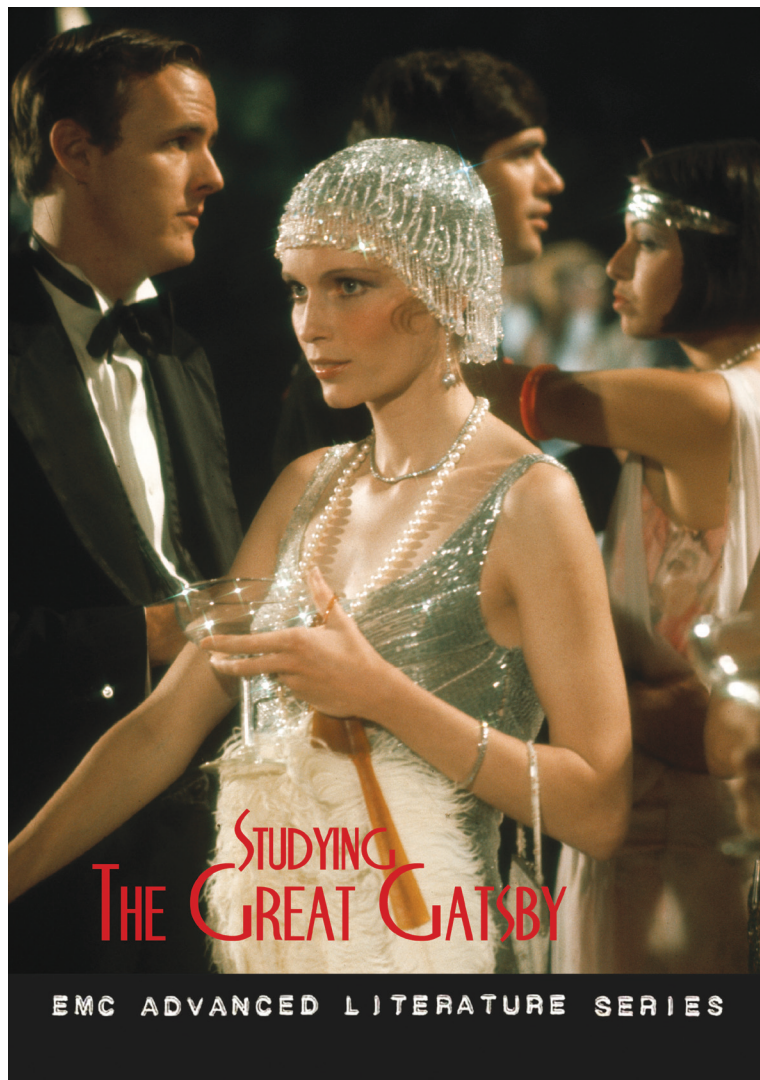


The Great Gatsby: An EMC Study Guide



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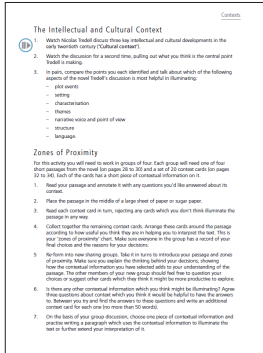
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1. What does this Video PDF include?

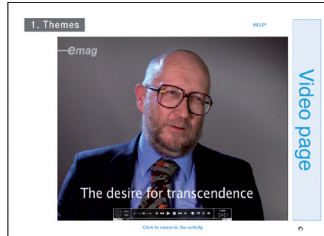
Pages 2-91 are activity sheets for you to print out. They look like this:



Activities which use a video clip are indicated with this icon: 

Clicking on this icon will take you directly to the video page.

Pages 92-99 are video pages (like a DVD). They look like this:



These pages include all the video clips referred to in the activity sheets.

2. How do I play the video clips?

First make sure you have saved the file to your desktop.

To play the video clips you need to open the file in Adobe Reader 9 or above.

You can download this free application by clicking here.



Follow the instructions to install the latest version of the Adobe Reader program. Once it is installed and you have agreed the license, open the program.

Go to 'File – Open' and navigate your way to the PDF you have downloaded. **NB: The video files will not display or play if you open the PDF in Adobe Reader 8 or below.**

Move your cursor onto the video image. Click and the video will begin to play within the page.

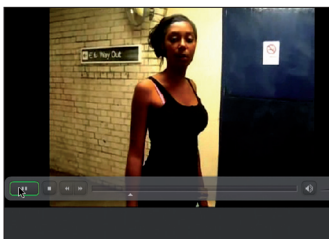
To play the video clips to a class you will need a computer, data projector and screen.

3. How can I play the video clips full screen?

Position the cursor on the video image. On a PC: right click. On a Mac either right click or 'Control+click'.

4. How do I stop the video clips playing?

Either move to another page in the PDF or click the Play/Pause button on the control panel, as shown here. **NB: The control panel is visible only when you move your cursor over the video image.**



5. What do I do after the video clip has finished playing in full screen mode?

To exit full screen mode, press the escape button on your computer.

Acknowledgements

Written and edited by Barbara Bleiman and Lucy Webster

Thanks to Jenny Grahame and Joel Sharples for their help with the text.

Video editing: Michael Simons

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Cover: *The Great Gatsby* (1974), directed by Jack Clayton, starring Robert Redford and Mia Farrow, courtesy of the BFI Picture Library.

The screenshots are taken from the 1974 film adaptation of *The Great Gatsby* directed by Jack Clayton, starring Robert Redford and Mia Farrow. This adaptation is widely available on DVD.

A note on the text

Due to copyright restrictions this Video PDF download edition of *Studying 'The Great Gatsby'* is an edited version of the print and DVD resource published by the English and Media Centre in 2009. In addition to minor changes, the section on literary context has not been included, while the length of the critical extracts on the ending of the novel has been reduced. The print and DVD edition includes several further clips of the video interview with Nicolas Tredell.

Text extracts from *The Great Gatsby* have been checked against the Penguin Classics edition (1926; 2000 with Introduction and Notes by Tony Tanner).

Thanks

Grateful thanks to Nicolas Tredell for giving so generously of his time.

Thanks also to all the teachers who attended English and Media Centre courses on 'Studying Narrative' and 'Studying *The Great Gatsby*'.

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INTRODUCTION & NOTES

Overview

'Studying *The Great Gatsby*' is intended as a set of resources to be used after completing a first reading, when you and your students are exploring key aspects of the text in more detail or are stepping back to consider it in relation to contexts, criticism or other narrative texts. The section 'Reading the Text – Teacher Resources' includes a few suggestions for during reading activities, along with an overview of some key aspects of the novel and possibilities for further work on linguistic analysis. You might like to use some of the materials on context (pages 18 to 25) before beginning the reading.

Notes on Activities

Structure – Charting Gatsby's story (page 43)

The activity on page 43 asks students to explore James E. Miller's schematic diagram of Gatsby's story. The significant events represented by the letters are:

- A: Gatsby's boyhood
- B: Gatsby's youth/the period with Dan Cody
- C: Gatsby's relationship with Daisy
- D: Gatsby's wartime experiences
- E: Gatsby's entry into his present mysterious occupation
- X: Straight chronological account of the events of the summer of 1922

When discussing with students the way in which the story of Jay Gatsby is relayed in the novel, you may want to use the following brief discussion by Nicolas Tredell.

[A]ccording to the opening section of the novel, Nick is recalling events that happened the previous year, and although by the last chapter of the novel the time-lapse seems to have extended to two years, this apparent inconsistency could be explained by saying that it has taken Nick a year to write his story. Within this prolonged flashback, other, shorter flashbacks are inserted. In Chapter 4, there is Jordan Baker's story, told in the first person, of the young Daisy Fay, her encounter with the young Gatsby, her marriage to Tom, his early infidelity with a chambermaid at the Santa Barbara Hotel, and the birth of Tom and Daisy's daughter, Pammie. In Chapter 6, Nick provides, near the start of the chapter, a summary of Gatsby's years with Dan Cody, and then concludes the chapter with an account of the first time Gatsby kissed Daisy. In Chapter 8, Nick interrupts his account of the morning of Gatsby's death with a flashback based on what Gatsby supposedly told him that morning. This flashback covers the development and consummation of Gatsby's relationship with Daisy in Louisville, his success in the war, his going to Oxford, Daisy's marriage to Tom, and Gatsby's brief return to Louisville. The final fragment of Gatsby's story is supplied in Chapter 9, when Wolfsheimer tells Nick he first met Gatsby in Winebrenner's poolroom. [...] [T]here is still a large gap in Gatsby's story between the point at which Wolfsheimer takes him up and his emergence as the lavish party-giver of West Egg; the source of Gatsby's wealth remains a mystery, though there are hints that he is engaged in a range of lucrative criminal activities – bootlegging, fixing the results of sporting events in order to win bets on them, and dealing in stolen bonds. But the reader who seeks traditional narrative satisfactions and wants to know the whole truth about the novel's protagonist will be thwarted: *Gatsby* will not fill in all the gaps.

Continuum Reader's Guide: Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, 2007

Reading *The Great Gatsby* in a literary context

Copyright restrictions prevent us including the section on the literary context in the Video PDF download edition of 'Studying *The Great Gatsby*'. We suggest that the following texts would provide students with an interesting literary context for the study of the text.

John Keats: 'Ode to a Nightingale' (1819)

The influence of Romantic and specifically Keatsian language is evident throughout Fitzgerald's work – and Fitzgerald himself acknowledged his debt to the poet. Not only is the title *Tender is the Night* taken from this poem, but in a letter to his daughter in 1938 Fitzgerald drew attention to his borrowing of the following lines from the poem:

But here there is no light
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

which in *The Great Gatsby* he transformed into:

He lit Daisy's cigarette from a trembling match, and sat down with her on a couch far across the room, where there was no light save what the gleaming floor bounced in from the hall.

Ford Maddox Ford: *The Good Soldier* (1915)

A first-person narrative and Ford's creation of the archetypal unreliable narrator makes this a good comparison with Fitzgerald's choice of Nick as narrator.

T.S. Eliot: From 'III. The Fire Sermon', *The Waste Land* (1922)

Eliot's Modernist poem, published in the year in which *The Great Gatsby* is set, 'influenced to a greater or lesser degree almost every writer of Fitzgerald's era' (Ruth Prigozy). Fitzgerald much admired *The Waste Land* – the first edition of *The Great Gatsby* contained the dedication 'To T.S. Eliot, the master of us all' – and critics frequently highlight the influence of the poem on the novel. The section included here compares well with Nick's description of his solitary, on-the-edge evenings in New York. Other connections might be made with the description of the valley of ashes, the sense of pointlessness of their lives (including Daisy's panicky 'What'll we do with ourselves this afternoon? [...] and the day after that, and the next thirty years?').

Ernest Hemingway: *The Sun Also Rises* (1926)

Writing at the same time as F. Scott Fitzgerald and also one of the expatriate 'Lost Generation', but stylistically very different, Ernest Hemingway makes a good contrast. *The Sun Also Rises* is a first-person narrative set in Paris and Spain in the early 1920s in the aftermath of World War 1.

Truman Capote: *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1958)

A first-person narrative of a young aspiring writer fascinated by a young woman, Holly Golightly. Capote presents a young, apparently superficial society, partying and drinking in early 1940s New York.

Richard Yates: *Revolutionary Road* (1961)

Set in 1950s America (Connecticut and its suburbs), this is a story of disappointed dreams, and the gap between aspirations and reality. *Revolutionary Road* is a third-person narrative which uses free indirect style to create a sense of intimacy with the characters. Yates has often been compared with Fitzgerald.

Number crunching

The section on 'Language' (page 59) includes three activities exploring the insights which might be gained by paying attention to patterns of punctuation and repeated words and images across the novel. This download publication includes a separate Word document: a chapter-by-chapter version of the text of *The Great Gatsby* which has been 'collapsed', with all the words organised alphabetically and with each new word on a different line, to use both as a print out, or on computer as a Word file.

Before being collapsed, this version of the novel was checked against the Penguin Classics edition (1926; 2000 with Introduction and Notes by Tony Tanner).

Activity 1 – Analysing a chapter (Using the collapsed chapters – hard copy)

1. You could ask students individually or in pairs to take responsibility for looking in detail at one of the chapters. If possible make sure each chapter is being covered by at least one person in the class. In no more than 20 words, students record their impression of their chapter (for example, is it tense, threatening, dreamy, episodic and so?).
2. Students could look through a print out of the collapsed version of their chapter. Which words leap out as they skim their eyes down the page? Is this impressionistic response to the chapter confirmed or challenged by viewing the chapter in this way?
3. What insights are gained into the chapter (for example, the way it is written, the themes, the role different characters play)? Students could choose four or five of the words that are of interest and go on to explore them in the context of the novel. (See page 7 for how to use a Word version of the chapter to locate each word in context.)
4. Students take it in turns to feed back two or three of the points that they find most interesting.

Activity 2 – Investigating a lexical cluster (Using the collapsed chapters – hard copy)

1. Students could take one lexical cluster and investigate it in more detail across each chapter, focusing on questions like those suggested here:
 - Is the word always used in the same way?
 - Is it used in relation to the same character?
 - Is it always associated with stories told in flashback – or is it used across the different time periods in the novel?

Activity 3 – Checking and challenging assumptions (Using the collapsed chapters – hard copy)

1. Students could take a word or lexical cluster that they think will be important in the novel (for example, 'white' or words to do with seeming and appearance). They skim their eye down each chapter and see whether, and how many times, it or associated words are used. Are their assumptions confirmed or challenged? For example, words to do with seeming, appearance and so on are used sparingly, yet appearance/reality is recognised as a significant theme. What does this suggest? Perhaps that the theme is conveyed less directly? Use the Word version of the chapter to 'Find' where the word is used in context (see page 7 for instructions on how to do this).

Activity 4 – Lexical clusters (Using the collapsed chapters – hard copy)

1. After completing the work on lexical clusters in Chapter 1 (see page 59), students could go on to explore the ways in which Fitzgerald combines and juxtaposes the Romantic and the modern across the novel. They could use the method above to compare Fitzgerald's language choices in different chapters and even across the novel as a whole. Some possible ways to focus the exploration are suggested here.
 - Do certain chapters have a higher proportion of Romantic words?
 - Are particular characters associated more with the language of Romanticism or the modern world?
 - What insights are revealed into the relationship between the language, plot and themes?

Some Useful Websites

American Memory – Great Depression and World War 2

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/fsahtml/fahome.html>

The American Novel

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanovel/>

American Passages – a Literary Survey

<http://www.learner.org/amerpass/index.html>

Artcyclopedia – Hopper

http://www.artcyclopedia.com/artists/hopper_edward.html

Back in Style – Radio Dismuke

<http://dismuke.org/radio/>

Between the Wars

<http://www.chenowith.k12.or.us/tech/subject/social/depression.html>

Cornell University Reading Project

http://reading.cornell.edu/reading_project_06/gatsby/the_great_gatsby.htm

Fitzgerald Society

<http://www.fscottfitzgeraldsociety.org/>

Guardian Books

<http://books.guardian.co.uk/authors/author/0,5917,-68,00.html>

Jazz Age Culture

<http://faculty.pittstate.edu/~knichols/jazzage.html>

Kingwood College Library – 1920-29

<http://kclibrary.lonestar.edu/decade20.html>

<http://www.lonestar.edu/research-guides-kingwood.htm>

Knowledge Rush

<http://www.knowledgerush.com/kr/encyclopedia/Decades/>

Literary History

<http://www.literaryhistory.com/20thC/Fitzgerald.htm>

Lost Generation

<http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/ent/A0856588.html>

Modernism – Fitzgerald

<http://www.cwru.edu/artsci/engl/VSALM/mod/markel/Links.htm>

New York Times Archive

<http://partners.nytimes.com/books/00/12/24/specials/fitzgerald.html>

Norton Literature Online

<http://www.wwnorton.com/college/english/naal7/contents/D/welcome.asp>

Perspectives in American Literature – Fitzgerald

<http://www.csustan.edu/english/reuben/pal/chap7/fitzgerald.html>

The Roaring 20s

<http://cvip.fresno.com/%7Ejsh33/roar.html>

The Romantic Egoists

<http://www.sc.edu/fitzgerald/romantic/romantic.html>

US History – 1920s and Great Depression

<http://home.comcast.net/~mruland/USResources/boombust/boom.htm>

Weblinks checked May 2009

READING THE TEXT – TEACHER RESOURCES

Much of the material in *Studying 'The Great Gatsby'* requires students to have completed an initial reading of the text. Rather than working through the novel chapter by chapter, the material is organised around key aspects and concepts. The activities encourage students to take a step back, ranging across the text to explore themes, character, contexts, language, structure and so on. 'Big picture' activities are balanced by detailed analysis of Fitzgerald's language, style and narrative techniques.

Here are some approaches you might take to support students' initial reading.

1. Model the reading process in Chapter 1, setting up key ideas, then encourage reading in chunks, selecting episodes for shared work or discussion. Use your 'agenda' (see pages 11-13) to identify key aspects of the narrative.
2. Focus on an aspect of narrative for example voice, or the use of symbolism and ask students to select passages to share with each other, around that concept.
3. Suggest students use post-it notes to make connections within the novel (and where appropriate across texts) and to mark questions, techniques, key moments, motifs and so on for sharing in class discussion.
4. Create shared charts on the wall that students contribute to as a result of their reading and work at home, for example a symbolism chart, a voice chart, structure charts and so on.
5. Keep students on track with the reading by:
 - setting quizzes
 - challenging them to find key quotes, or passages to illustrate concepts or themes
 - asking them to summarise each chapter using the approach suggested on page 14.

Quotations from The Great Gatsby

Use the quotations below and on page 17 as a way of helping students get to grips with the text, making connections, practising integrating textual evidence into analysis or as revision.

A few suggested uses

1. **Speed dating**

Each student is given one of the quotations. Everyone moves round the room, stopping to read the quotation to anyone they meet and exploring anything they have in common. After doing this several times, everyone chooses his or her favourite partner quotation. Are there any matches? Are some quotations more popular than others? Why might this be?

2. **Use the quotations as revision**

Students learn a quotation to present to the rest of the class. They then take it in turns to say their quotation and give a short commentary on it.

3. **Do visual displays around the quotations**

4. **Connect, contrast, compare – key quotation hunt**

Students choose one of the quotations, look back into the text to find three other quotations which connect, contrast or compare interestingly.

5. **Question and answer**

Students choose one of the quotations and answer the questions, 'Who?', 'What?', 'When?', 'Why?' without looking back into the text.

A	her remark was addressed to the premature moon, produced like the supper, no doubt, out of a caterer's basket. (p44)
----------	--

B	Making a short deft movement, Tom Buchanan broke her nose with his open hand. (p39)
----------	---

C	I was within and without, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of life. (p37)
----------	---

D	'He went to Oggsford College in England. You know Oggsford College?' (p70)
----------	--

E	The exhilarating ripple of her voice was a wild tonic in the rain. (p82-83)
----------	---

G	Every Friday five crates of oranges and lemons arrived from a fruiterer in New York – every Monday these same oranges and lemons left his back door in a pyramid of pulpless halves. (p41)
----------	--

H	I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known. (p59)
----------	---

I	Then it was all true. (p65)
----------	-----------------------------

J	'Can't repeat the past?' he cried incredulously. 'Why of course you can!' (p106)
K	a promise that the rock of the world was founded securely on a fairy's wing. (p96)
L	It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. (p90)
M	'He's a bootlegger,' said the young ladies, moving somewhere between his cocktails and his flowers. (p60)
N	and I had a glimpse of Mrs Wilson straining at the garage pump with panting vitality as we went by. (p66)
O	The eyes of Doctor T.J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic – their retinas are one yard high. (p26)
P	'That's what I get for marrying a brute of a man, a great, big, hulking physical specimen of a – ' (p17)
Q	But I am slow-thinking and full of interior rules that act as brakes on my desires, (p59)
R	a high Gothic library, panelled with carved English Oak, and probably transported complete from some ruin overseas. (p46)
S	they saw that her left breast was swinging loose like a flap, and there was no need to listen for the heart beneath. (p131)
T	once there he could suck on the pap of life, gulp down the incomparable milk of wonder. (p107)
U	High in a white palace the king's daughter, the golden girl... (p115)
V	With fenders spread like wings we scattered light through half Astoria – (p66)
W	That's my Middle West – not the wheat or the prairies or the lost Swede towns, but the thrilling returning trains of my youth, (p167)
X	I enjoyed looking at her. She was a slender, small-breasted girl, with an erect carriage, (p16)
Y	From East Egg, then, came the Chester Beckers and the Leeches, and a man named Bunsen, whom I knew at Yale, and Doctor Webster Civet, who was drowned last summer up in Maine. (p60)

C O N T E X T S

Exploring Images

A selection of images from the period (1918 to 1925) is included on pages 19-23.

1. As a class, share what these images suggest to you about the period.
2. On your own, choose two or three images that particularly appeal to you. As you read *The Great Gatsby*, annotate the images with short quotations from the novel.
3. After you have watched some or all of Nicolas Tredell's discussion of the historical, social and intellectual context, add key word notes to your annotations.

Naming the Period

Listed below are some of the names given to the period between approximately 1918 and 1939 and the generation who became adults during it.

1. Annotate the names with your ideas about what this period might have been like. You could start by thinking about:
 - mood/tone
 - themes
 - impressions of the people
 - impressions of the period.

Jazz Age
Roaring 20s
World War 1 Generation
Pre-Depression Era
Lost Generation
Golden Twenties
Golden Age of Hollywood
Prohibition Era
Inter-war
La Génération du Feu (Generation of Fire)
Bright Young Things
The Flapper Era

Key Dates

Listed below are some of the main events and developments which took place during Fitzgerald's life.

1. Talk about the kind of world Fitzgerald lived in. How might this have affected his work and what he chose to write about?

- 1896 US Supreme Court upholds legality of segregation; F. Scott Fitzgerald born
- 1906 Anti black riot in Atlanta – 22 killed
- 1914 World War 1 begins
- 1917 US enters World War 1 (Uncle Sam poster); 24% of US homes have electricity
- 1918 End of World War 1; League of Nations; worldwide influenza epidemic – kills 5 million Americans
- 1919 18th Amendment to the Constitution (popularly known as Prohibition) outlawing the sale of all alcohol passed in January, with the Volstead Act passed in September. This allowed the law to exact penalties from those breaking the Amendment. The Amendment came into force at the beginning of 1920; Irish War of Independence (till 1921)
- 1920 Women get the vote in US (Woman's Suffrage Amendment); 8 million cars in the US; Fitzgerald publishes his first novel *This Side of Paradise* and a collection of short stories *Flappers and Philosophers*
- 1921 Baseball World Series broadcast on radio; immigration controls introduced
- 1922 T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* published; 40 million film tickets sold each week in the US
- 1924 First Walt Disney cartoon: *Alice in Wonderland*; Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue' performed
- 1925 Warner Brothers start to make 'talkies'; Miss America contest; Fitzgerald publishes *The Great Gatsby*
- 1926 The film star Rudolf Valentino's funeral sparks mass hysteria
- 1927 International airmail; *The Jazz Singer* is the first popular 'talkie'
- 1928 Charleston is the latest dance craze
- 1929 US stock market crash; beginning of The Great Depression
- 1930 Hollywood: Motion Picture Code; BBC play on TV; Hemingway publishes *A Farewell to Arms*
- 1933 Hitler comes to power; Presidential candidate Roosevelt's 'New Deal'; 18th Amendment (Prohibition) repealed to provide jobs
- 1934 Nuremberg Laws strip German Jews of rights; Fitzgerald publishes *Tender is the Night*
- 1935 Alcoholics Anonymous founded
- 1940 F. Scott Fitzgerald dies

By January 15th 1919, Congress ratified the 18th Amendment, which prohibited the manufacture and sale of alcoholic drinks and the Volstead Act put it into force. But Prohibition, an outgrowth of old American Puritanism which was designed to create a sober and temperate society, backfired dramatically. It fuelled the rapid growth of organised crime networks engaged in bootlegging [...] and fostered the emergence of wealthy and powerful gangsters.

17

Nicolas Tredell

American consumer capitalism exploded, and the age of advertising and mass consumption reshaped the day-to-day lives of many Americans. The automobile, which debuted before the turn of the century, became an ever-increasing fact of daily life: in 1900 there were only eight thousand cars in America; by 1940 there were thirty-two million. Telephones and electrification, both innovations of the late nineteenth century, also became commonplace in American homes.

18

American Passages

In a sense, the concept [of the American Dream] has its origins in an essay written by John Winthrop aboard the Arbella in 1630. Soon to be governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, Winthrop was pondering the nature of life in a new society, one filled with opportunity for social and financial advancement but one in which ambition had to be tempered with charity and decency, especially with regard to the poor. What his people needed, he argued, was the freedom to make the most of their lives based on the development of essential inner qualities, justice and mercy chief among them [...] So was born the original American dream of boundless opportunity for material fulfillment as a reward for ambition, goodness of heart, and purity of soul.

19

<http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americanovell/>

America in the 1920s was undergoing dynamic changes. Between 1921 and 1924 the country's gross national product jumped from \$69 billion to \$93 billion while aggregate wages rose from roughly \$36.4 billion to \$51.5 billion. The United States had entered World War I a debtor nation and emerged as Europe's largest creditor, to the tune of \$12.5 billion. From a relative standpoint, America was rich, and it showed. When a prominent Philadelphia banking family raised eyebrows for installing gold fixtures in its bathrooms, a spokesman for the clan shrugged off the criticism, explaining simply that 'you don't have to polish them you know.'

20

Joshua Zeitz, 'F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Age of Excess', History Now, June 2008

N I C K – C H A R A C T E R

A N D S T O R Y T E L L E R

The choice of the point(s) of view from which the story is told [...] fundamentally affects the ways readers will respond emotionally and morally to the fictional characters and their actions.

David Lodge: The Art of Fiction, 1994

Introducing Nick

In *The Great Gatsby* Fitzgerald chooses to use a first-person narrator. However, this narrator, Nick Carraway, does not set out to tell his own story but that of Jay Gatsby ‘the man who gives his name to this book’ (*The Great Gatsby*, p8).

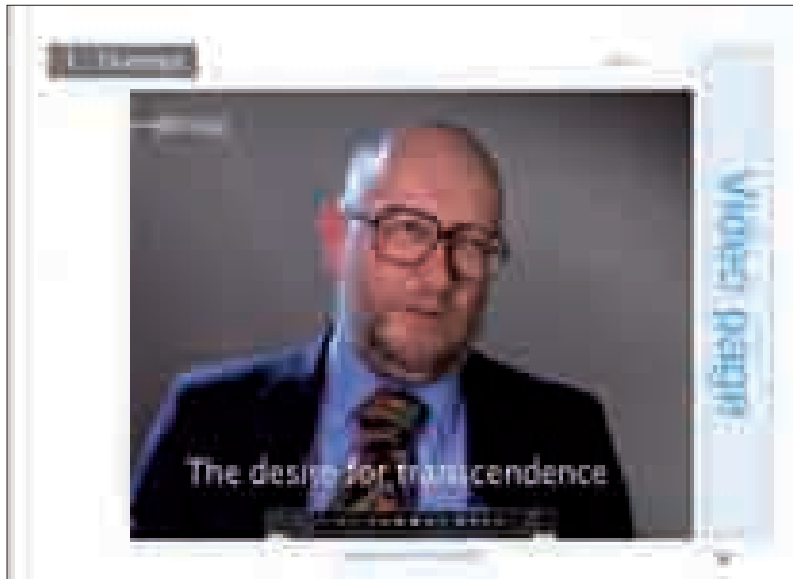
1. In your group, spend 10 minutes reading and talking about one of the clusters of quotations on pages 36 to 37. Each cluster includes a range of quotations by and about Nick from across the novel. Focus your discussion on what you discover about:
 - Nick as a character, for example:
 - what he says (and doesn’t say)
 - how he says it (what makes his ‘voice’ distinctive, for example word choices, sentence structures, key phrases and so on)
 - what others say about him
 - what he does
 - Nick as a narrator, for example:
 - the way in which he presents himself and the other characters
 - his telling of Gatsby’s story
 - gaps, silences and inconsistencies in this telling
 - your own response to Nick and the role he plays in the telling of Gatsby’s story.
2. Re-form into sharing groups and take it in turns to spend 10 to 15 minutes introducing your quotations and the main points of your discussion. What first ideas and questions have been raised for you about Nick as a character and narrator?

Video pages

The download you are previewing is a Video PDF publication.

This preview does not include the video pages.

In the download video pages (like a DVD) are included at the end of the PDF. They look like this:



These pages include all the video clips referred to in the activity sheets.

For a preview of the video clips included in the Video PDF publication, please click 'Video preview' on the website.

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