

QUICK CARD: THE GREAT GATSBY



<i>Reference</i>	The Great Gatsby. F. Scott Fitzgerald. (1925) ISBN-13: 978-0743273565
<i>Plot</i>	When Nick Carroway returns from the Great War to his quiet home in the American midwest, restlessness leads him to New York City, the hub of burgeoning culture. There, he meets Jay Gatsby, his incredibly affluent and mysterious neighbor, and learns of Jay's longing for the elusive (and married) Daisy Buchanan, Nick's cousin. Nick's first person narration of their ensuing affair records the culmination of Gatsby's life, love and dreams, finding in Gatsby the figure of the American Dream and its disappointing end.
<i>Setting</i>	The story transpires due east of New York in the fictitious island neighborhoods of East and West Egg. East Egg is home to the rich and famous; West Egg, while it enjoys the same waterfront views, commands somewhat lesser rents. This comparison of East and West, old money and new wealth, traditional values and new morés, functions as a recurring motif representing tradition and modernity throughout the story. In addition to these neighborhoods, the story settings include the Valley of Ashes, an industrial portion of town which floats between the islands and New York City itself. A picture of the excess and dissipation of the roaring '20s with its prohibition, rum runners and debutantes, the world of Gatsby presents a debauched, materialistic culture replete with hypocrisy and crime.
<i>Characters</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nick Carroway – the narrator. A Minnesotan, Yale Man in the bond business. He's newly returned from the Great War and finds his home in the midwest the "ragged edge of the world." He's looking for its center. • Jay Gatsby (aka Jimmy Gatz) – Nick's fabulously wealthy and very mysterious neighbor. He's famous for lavish parties. No one really knows who he is, what he does, or how he gets his money. He's a dreamer, and Daisy Buchanan is his dream. • Daisy Buchanan – Nick's cousin and Gatsby's long-lost love. Wife of Tom Buchanan and mother to one young daughter. A superficial and narcissistic socialite. • Tom Buchanan – Daisy's adulterous husband. He hails from a wealthy, old family. Racist and sexist, he is a violent bully who espouses hypocritical standards of behavior and decency. • Jordan Baker – a friend of Daisy's and a golf pro, her ennui and cynicism capture the mood of the age. Nick's date. • Myrtle Wilson – mistress of Tom Buchanan and wife of Wilson, the grey man in the Valley of Ashes who runs the garage and gas station. He idealizes his wife. He's ruined by unrequited love. He serves as a foil for both Gatsby

	<p>and Tom.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor Wolfsheim – shady businessman who helped to fix a World Series. He and Gatsby have a history of illegal business dealings. • Owl Eyes – the drunk man Nick meets at Gatsby’s party. He’s impressed by Gatsby’s library and wealth. • Klipspringer – the freeloader who stays with Gatsby until his ruin. He doesn’t bother to attend Gatsby’s funeral, but moves on to leech on other wealthy “friends.” • Mr. Gatz – Jay’s father, a farmer from N. Dakota • Catherine, Myrtle’s sister, Mr. and Mrs. McKee – guests at the cocktail party at Tom and Myrtle’s city apartment
<i>Conflict</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Man vs. Society • Man vs. Man • Man vs. Self • Man vs. God
<i>Theme</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The futility of the American Dream • Disillusionment, Cynicism, Alienation • Indictment of American excess and materialism • The death of God/loss of a center • Appearance vs. Reality
<i>Literary Devices</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Symbolism - the extended use of an image, usually associated with major story themes. Consider: The Valley of Ashes, the billboard of Dr.T.J. Eckleburg, the parties at Gatsby’s house, East and West Egg, the green light across the lake from Gatsby’s dock • Foreshadowing – subtle clues to coming plot development. “So we drove on toward death through the cooling twilight.”