

The Great Gatsby Discussion Questions

1. Why is it unhealthy to live in the past? Use characters from *The Great Gatsby* to back up your claim.
2. If you found yourself trapped in loveless marriage, does this allow you to seek out love elsewhere? Use characters from *The Great Gatsby* to back up your claim.
3. How is Gatsby himself a symbol of his time period? Explain.
4. If the story of Gatsby were translated to another time period, would it be as effective? Explain. What time period would also work as its setting? Explain.
5. Does Gatsby truly love Daisy? Explain.
6. Tragic heroes are characters who suffer a downfall because of a personal flaw or weakness. Analyze Jay Gatsby as a tragic character. What is his tragic flaw? Explain.
7. According to the novel, what is it about the past that draws us both forward and leaves us stuck where we are? How can we be set free of the past?
8. Is Gatsby great? Explain. If not, why would the novel be titled in this manner? Explain.
9. Nick is from the Midwest, and so are most of you. Are Midwestern values different than those from "the big cities"?
10. Are there any characters in *The Great Gatsby* that you pity? Which ones are they? Explain why.
11. Do you agree with Nick's final assertion that Gatsby is "worth the whole damn bunch put together"? Why would Nick think that Gatsby was better than all the others? Explain.
12. Is Daisy right—do some girls get ahead in life by being "beautiful, little fools"? Explain.
13. F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, "You don't write because you want to say something, you write because you have something to say." What did he have to say in *Gatsby*?
14. What lesson(s) does Nick learn through observing the life (and death) of Gatsby? Explain.
15. How is color important in *The Great Gatsby*? Here are some colors to consider: Green, gray, and yellow.
16. Should you ever change yourself to make someone else like you more? Explain.
17. Why do all of Gatsby's friends abandon him? What can you tell about his friends? What lessons can you learn from this? Explain.
18. What is *The Great Gatsby* trying to say about the American Dream?