



# Wichita East Pre-IB English 2 Summer Reading 2023

*The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald  
(ISBN: 9780593312919)

Your summer reading book, *The Great Gatsby*, will be used to ground our study of literature in the first weeks of school, and **we will start with it on the first day.**

Read thoughtfully and reread when you need to. Make sure you take a few moments to look up any terms, names, ideas you aren't familiar with as you read. You're reading both to restart your literary criticism skills after the summer and to think about the novel as a carefully constructed artwork with something to say to its readers.

## ➤ Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*

Read the novel carefully and enjoy it. Pay particularly close attention to these ideas:

- At the time of the novel, alcohol is illegal in the US under what's now known as "prohibition." Of course, acquiring "bootlegged" alcohol was not difficult for wealthy people. Some alcohol could be acquired legally as a prescription, so "drugstores" at the time could be a front for alcohol smuggling.
- This book relies on our narrator, Nick Carraway, who claims to be honest, but he is often accused of dishonesty by others. What evidence is there that Nick can or cannot be trusted to tell Gatsby's story?
- It helps to imagine the geography of the story, West Egg is a fictional name for Great Neck, NY, and East Egg represents Port Washington, NY. Look these places up on a map, and as you read, consider the landscapes' significance to the story—structurally and symbolically.
- It's thought that Oheka Castle might be the model for Gatsby's house on West Egg, and that Old Westbury Gardens might be a model for Daisy and Tom's house. Pictures of both can be found online, though those houses are not actually located on "West Egg" or "East Egg." They are close by, though, in Huntington, NY and Old Westbury, NY respectively.
- Nick's retelling of Gatsby's story leaves some gaps, and a number of things in the conversations between characters are implied but left unsaid. It helps to hear the characters in your head when you're reading. Imagine Daisy's marvelous voice and Gatsby's somewhat fake "old sport" and Tom's physical brutality in their voices and hear those voices when they speak. It helps.
- Fitzgerald is a master of complex but effective similes. Notice and appreciate them. We'll study them for sure.
- How do characters react and interact differently with characters of different social status and perceptions of wealth? Make note of these scenes and how the characters treat and interact with each other.
- While the book is clearly rooted in the 1920's "jazz age," in what ways does the book still represent the dreams and excesses of American culture? In what ways does the book present a false or unconvincing vision of America and Americans?

**Content Warning:** While not maliciously racist or anti-Semitic, this novel does rely on some stereotypes and out-of-date language in reference to Black and Jewish people that reflect the time in which it was written.

- ✓ **Assignment 1:** There will be an objective test over the book in the first week of school. If you've read it with reasonable care and have done some reflection on it, you will be fine.
- ✓ **Assignment 2:** Choose ONE passage, approximately one page in length each (EXCEPT from Chapter 1, pp. 1-24—I'm reserving those to use in class), and do the following:
  - annotate the passage as if you were about to write about it (marking of important text, marginal explanations and reflections—you'll receive a grade for this as well)
  - Type (double-spaced) a well-written paragraph explaining the following about the passage you chose:
    - a. the passage's primary meaning and significance—that is, an interpretation, not just a retelling or paraphrase of what happens. What does the passage imply that it doesn't directly say that requires your interpretation?
    - b. quoted text that includes language that conveys the meaning and significance of the passage
    - c. explanation of how authorial choices (literary elements) in the passage contribute to your interpretation
    - d. By "well-written paragraph" above, we are suggesting that your ideas should be integrated and coherent as a prose paragraph, following standard English conventions.

There will be additional writing assignments upon your return to school that depend upon you reading the book and completing the assignment above—so failure to do it will hurt you doubly when you return.

PLEASE do not hesitate to email us with questions. We are happy to help: [rcompton@usd259.net](mailto:rcompton@usd259.net) or [ksosa@usd259.net](mailto:ksosa@usd259.net)

### **About acquiring your books:**

Watermark Books & Café will have all next year's books on hand over the summer. Apart from *The Great Gatsby*, you might want to get your other books at the same time to prevent having to make multiple trips. You can also order from Watermark online at their website: <https://www.watermarkbooks.com/summer-reading-ib-sophomore>.

The edition of *The Great Gatsby* (ISBN: 9780593312919) ordered for you at Watermark is really cheap, so we recommend getting it there. If you get a different edition, the page number references may not match. We can check out a book to you, but you can't write in it (you'll have to annotate with post-it notes, or something), and the page numbers won't match.

You will also be expected to hang onto your copy of *The Art of the Short Story*. We will definitely be using it again next year.

If household finances make buying the books difficult for you, please call the IB office (973-7289) or send Mr. Boykins an email ([mboykins@usd259.net](mailto:mboykins@usd259.net)).