

Name _____ Date _____

AP Language & Composition
The Great Gatsby
Study Questions – Chapters 7-9

Chapter 7

1. How does Nick finally explain the charm of Daisy's voice? In what sense, then, is Daisy connected to "His Father's business, the service of a vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty"?
2. What similar circumstance has been revealed both to Tom and to Wilson?
3. Myrtle, watching Tom fill the car with gas, draws two wrong conclusions. What are they?
4. Explain Nick's fascination with Tom's transition "from libertine to prig."
5. Whose car actually hits Myrtle? Who did she think was in the car? Why?
6. Explain how the last two sentences of this chapter continue the theme of Gatsby's dream.

Chapter 8

1. Look at the paragraph beginning with “But he didn’t despise himself and it didn’t turn out as he had imagined.” Particularly, note the second sentence: “He had intended, probably, to take what he could and go – but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail.” How does this allusion add meaning to the reader’s understanding of Gatsby’s dream?
2. What simile in the paragraph beginning with “When they met again two days later it was Gatsby who was breathless, who was somehow betrayed” creates a suggestion about Daisy?
3. What effect does Fitzgerald create in the paragraph beginning “For Daisy was young and her artificial world was redolent of orchids and pleasant, cheerful snobbery and orchestras which set the rhythm of the year, summing up the sadness and suggestiveness of life in new tunes”?
4. Why did Daisy marry Tom? Connect this to her “paralysis.”
5. Explain the sentence: “But it was all going by too fast now for [Gatsby’s] blurred eyes and he knew that he had lost that part of it, the freshest and the best, forever.”
6. Read the paragraph beginning “I’ve always been glad I said that...” How does this paragraph extend the paradox of Nick’s feelings about Gatsby?
7. Read this passage closely, beginning with this paragraph: “Wilson’s glazed eyes turned out to the ashheaps, where small grey clouds took on fantastic shape and scurried here and there in the faint dawn wind” and ending with “‘That’s an advertisement,’ Michaelis assured him.” What could this mean? (Remember the earlier comment, “He was a son of God...”)

8. Who is that “ashen, fantastic figure gliding toward Gatsby through the amorphous trees”?
9. Explain Fitzgerald’s use of the word “holocaust” in the last sentence of Chapter 8.

Chapter 9

1. Read the following from Benjamin Franklin’s autobiography (Franklin is speaking of his efforts to reach moral perfection):

“It may be well my posterity should be informed that to this little artifice [his plan to reach perfection], with the blessing of God, their ancestor ow’d the constant felicity of his life, down to his seventy-ninth year in which this is written. What reverses may attend the remainder is in the hand of Providence: but if they arrive, the reflection on past happiness enjoy’d ought to help his bearing them with more resignation. To *Temperance* he ascribes his long-continued health, and what is still left to him of a good constitution; to *Industry* and *Frugality*, the early easiness of his circumstances and acquisition of his fortune, with all that knowledge that enabled him to be a useful citizen, and obtained for him some degree of reputation among the learned; to *Sincerity* and *Justice*, the confidence of his country, and the honorable employments it conferred upon him; and to the joint influence of the whole mass of the virtues, even in the imperfect state he was able to acquire them, all that evenness of temper, and that cheerfulness in conversation, which makes his company still sought for, and agreeable even to his younger acquaintance. I hope, therefore, that some of my descendants may follow the example and reap the benefits thereof.”

What in this chapter relates to what Franklin has written? What is Fitzgerald suggesting?

2. Nick is comparing the vitality of his West with his memory of the East. Look at the paragraph beginning “Even when the East excited me most...” Particularly the part following his mention of El Greco. What language creates the tone? What is the tone? What is the effect of this passage?

3. Read the paragraph beginning with “I couldn’t forgive him or like him but I saw that what he had done was, to him, entirely justified.” Read especially the part about Daisy and Tom. Explain Nick’s point here, and connect it to his mention of the two things that Tom may be purchasing. How does this tie in to the “service of a vast, vulgar and meretricious beauty”?

4. How do the last four paragraphs of the book, beginning with “Most of the big shore places were closed now” effectively connect the main ideas in the novel?