

Approved for use in all levels of English III

Summary of the Work:

The Great Gatsby tells of the moral decay of the American Dream during the 'roaring 20's. Nick Carraway, the narrator of the novel and the protagonist of the frame narrative, is a conservative young man from the Midwest who comes to New York to seek freedom and escape his small-town background. Nick is soon drawn into Jay Gatsby's world. Jay Gatsby, Nick's neighbor, has amassed a fortune from bootlegging and other illegal means, and builds a huge mansion to win back the love of Daisy Fay, a wealthy and shallow "golden girl." In order to attract her attention, he convinces Nick, who is Daisy's distant cousin, to bring the two of them together, and for awhile Gatsby and Daisy have an affair. She, however, only uses Gatsby for entertainment to break the boredom of her life. Nick sees first hand the ugliness and shallowness of materialism and wealth, and returns home to the Midwest to escape this moral decay of society.

Rationale:

The Great Gatsby is considered by many critics to be one of the most well written and tightly structured novels in American literature. It is an extremely complex story about a unique and interesting character Jay Gatsby. *The Great Gatsby* also captures a historically significant time in America and is an example of the excess of the 1920's.

Fitzgerald confronts the idea of the American Dream, and students can make present day connections to the novel. Many Americans have a tendency to believe that if they have enough money, they can manipulate time, stay perpetually young, and buy their happiness through materialistic spending. Fitzgerald clearly intends for Gatsby's dream to be symbolic of the American Dream for wealth and youth. Gatsby genuinely believes that if a person makes enough money and amasses a great enough fortune, he can buy anything.

The Great Gatsby includes a complex plot, dynamic characters, strong themes, symbols, flashbacks, and foreshadowing which makes this novel a powerful teaching tool at all levels of junior English.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

"Why *The Great Gatsby* is so appealing to readers" by Ryan Helmkamp
http://www.geocities.com/andrew_dilling/essayappeal.htm

"Nick, the flawed narrator" by Linda Daley
http://www.geocities.com/andrew_dilling/essaynick.htm

"Some Like it Hot:" by Wayne Crawford
http://www.geocities.com/andrew_dilling/essayatmos.htm

Reviews:
http://www.geocities.com/andrew_dilling/essays.htm
<http://www.f.kth.se/~f98-jsp/texter/gatsby.html>

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

- Outstanding Books for the College Bound
- Modern Library 100 Best Novels
- Nation's 100 best-loved novels, BBC's The Big Read 2003

Readability:

- Lexile Score: 1070L
- Readability Level: 6.9

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The plot contains references to extramarital affairs that occur between Jay Gatsby and Daisy Buchanan, and Tom Buchanan and Myrtle Wilson. In addition, there is some violence involving the death of some of the characters, including the death of Jay Gatsby and Myrtle Wilson. These instances are part of the plot development and are critical discussion points in terms of character motivation.

Connection to the Curriculum:

The complexity of the plot structure, symbolism, and character motivation requires critical thinking skills and in-depth analysis. *The Great Gatsby* fits historically as a representation of the 1920's. The novel also fits with the study of American Literature, and is an example of Modernism.

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)