

THE GREAT GATSBY DISCUSSION PREP

Student Name: _____ Date: _____ Class Period: _____

Purpose

A Socratic Seminar is a student-led, text-based dialogue. The goal is to collaboratively explore complex ideas, uncover deeper meanings in Fitzgerald's text, and examine how the themes of *The Great Gatsby* reflect human nature, American culture, and social dynamics.

Seminar Expectations

1. **Be Prepared:** Bring your annotated book, completed dialectic journals, and this prep sheet with specific textual evidence cited (with page numbers).
2. **Listen Actively:** Build upon, clarify, or respectfully challenge your peers' ideas.
3. **Anchor in the Text:** Support every claim with direct evidence or specific scenes from the novel.
4. **Include Everyone:** Invite quieter voices into the conversation; avoid dominating the discussion.

Questions: PICK 2!

Directions: Select and thoroughly prepare answers for 2 questions. You must provide at least one direct quote with a page number and some analytical reasoning response for each question you prepare.

Question 1: In Chapter 9, Nick famously reflects: *"They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness..."* Does elite wealth function as an invincible shield against moral accountability in the novel? Who bears the actual cost of Tom and Daisy's "carelessness," and do any characters truly experience consequences for their actions?

- **My Claim/Interpretation:**
- **Textual Evidence (Quote & Page #):**
- **Analysis**

Question 2: Nick's final statement to Gatsby is: *"They're a rotten crowd... You're worth the whole damn bunch put together."* Is Gatsby truly morally superior to Tom, Daisy, and Jordan, or is Nick romanticizing a criminal bootlegger who built his fortune through corruption and deceit?

- **Interpretation:**
- **Textual Evidence (Quote & Page #):**
- **Analysis**

Question 3: Contrast the hundreds of guests who flooded Gatsby's West Egg mansion during his summer parties with the handful of attendees at his funeral in Chapter 9 (Nick, Owl Eyes, Henry Gatz, and a few servants). What does this contrast infer about the nature of 1920s high society and social relationships?

- **Interpretation:**
- **Textual Evidence (Quote & Page #):**
- **Analysis:**

Question 4: In Chapter 9, Henry Gatz shows Nick young James Gatz's childhood schedule and "General Resolves" written in *Hopalong Cassidy*. How does young Gatz's innocent commitment to self-improvement contrast with the illegal bootlegging empire Jay Gatsby eventually built? Is Fitzgerald suggesting that the traditional American Dream of honest, hard work is impossible in a classist society?

- **Interpretation:**
- **Textual Evidence (Quote & Page #):**
- **Analysis & Nuance:**

Question 5: Consider the famous concluding lines of the novel: "*Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us... So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.*" Why is Gatsby's pursuit of his dream inherently tragic? Was his mistake believing he could repeat the past, or was his dream corrupted because it was attached to a person (Daisy) who could never live up to his romanticized ideal?

- **My Claim/Interpretation:**
- **Textual Evidence (Quote & Page #):**
- **Analysis & Nuance:**

Student-Generated Discussion Questions

*Directions: Write **two** original, open-ended questions about the novel that require close textual analysis and debate. Do not write simple factual or plot-based recall questions.*

Question 1 (Focus on Character, Symbolism, or Theme):

- **My Question:**

- **Passage/Page Reference:**

- **My Initial Response/Idea:**

Question 2 (Focus on Modern Connection, Synthesis, or Critique):

- **My Question:**

- **Passage/Page Reference:**

- **My Initial Response/Idea:**
