

*AP English III Great Gatsby Essay Prompts:*

**Assignment:** Choose two of the following six essay topics. Construct a specific thesis which outlines your ideas and then support it.

-Underline your thesis.

-Cite examples from the play to effectively support your thesis.

**Requirements:**

Each should be 2-3 pages, typed, double spaced, Times New Roman font (12"), 1" margins set. Don't forget a title for your essay. Do the very best you can with the knowledge you have of MLA format (which is very important for my course) and of essay components and how they come together to form a persuasive argument or analysis. I will use these essays as baselines for your abilities coming into the class. Remember, though: you're taking my class for a reason. I don't expect you to magically know everything I'm going to teach you throughout the year.

**The Great Gatsby**  
**AP Essay Prompts**

Choose one of the essay prompts below. Write a thoughtful, focused, and organized response. Your essay should focus on the novel as evidence— this means quoting directly from the novel at least twice.

Your essay will be graded using the AP style rubric (available for viewing on my website) on how well you answer the chosen prompt with careful analysis of the text and adequate support.

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**Gender:** Write an essay analyzing the role of women in *The Great Gatsby*, as represented by Daisy, Jordan, and Myrtle. What kind of influence or power do they wield? Consider their social positions and interactions.

**Money:** Analyze the portrayal of wealth in the novel—the difference between “old money” and “new money” as well as the things that money can and cannot buy. What is Fitzgerald ultimately trying to say about money and materialism? What does Gatsby's rise and fall say about the pursuit of wealth and status in the world of the novel?

**Phony vs. Real:** One of the main themes of the novel is how illusion is mistaken for reality. Illustrate how this is true in the various party scenes, in the empty gestures and speeches of the main characters, and in the basic fabric of Jay Gatsby's life.

**Indirect Characterization:** Show how indirect characterization significantly influences a person's interpretation of one character.<sup>1</sup> Your thesis statement would tell us how F. Scott Fitzgerald wants us to

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<sup>1</sup> **Indirect characterization:** when the writer reveals information about a character and his personality through that character's thoughts, words, and actions, along with how other characters respond to that character, including what they think and say about him (showing).

view this character. Your evidence and analysis would show the way in which Fitzgerald guides our impression of the character throughout the book.

**Symbols:** A symbol in a novel is a concrete object that represents an idea or a set of ideas. Choose three major symbols in the book. Explain what those symbols mean and how they function together to support a central theme. (Hint: obviously in order to respond to this prompt, you will have to identify what theme is being supported.)

**Theme:** In retrospect, the reader often discovers that the first chapter of a book introduces some of the major themes of the work. Analyze how the first chapter of *The Great Gatsby* sets forth the major themes of the book.