

The Great Gatsby, CHAPTER 1

1. What was the advice given to Nick by his father? How, do you suppose, this makes him a good person to tell this story?
2. What is Nick's social class/background? How did his family make its money?
3. When Nick returns from the war, why does he decide to go East?
4. How is West Egg different from East Egg?
5. Before meeting him, what does Nick tell us about Tom Buchanan?
6. If you were going to pick one color to connect with Daisy Buchanan, what color would it be? Explain your reasoning.
7. We find out that Tom has "some woman in New York." What unflattering feature of Jordan Baker's personality is revealed in this scene?
8. What's the name of the book that Tom wants to discuss at dinner? What does this book's content show us about Tom?
9. What is the reader left to think about Daisy's emotional state and her relationship with Tom?
10. Who is Jordan Baker, and what has Nick heard about her?
11. At the end of this chapter, Nick sees Gatsby on the lawn and is about to call to him and introduce himself, but he does not. What stops Nick? What does Gatsby's "trembling" suggest?
12. The green light that Gatsby is staring at will become an important symbol in the book. What symbolic associations do you connect to the color green?

The Great Gatsby, CHAPTER 2

1. The description of the "valley of ashes" opens this chapter. Literally, what is the valley of ashes? What might it represent on a symbolic level?
2. Compare and contrast George Wilson and Tom Buchanan. Then, compare and contrast Myrtle Wilson and Daisy Buchanan.
3. How do we know that Myrtle Wilson is not an intellectual?
4. Notice how often and in what context Doctor Eckleburg's eyes are mentioned. Symbolically, what might those eyes on that billboard represent?
5. What's up with the puppy? Why do you suppose Fitzgerald included it as an element in this chapter?
6. Do you think Tom will leave Daisy for Myrtle? Support your answer.

The Great Gatsby, CHAPTER 3

1. Nick describes the people who attend Gatsby's parties and says "that once there, the guests conducted themselves according to the rules of behavior associated with amusement parks." Given this, what can you conclude is Nick's opinion of Gatsby's party guests?
2. Why does Jordan want to leave the group from East Egg? Why does Nick want to leave the group?
3. Who is Owl-Eyes? What surprises him about Gatsby's library? Why would this impress him?
4. What unexpected common bond do Gatsby and Nick share?
5. Nick says, "I was looking at an elegant young roughneck...whose elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd. Sometime before he introduced himself I'd got a strong impression that he was picking his words with care." What is Fitzgerald trying to convey here about Gatsby? How should we feel about Gatsby here?
6. Why do you suppose that Jordan does not believe Gatsby when he says that he had attended Oxford College in England?

7. In what ways is Gatsby's behavior at his party quite unlike the behavior of most of his guests?
8. Toward the end of the party, we have the unflattering description of husbands and wives and also the drunk who has crashed his car. What is Fitzgerald's deeper message to us here?
9. Jordan declares to Nick that she "hates careless people." Explain the irony here.

The Great Gatsby, CHAPTER 4

1. Looking through the list of party-goers, find and paraphrase at least three pieces of evidence that the old money is in East Egg and the new money in West Egg?
2. What is weird about Nick's drive into New York with Gatsby? List at least three things about Gatsby in this scene that strike you as odd.
3. What two things does Nick see on/near the Queensboro Bridge that make him think that Gatsby is, perhaps, telling the truth?
4. Who is Meyer Wolfsheim, and what do we know about him?
5. Gatsby disappears when which other character unexpectedly arrives at lunch? Take a guess as to why Gatsby doesn't want to see this character.
6. Jordan recalls the time in 1917 when she saw Gatsby and Daisy together. From Jordan's description, do you think Daisy was genuinely interested in Gatsby?
7. How does Daisy behave the night before her wedding? Why?
8. Who, do you suppose, sent the letter that caused Daisy to become so upset? What do you think the letter may have said?
9. Nick says, "Then it had not been merely the stars to which he had aspired on that June night" when Nick first spotted Gatsby reaching out across the bay. What does Nick now realize about that night and about Gatsby's real estate purchase?
10. What's happening between Nick and Jordan?

The Great Gatsby, CHAPTER 5

1. What steps has Gatsby taken to ensure this reunion day is perfect?
2. What's the weather like at the beginning of the chapter? Symbolically analyze this element of the scene.
3. Why does Gatsby take Nick and Daisy the long way around his house to the front door instead of just cutting through the back lawn?
4. When Nick asks Gatsby what business he is in, Gatsby responds, "That's my affair," before he realizes that this is not an appropriate reply. Why does Gatsby give that answer, and why is not it an appropriate reply?
5. Okay, let's talk about that scene with the shirts. Obviously, Daisy's not crying because of the actual shirts. Analyze the passage and explain what, exactly, has caused Daisy to become so emotional as she wraps herself in all those shirts.
6. As the three of them look across the bay toward Daisy's house, Nick tells us, "Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now vanished forever. Compared to that great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one." First, explain what Fitzgerald means by "the great distance" between Gatsby and Daisy. Then, explain the significance of the fact that the green light is now just a light on a dock and that Gatsby's "count of enchanted objects had diminished by one."

The Great Gatsby, CHAPTER 6

1. In the first few pages of this chapter, we learn about Gatsby's background. When did James Gatz change his name to Jay Gatsby? Why did he leave college after just two weeks?

2. Nick says, "So he [Gatsby] invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end." For James Gatz, what does he expect the future Jay Gatsby's life will be like? Specifically, at night, what sets James' heart "in a constant, turbulent" riot?
3. To young Gatz, what does Dan Cody's yacht represent?
4. Why does Gatsby not get the \$25,000 left to him in Cody's will? What lesson did young Gatsby likely learn from this incident?
5. After crossing paths with Gatsby, Tom says, "I may be old-fashioned in my ideas, but women run around too much these days to suit me." What's interesting (and hypocritical) about this line?
6. What is Daisy's opinion of Gatsby's party?
7. While the reader can have easily predicted Daisy and Tom's reactions to his party, Gatsby cannot. Why not?
8. What is Nick's view of repeating the past, and what is Gatsby's opinion? Why is Gatsby's opinion unrealistic?

The Great Gatsby, CHAPTER 7

1. Why, do you suppose, Fitzgerald links the behavior of the characters to the hottest day of the summer?
2. When Gatsby briefly meets Daisy's little girl, he is somewhat unnerved. Symbolically, what does the little girl represent?
3. What causes Tom to realize that his wife has been having an affair with Gatsby?
4. What does Gatsby understand about Daisy's voice that Nick does not?
5. Describe the driving arrangement that brings the five characters into the city.
6. Why, do you suppose, Tom decides to let Wilson finally have the car he has been promising him?
7. What indication is there at this point that, in Myrtle's mind anyway, Tom has been more than a fling?
8. Besides Myrtle's, what other eyes "kept their vigil" on the activities along the roadway?
9. As always, there is a grain of truth in what Gatsby says. In what sense is he an Oxford man?
10. Daisy says that Tom is "revolting." To what, can you imagine, is she referring?
11. Why does Daisy have a tough time saying, as Gatsby wishes, that she never loved Tom?
12. Why is it so important to Gatsby that Daisy say she never loved Tom?
13. How has Gatsby earned most of his money, and what does Tom say that startles Gatsby?
14. What is Daisy's reaction to this news?
15. Describe the hit-and-run scene.
16. Why does Tom make the point to Wilson that he just drove the coupe from New York and the yellow car does not actually belong to him?
17. What indication is there that Tom really was fond of Myrtle?
18. What does the reader learn that Tom does not know?
19. What is the scene that Nick observes taking place between Tom and Daisy in the kitchen?
20. Why does this scene suggest ill for Gatsby?

The Great Gatsby, CHAPTER 8

1. Why was the young Gatsby drawn to Daisy?
2. What is the cause of the problem between Jordan and Nick?
3. In what context do Dr. Eckleburg's eyes appear in this chapter?
4. When Wilson disappears for three hours, where do you guess he might have gone? (You won't know for certain until later.)
5. Gatsby asks the groundskeeper not to drain the pool. Why? In light of what happens at the very end of this chapter, how is this exchange symbolically meaningful?
6. How can Wilson's actions at the end of this chapter be explained?
7. What were Nick's final words to Gatsby? Why is this a fitting goodbye?

The Great Gatsby, CHAPTER 9

1. Why does Nick feel responsible for getting people to the funeral? Why do you suppose Wolfsheim reacts the way he does?
2. What does young Jimmy Gatz's daily schedule say about him?
3. Is Nick surprised that Daisy has not sent a message or flowers? Are you?
4. Nick's fantastic dream involves El Greco figures. What is the dream, and what might this dream represent in regard to Nick's present feelings about the East?
5. What shocking piece of information does Nick receive in his chance meeting with Tom? What is Nick's final feeling about Tom and Daisy?
6. In the last four paragraphs, Nick makes the symbol of the green light very concrete. What does the green light symbolize?
7. Keeping the last few paragraphs in mind, what does the last sentence in the story mean?