

Possible Topics for *The Great Gatsby* Argumentative Essay

(Note that your topic will then need to be converted into a thesis statement)

- Is Nick a reliable or trustworthy narrator? How does his point of view affect the story?
- Is the story of *The Great Gatsby* believable? Why or why not?
- Where is the climax of the story? Explain your choice.
- Are the characters in *The Great Gatsby* stereotypes? If so, explain why Fitzgerald used stereotypes in the novel. If not, explain what makes the characters individuals.
- What is the most essential symbol in the novel? What does it represent?
- Analyze Gatsby's relationship with Daisy.
- Are Gatsby's actions believably motivated? Explain why or why not.
- What makes F. Scott Fitzgerald's writing style unique and/or effective?
- Compare and contrast various characters.
- Explain how F. Scott Fitzgerald uses the minor characters--Owl Eyes, Mr. Wolfshiem, Pammy, Michaelis, and George Wilson--in the novel. What does each character add to the story?
- Explain how the title, *The Great Gatsby*, is appropriate.
- Why do Daisy and Tom stay together?
- What does it mean to be wealthy? Do responsibilities come with money?
- Does Gatsby's money bring him happiness?
- Interpret one of the novel's key symbols (the green light, the eyes of Dr. T. J. Eckleburg, the valley of ashes, etc.).
- Suppose this novel had been written from Gatsby's (or another's) point of view. How would the story have changed?

- Analyze each of the novel's locations (West Egg, East Egg, the Valley of Ashes, and New York City), and explain how each corresponds to the social position, lifestyle, and personality of its residents.
- What traits does Nick find admirable about Gatsby? What traits does he dislike?
- Is *The Great Gatsby* an outdated novel, or is it relevant today? If it is relevant, what specific elements of current society does the book describe or explain?
- What motivates Daisy, Myrtle, and Jordan? Is there a common thread?
- Surprisingly, Tom Buchanan and George Wilson are actually similar in many ways. Be sure to focus on their attitudes toward women, their approach to violence, and their reactions to being cheated on.
- How does Fitzgerald use weather in the novel?
- How does the state of the current financial markets resemble the economic problems of the 1920s? How does Fitzgerald highlight and predict those problems?
- Which characters are static and which are dynamic? Why did Fitzgerald choose to portray them this way?
- In the final chapter, Nick describes Tom and Daisy as "careless people." Are they? Are they each careless in their own way?
- Explore ONE of the following themes: alienation, friendship, identity, the American Dream, materialism, corruption, fate, the past, love, hope, etc.
- **Additionally, feel free to explore your own topic regarding the novel. If you do so, please discuss the topic with me so I can help you verify that it is practical, as well as help you brainstorm how to proceed.**