

The Great Gatsby

Literary Analysis Essay – 11th American Literature Gifted Summer Assignment 2018

Due: August 13,2018

Assignment Summary:

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* is a widely studied novel. Not only does this novel embody struggles of the everyman, but Fitzgerald presents compelling characters and themes that still ring true today. *The Great Gatsby* has been studied for its commentary on the 1920's as a decade, economics, and the conflict between classes as well as the failure of the American dream. **See topics below.**

Your audience is comprised of teachers, students, and anyone who has read *The Great Gatsby*. Expect that your audience has a working knowledge of the novel and **do not write a summary**. Reference the novel to prove what you are saying. **(Quotations and/or paraphrasing = textual evidence.)**

Literary Analysis: The purpose of a literary analysis essay is to carefully examine and sometimes evaluate a work of literature or an aspect of a work of literature. As with any analysis, this requires you to break the subject down into its component parts. Examining the different elements of a piece of literature is not an end in itself, but rather a process to help you better appreciate and understand the work of literature as a whole.

(If you did not read *The Great Gatsby* in 10th grade, then you also have to read the novel.)

- 2-3 pages (3 is a MAXIMUM)
- size 12 pt., Times New Roman, double-spaced, standard margins (1-inch)
- do not use 1st person or 2nd person point of view; use 3rd person point of view
- smoothly integrate direct quotations from the novel
- MLA In-Text Citations and Works Cited Page

Steps:

1. Select your topic.
2. Brainstorm possible sections of the novel that will help you narrow and support a thesis.
3. Find primary references (5 or more quotations) to support your thesis. Remember, you must *prove* everything you say by giving textual evidence.
5. Write an outline with a thesis statement to plan your essay.
6. Write your essay!

Questions? See Mrs. Purvis in Rm 450 before the end of school, or email dopurvis@dodge.k12.ga.us.

Theme Analysis: Select one focus

THEME: identify, discuss, and support from the text ONE major theme.

1. Pursuit of the American Dream:

Consider the way that Fitzgerald develops the message throughout the novel on the American dream or the corruption of it. (You cannot merely discuss the ending!)

2. The stratification of the social classes:

What happens when characters attempt to move from one social sphere to another? Why is this significant?

3. Illusion:

How do illusions contribute or prohibit characters' ability to thrive in their societies and relationships?

4. Carelessness:

Consider Fitzgerald's message regarding careless and caring individuals. (You may select only one side to analyze.) Is this novel essentially about carelessness? Support and defend a stance.

5. Nick:

Some say that Nick is the *only* dynamic character in the novel. Discuss how Nick changes and what his evolution shows.

Symbolism:

In your discussion of a theme, you may also include related references to:

- the green light
- the eyes of T.J. Eckleburg
- weather
- use of colors
- how setting contributes to interpretation of character and theme

Literary Analysis Mini-Essay Checklist

General

- Essay is in 12, Times New Roman font, double-spaced with 1-inch margins
- Essay 2-3 pages (no papers OVER 3)
- Must include at least 5 direct quotations and/or paraphrases from the primary source
- MLA format, in-text citations and works cited page

First Page:

Heading (name, teacher name, course name, date) _____

Header (last name and page number) _____

Original Title (centered) _____

INTRODUCTION

Thesis clearly stated at end and previews main points _____

The thesis statement tells your reader what to expect: it is a restricted, precisely worded declarative sentence that states the purpose of your essay -- the point you are trying to make. The thesis is the last sentence of your introductory paragraph. **Remember to use HATMAT for the details you must include in your introduction: Hook, Author, Title, Main Characters, A Short Summary, Thesis Statement. Without a carefully conceived thesis, an essay has no chance of success.**

BODY PARAGRAPHS

Each body paragraph should have a topic sentence, appropriate primary references, and original commentary!

Include two-way topic sentences (point to thesis and to paragraph) _____

Thesis supported by way of reference to primary source(s) _____

All quotations/paraphrases have in-text citations _____

CONCLUSION: The conclusion should not be a mere summary of what you have written. Use this to provide your final thoughts without branching into a new subject.