



 Prestwick House

Activity Pack

THE GREAT GATSBY

BY F. SCOTT FITZGERALD



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Edited by Paul Moliken

Name: _____

Date: _____

Pre-Reading

Historical Context

Objective: Familiarizing students with the historical context in which to view the plot and theme of this novel

Activity I

1. Read the article that follows, "The 1920s: The Real Deal"; in small groups, construct a one-page outline of the material.
2. Consider these five aspects of the period for purpose of an oral presentation:
 - The causes and effects of post World War I disillusionment
 - Economic growth and stock market activity
 - Legal and moral concerns of the day
 - The rising effect of the automobile
 - Entertainment and culture of the time

With each person in the group researching one of the aspects more deeply, prepare a talk show with one group member as moderator and the remaining group members as expert guests. Be prepared for questions from the audience. See appendices for information on Small Group work.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter II

Style and Imagery

Objectives: Responding to a writer's style
Inferring possible thematic ideas suggested by images and symbols
Reading to visualize images and details of setting

Activity

In Chapter II, Fitzgerald, presents the reader with a series of powerful images. Some of them have almost a surreal quality about them. Divide the class into small groups. In your groups, select a different image from the list that follows.

Read the text provided and decide what is being described. List the details Fitzgerald gives. Sketch or create a visual representation of the scene using original sketches, magazine pictures, computer graphics, or pieces of fabric. Attach a quotation from the text to your picture that best captures the scene. Write a short explanation of the idea suggested by the image of the scene. For instance, the valley of ashes may suggest the idea that Americans have polluted the environment through their carelessness.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters II and III**Relating Literature to Life****Objective:** Relating literature to social issues**Activity**

In these chapters, the reader hears the gossip about Gatsby. Interestingly, the people who gossip about Gatsby do not know him. In pairs, complete the following:

- Discuss your view of gossip.
- Share examples of gossip.
- List the dangers and appeal of gossip.
- How does the gossip about Gatsby contribute to the story?

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter III

Relating Literature to Life

Objective: Relating literature to life

Activity

Nick tells us:

I believe that on the first night I went to Gatsby's house I was one of the few guests who had actually been invited. People were not invited—they went there. They got into automobiles which bore them out to Long Island, and somehow they ended up at Gatsby's door. Once there they were introduced by somebody who knew Gatsby, and after that they conducted themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with an amusement park. Sometimes they came and went without having met Gatsby at all, came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission.

Many people in New York attend or seem to know about Gatsby's parties but, at the same time, know little about Gatsby himself. Imagine that a New York newspaper prints a series of feature articles and editorials about Gatsby. You are a reporter and have to attend Gatsby's parties to write your article. Read background articles on the Roaring Twenties, Prohibition, and the desire for wealth to help you. Remember that there were many ordinary people who had strong feelings about the consumption of alcohol, the greediness of the upper classes, and the scandalous behavior of women.

In your group, select a different news story assignment from the list below.

- Discuss your assignment and decide the position or attitude you will take toward the issue.
- Do you approve of or are you opposed to the activity? Why?
- Use the Notes to Write Your Article sheet to plan your article.
- State your position and reasons.
- List details from the text to support your position.
- Write a newspaper article or editorial (one – two pages) to share with the class.

Topics for Feature Articles to be Written in Response to Gatsby's Parties:

1. The behavior of the guests at Gatsby's party
2. The mysterious Jay Gatsby's activities at the party
3. Famous golfer Jordan Baker who attends Gatsby's party
4. Fashions worn by the participants
5. Glimpses of the Ziegfeld Follies and jazz performances at Gatsby's party
6. Fun, laughter, hilarity of Gatsby's parties: Healthy or Hysterical
7. The excessive, outrageous wealth of Gatsby
8. The consumption of alcohol at Gatsby's parties
9. Wild women at Gatsby's parties
10. Greed as shown by Gatsby's guests

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter IV

Inference

Objective: Reading for detail and drawing inferences

Activity

At the start of Chapter IV, Nick informs the reader that he keeps a list of the names of the people “who accepted Gatsby’s hospitality” because the names “will give you a better impression than my generalities” of the people who come to Gatsby’s parties.

1. Working in pairs, take turns reading the list to each other.
2. Write your impressions after you hear the list.
3. List the general characteristics or “types” of people who come to the parties.
4. Use these lists as the basis for class discussion about the characters at Gatsby’s parties. Draw up one class list of the general types that attend and develop a statement that would reflect the reason all these people attend.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter V

Point of View

Objectives: Retelling a story
Interpreting a sequence of events from a different point of view

Activity

Chapter IV ends with the story of Daisy's romances and marriage. In Chapter V, Daisy and Gatsby are reunited. It seems that they have fallen in love again when Nick says:

As I watched him he adjusted himself a little, visibly. His hand took hold of hers, and as she said something low in his ear he turned toward her with a rush of emotion. I think that voice held him most, with its fluctuating, feverish warmth, because it couldn't be over-dreamed—that voice was a deathless song.

They had forgotten me, but Daisy glanced up and held out her hand; Gatsby didn't know me now at all. I looked once more at them and they looked back at me, remotely, possessed by intense life. Then I went out of the room and down the marble steps into the rain, leaving them there together.

Imagine that Daisy calls Jordan when she returns home. Compose a poem about what was said. The poem does not have to rhyme, although it certainly may. The contents of the poem will depend on how you interpret the discussion and meeting between Gatsby and Daisy. In the chapter, Fitzgerald allows for many interpretations of their meeting. See if your poem can deal with the significance of Daisy's crying over Gatsby's shirts, the meaning of Gatsby knowing how long it has been since had last seen Daisy, Daisy's comments about the clouds, or, possibly, the implied conversation after Nick leaves.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapter VI

Writing

Objective: Organizing and writing questions appropriate to the text

Activity

Chapter VI opens with a reporter who is investigating Gatsby's "notoriety" asking him questions. Obviously, not much is known about Gatsby's past or his money, beyond the foolish rumors that are described in the beginning of this chapter. Nick does reveal a bit of Gatsby's history.

Imagine that you are the reporter. Come up with a list of ten questions that you would like to have Gatsby answer for your paper. As you read further in the book, write down the answers to any of the questions that you come across.

Name: _____

Date: _____

Chapters I and VII**Relating a Novel to Real Life (cont.)**

Objectives: Relating literature to social issues
Responding to racism

Activity II

Write two letters to Tom from any two of the following perspectives. In them, offer reasons that show he is wrong in what he says.

- the President of the United States.
- Martin Luther King, Jr.
- a black child who is descended from slaves.
- yourself
- Nick
- an interracial couple
- the child of an interracial couple