

Summer Reading Assignments

232/231 American Literature/Advanced American Literature

I. Read *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald; ISBN: 978-0-7432-7356-5; Publisher: Scribner

Note: Actually read it please, not just an online summary. 1) It's short, less than 200 pages.
2) It's an overall easy read, crisp language and short sentences.

Additional note: Do not just watch the Leonardo DiCaprio movie version either. 1) It's not the same as the book. Yes, it's entertaining and it mixes in modern components. And, yes, it can help you understand the essence of the novel. In fact, we will probably watch clips from it in the fall. It is not the book, however. So, refer to the previous note. Then, by all means have a movie-watching party with your friends.

II. Analytical Paper

Select one of the following prompts and write a 3-5 paragraph analytical paper (guidelines can be found on Mrs. Haley's American Literature Classroom Page). You should have a clear thesis, textual evidence, and analytical opinions/assertions. Your paper should be based on your understanding and opinions about the novel, not what writers of SparkNotes, LitCharts, and other online resources say. Do not plagiarize ideas; rather, form your own. Please answer thoughtfully and completely.

These prompts are based on the concept of the American Dream.

The belief that anyone, regardless of where they were born or what class they were born into, can attain their own version of success in a society where upward mobility is possible for everyone. The American dream is achieved through sacrifice, risk-taking and hard work, not by chance. Both native-born Americans and American immigrants pursue and can achieve the American dream. In contrast to other political and economic systems, such as communist dictatorships, America's free-enterprise system makes possible the circumstances that allow individuals to go beyond meeting their basic needs to achieve self-actualization and personal fulfillment. (<http://www.investopedia.com/terms/a/american-dream.asp#ixzz4hRJ9oqGY>)

- 1) Explain how the novel does or does not demonstrate the death of the American Dream. Is the main theme of *Gatsby* indeed the withering American Dream? What does the novel offer about American identity?
- 2) Discuss the novel's theme that the American Dream is corrupted by the desire for wealth. What does the novel and its theme offer about the American identity?
- 3) Discuss how *The Great Gatsby* is the quintessential American novel. What does it have to offer about the American identity and the American Dream? (Note: for this topic you are allowed to look up characteristics of the American novel.)

4) Discuss the novel's theme that outward appearances can be deceptive. What does the novel and its theme offer about the American identity?

III. Advanced Only: One Paragraph Response Paper

Discuss whether or not Gatsby is a romantic hero in the modern era. Use at least one quote from the text to demonstrate your position. (Guidelines for response papers can be found on Mrs. Haley American Literature Classroom page.)

The romantic hero is a literary archetype referring to a character that rejects established norms and conventions, has been rejected by society, and has himself/herself as the center of his or her own existence. (A basic Wikipedia definition)

You may use the following site to help you understand the concept of the romantic hero (I will also post links on the class webpage):

<http://classroom.synonym.com/qualities-romantic-hero-8738561.html>

Note:

To access Mrs. Haley's class page, go to:

www.nda-worc.org, select Academics

Choose Online Classrooms, then Mrs. Haley (from the list on the left)

Choose American Literature (from the list on the left)