



Exploring Senior Cycle Comparative Studies *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald is a novel included as part of the Prescribed Material for the Leaving Certificate English Examination in 2027 and 2028. It may be used as the single text or as part of the Comparative Study at Ordinary Level or Higher Level.

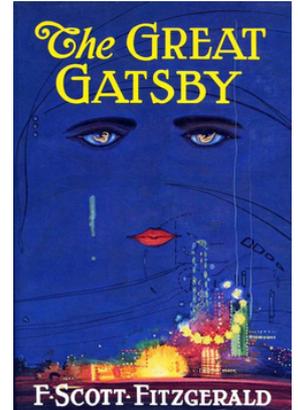


Image courtesy of
Penguin books

Please note:

- The following tasks might be completed over a series of lessons.
- You may like to adapt and adjust the tasks to suit your context.
- Please note that *The Great Gatsby* covers themes which could be considered sensitive or controversial. You may wish to consult with our READY Framework to support you in your study.



[Scan the QR code or click here to access a Getting Started with Guide for this Text](#)

Before you read.... (Teacher Guidance)

1. Discussing and Reflecting on the Key to Happiness

- Guide students in a discussion about the concept of happiness.
- Introduce the proverb “Money can buy you happiness” and facilitate a debate in which students consider both sides of the argument. Pair or group students so that they share and compare viewpoints with peers who hold opposing perspectives.

2. Considering Cultural Context

- Organise students into groups to conduct a jigsaw-style inquiry into various aspects of 1920s American society. Assign or allow students to select specific research areas such as Prohibition, the Jazz Age, the American Dream, the Wall Street Crash, and social class divisions.
- After individual research is completed, prompt groups to synthesise their findings and decide on both an oral and visual format for presenting their collective understanding.

3. Exploring Setting and Mood

- Play a 1920s jazz recording by Louis Armstrong and guide students in analysing the atmosphere and mood conveyed through the music.



[Click here](#) to listen to a recording of Cornet *Chop Suey* by Louis Armstrong



Extract

Background to the novel:

***The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald was published in 1925. It tells the story of Jay Gatsby's unrequited love for Daisy Buchanan. In this extract, narrator Nick Carraway catches his first glimpse of the mysterious Gatsby, who lives in the large mansion next to Nick's rented summer house.**

Already it was deep summer on roadhouse roofs and in front of the wayside garages, where new red gas-pumps sat out in pools of light, and when I reached my estate at West Egg I ran the car under its shed and sat for a while on an abandoned grass roller in the yard. The wind had blown off, leaving a loud, bright night, with wings beating in the trees and a persistent organ sound as the full bellows of the earth blew the frogs full of life. The silhouette of a moving cat wavered across the moonlight, and turning my head to watch it, I saw that I was not alone —fifty feet away a figure had emerged from the shadow of my neighbor's mansion and was standing with his hands in his pockets regarding the silver pepper of the stars. Something in his leisurely movements and the secure position of his feet upon the lawn suggested that it was Mr. Gatsby himself, come out to determine what share was his of our local heavens.

I decided to call to him. Miss Baker had mentioned him at dinner, and that would do for an introduction. But I didn't call to him, for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone —he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward—and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock. When I looked once more for Gatsby he had vanished, and I was alone again in the unquiet darkness.

*(F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby* 1925, p.26)*

Activities Based on Extract (Teacher Guidance)

The following may be completed in written or oral format,
as individuals or as part of a group activity.

1. Exploring Writing Style

Guide students to work in pairs to discuss the author's use of visual, tactile, and emotional language. Ask them to evaluate how effectively this language creates intrigue around the character of Gatsby.

2. Symbolism Explorer

Instruct students to examine the symbol of the distant green light in the extract. Prompt them to consider why the light appears small and far away and to explore the broader ideas or themes this symbol may represent.

Read and Respond (Teacher Guidance)

The following questions may be based on the extract included or form part of your extended study of the novel. Students may like to complete the activities individually or collaboratively.

1. Dream and Ambition Mapping

Guide students to create a personal visual or written map that outlines their dreams, goals, or imagined future. Instruct them to include an expected timeline and to identify potential obstacles as well as supports that may help them achieve these ambitions.

2. Radio Broadcast

Direct students to write a short radio interview featuring a well-known celebrity. In this interview, the celebrity should discuss their passions and dreams beyond the spotlight of fame. Have students rehearse and deliver the interview aloud.

3. Personal Essay

Ask students to write a personal response discussing how the version of ourselves that we present outwardly can differ significantly from who we are internally.

4. Audio Accompaniment

Instruct students to select an appropriate background sound to accompany a reading of the extract. Have them explain the impact they believe their chosen audio will have on the atmosphere and on the audience's interpretation of the piece.

5. Comparison Task

Provide students with the link to the trailer for *The Great Gatsby*. Ask them to compare the effectiveness of the trailer with the written extract by completing one of the following options:

- Guide students to create a short storyboard illustrating how both the extract and the trailer present the atmosphere of the world of *The Great Gatsby*.
- Instruct students to write a paragraph or record a short audio/video response comparing the imagery and tone in the trailer with the descriptive language used in the extract.
- Have students identify one detail from the trailer and one from the extract that strongly convey a restless mood. Students should explain their choices.

 [Click to watch the trailer for the film version of this novel](#)
courtesy of Warner Bros