



King High School Peña 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 are not familiar with as you read. You are 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 is 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 is 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 are 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 will 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:** Choose ONE passage, approximately 40 lines in length (EXCEPT from Chapter 1, pp. 1-24), 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 will receive a grade for this as well)
 - Type (double-spaced) a multi paragraph commentary 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