

THE GREAT GATSBY EXAM TOPICS: Complete one topic of your choice, 100 points.

Write a well-thought out essay that explores one of the following topics from *The Great Gatsby*. Show the depth and knowledge of your understanding of the book; support your claims with evidence from the text. Grading: see below*

1. What aspects of the 1920s are exemplified in the novel? What role does history play in the novel? Could this story have happened this way at any other time?
2. Does Daisy really love Gatsby? Does Gatsby really love Daisy? Is this novel a true romance? In developing your response, trace the development of their relationship through the novel character from the beginning to the end of the novel.
3. Discuss Gatsby's character throughout the novel. What makes Gatsby "great"? Why is this title appropriate?
4. What does the geography of the novel suggest about its themes and characters? In what ways is setting important in *The Great Gatsby*?
5. How does Gatsby represent the American dream? What does the novel have to say about the condition of the American dream in the 1920s—think about—dreams, wealth, time and the idea of America.
6. Compare and contrast Gatsby and Tom. How are they alike? How are they different? Given the extremely negative light in which Tom is portrayed throughout the novel, why might Daisy choose to remain with him instead of leaving him for Gatsby?
7. In Chapter 7, Nick says, "You can't repeat the past" and Gatsby replies "Can't repeat the past...Why of course you can!" Gatsby then describes a moment when he had kissed Daisy. Describe how Gatsby sees the past and the present. How does Gatsby misuse the past and his memories in order to enliven the present?
8. Nick says: "I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known." When you consider his role as narrator, do you believe that he is honest? Are his depictions of others honest? If he is not honest, why does he believe he is so honest?
9. Is Tom most responsible for Gatsby's death? Daisy? Myrtle? Gatsby himself? Who is most responsible for Gatsby's death? Give reasons why or why not each character is implicated in the murder.

A **proficient** response (**mastery**) shows the student has mastered both knowledge of the text and skills of the conventional essay form. The essay introduces the topic in an interesting way and has a concise and clear thesis, which is supported by at least three examples from the novel. Each example is fully explained as far as the context (scene—who, what, when, where) and its significance. The explanations clearly show understanding of the quotes used and how each is connected thematically to the chosen aspects of the novel. The flow of evidence is logical. There are transitions between major sections and within paragraphs as needed. The conclusion creates unity without being repetitive. There may be a few spelling or grammatical errors in this essay. Overall, there is solid support for the thesis, clear structure and solid coherence.

To achieve **excellence** (a **beyond** response): move beyond mastery in both knowledge of the text and skills of the conventional essay form. This means: introducing the topic in a insightful/profound way, formulating a thesis that is unique, presenting the topic from a fresh angle, supporting claims with numerous insightful examples—beyond what we've studied in class, fully explaining understanding of the quotes used, using a logical and flowing structure with excellent transitions, creating a conclusion that unifies without being repetitive and leaves the reader with a profound or unique conception regarding the novel or the theme. Spelling, grammatical and other errors are rare.