was both Myrtle's lover and her killer. Devastated, George murders Gatsby and then himself. Daisy and Tom immediately leave town without expressing guilt or sorrow.

Only Nick, along with a few servants, attends Gatsby's funeral. Disillusioned by the East Coast's moral emptiness, Nick returns to the Midwest, reflecting on Gatsby's dream and the impossibility of achieving a perfect future by chasing illusions of the past.

### III. Analysis and Evaluation

Fitzgerald's writing style in *The Great Gatsby* is poetic, symbolic, and richly descriptive. His use of imagery—especially color symbolism—gives the novel emotional depth and literary complexity. For example, the color gold represents wealth and success, while green symbolizes Gatsby's dreams and hopes. Fitzgerald's lyrical writing invites readers to look beneath the glitter of the Jazz Age and see the emptiness that often lies behind wealth and luxury.

The structure of the novel is also very effective. By telling the story through Nick's eyes, Fitzgerald gives readers a mixture of admiration, confusion, and moral reflection. Nick is both a participant in and observer of the events, which makes the narrative feel personal yet detached. Fitzgerald's careful pacing allows the mystery around Gatsby to unfold slowly, keeping readers intrigued.

One of the novel's major strengths is its use of symbolism. The green light at the end of Daisy's dock represents Gatsby's longing for a future he can never fully reach. The Valley of Ashes symbolizes the social and moral decay hidden beneath the surface of wealth. Dr. T.J. Eckleburg's eyes represent the idea of judgment—whether from society, God, or the characters' own consciences.

A possible weakness, depending on the reader, is that several characters are intentionally shallow or morally flawed. While this can make them frustrating, it also serves the novel's purpose of criticizing the carelessness and superficiality of the wealthy class.

Overall, Fitzgerald's writing is both beautiful and tragic, offering a strong critique of society while capturing the emotional vulnerability of his characters.

## IV. Themes and Messages

One of the main themes is **the corruption of the American Dream**. Gatsby's dream begins with honest hope but becomes twisted by materialism and obsession. He believes that wealth will allow him to win Daisy, but in the process he loses sight of reality and morality.

Another theme is **illusion versus reality**. Many characters hide behind false appearances—Gatsby fabricates his past, Daisy pretends to care deeply, and Tom appears strong but is emotionally insecure. The novel suggests that illusion can be both comforting and dangerous.

A third theme is **class division**. Fitzgerald shows the sharp differences between old money (East Egg) and new money (West Egg), as well as the suffering of the working class. These divisions shape the characters' lives and limit their ability to change their social positions.

Finally, the theme of **moral decay** runs throughout the novel. The wealthy characters act carelessly, causing destruction without taking responsibility, which ultimately leads to Gatsby's death.

## V. Character Analysis

**Jay Gatsby** is ambitious, hopeful, and deeply romantic. His determination is admirable, but his obsession with the past makes his dream unrealistic. Gatsby represents the idealistic side of the American Dream.

**Daisy Buchanan** is charming but superficial. She symbolizes beauty and wealth, but her actions reveal emotional weakness and selfishness.

**Tom Buchanan** is wealthy, aggressive, and hypocritical. He represents the entitlement of old money and the moral corruption it often hides.

**Nick Carraway** serves as the novel's moral center. Although he is sometimes unsure of himself, he grows more aware of the dishonesty around him.

## VI. Personal Reflection

Reading *The Great Gatsby* made me think deeply about ambition, identity, and the desire for acceptance. Gatsby's hopefulness is inspiring, but his downfall shows the danger of chasing illusions. The novel demonstrates how money can distort relationships and blur the lines between right and wrong. Fitzgerald's beautiful writing and powerful themes make the story unforgettable.

## VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, *The Great Gatsby* remains an essential American novel because of its rich symbolism, complex characters, and powerful critique of the American Dream. Through the tragic story of Jay Gatsby, Fitzgerald shows how hope and ambition can be both uplifting and destructive. The book leaves readers reflecting on the meaning of success, love, and the importance of seeing people—and ourselves—clearly.

