

Reading Guide for *The Great Gatsby*

Chapters I, II

1. In the beginning of the novel, the narrator (later introduced as Nick) gives the reader several dates to place the story in time. When did he graduate from college? When did he come to East Egg to live?
2. Where are the twin villages of East Egg and West Egg located? What large city are they near?
3. Nick's story begins when he drives to East Egg one night to have dinner with three people. Who are these people, and what relationship does he have with each?
4. What were Tom Buchanan's two claims to fame in college?
5. After telling us about Tom's college career, Nick describes his personality. List at least three adjectives that show what he thinks of Tom. (Avoid simple words; use your immense vocabulary.)
6. Besides her personal beauty, what is it about Daisy that most attracts attention?
7. What private information about Tom does Jordan Baker reveal to Nick during the dinner party?
8. Whom does Nick see on the darkened lawn when he gets home at the end of chapter 1, and what is that person doing?
9. Chapter 2 describes the desolate area of land that Nick calls "a valley of ashes," located on the road about halfway between West Egg and New York City. What is painted on a large billboard there?
10. Why does Tom pull Nick off the train at the beginning of chapter 2?
11. Most of chapter 2 describes a party. Catherine, Myrtle Wilson's sister tells Nick, "Neither of them can stand the person they're married to." To whom is she referring?
12. With what act of violence does the party end?

Chapters III, IV

13. List three examples of Gatsby's elaborate, expensive preparations for the party described in chapter 3.
14. What fact makes Nick unusual among the many guests at the party?
15. Looking for Gatsby, Nick and Jordan encounter a drunken man in the library. What has this man just discovered about the books?
16. To Nick's astonishment, the man who shares wartime memories with him and then invites him to fly in a hydroplane turns out to be whom?
17. Later in the party Gatsby's butler appears at Jordan Baker's elbow. What surprising message does he bring?
18. Toward the end of chapter 3, after Jordan lies about leaving the top down on a borrowed car, Nick realizes something about her character. She is _____. By contrast, how does he describe himself in the last sentence of the chapter?
19. At the beginning of chapter 4, Nick mentions three rumors about the mysterious Gatsby that his guests have passed around at parties. What are they?
20. Driving into the city, Gatsby tells Nick about himself. Where does he claim to have gotten his money? Where does he claim to have been educated?
21. Who does Nick meet at lunch with Gatsby? What remarkable fact does he learn about this man afterward?
22. Later that afternoon Jordan tells Nick how Daisy came to marry Tom. Whom did Jordan see sitting in a car with Daisy in October of 1917? In what way did she show reluctance to marry Tom?
23. What favor does Gatsby want from Nick?

Chapters V, VI

24. What special preparations does Gatsby make for having tea with Daisy at Nick's house?
25. Cite two or three details about Gatsby's appearance and behavior that show how nervous he is waiting for Daisy to arrive at Nick's house.
26. During their tour of Gatsby's house, at what point does Daisy seem most affected? How does she express her emotions at that point?
27. In the last three paragraphs of chapter 5, Nick reflects on Gatsby's state of mind. Complete the quotation: "There must have been moments even that afternoon when Daisy tumbled short of his dreams – not through her own fault, but because of ... _____"
28. In chapter 4 we learn the truth about Jay Gatsby's origins. Where did he come from? Who were his parents? What was his real name?
29. What was Gatsby doing to earn a living when he met Dan Cody?

30. Dan Cody was the most important influence on Gatsby as he grew up. How had Cody gotten his money?
31. How long did Gatsby work for Dan Cody? What jobs did he do?
32. How much money did Cody leave to Gatsby? Who actually received this money?
33. Who comes to Gatsby's next party with Daisy?
34. Toward the end of Chapter IV, we discover what Gatsby really wants from Daisy, besides her leaving Tom and marrying him. He wants her to tell Tom: _____.
35. When Nick warns him not to expect too much of Daisy, saying, "You can't repeat the past," what is Gatsby's reply?

Chapter VII

36. At the beginning of Chapter VII, Nick finds that Gatsby has replaced all his servants. What is Gatsby's explanation for this action?
37. After Gatsby calls, Daisy calls Nick, too. What do they both want him to do?
38. What is the weather like on the day of the luncheon party?
39. After the lunch Tom Buchanan sees with astonishment that his wife is in love with Gatsby, because of something she says in a certain way. Quote the words by which Tom realizes Daisy loves Gatsby.
40. A page or so later, Gatsby explains to Nick the extraordinary quality of Daisy's voice: "Her voice is full of: _____."
41. The Buchanans and their guests decide to go to New York. Who drives Gatsby's car? Who rides with Gatsby in the other car?
42. On the way to town, Tom stops to get gas at George Wilson's garage. What has Wilson recently discovered about his wife, Myrtle? Who is watching from an upstairs window?
43. At the Plaza Hotel the quarrel between Gatsby and Tom comes out into the open. How does Gatsby describe Daisy's feelings for Tom?
44. Still at the hotel, Tom exposes Gatsby as "one of that bunch that hangs around with Meyer Wolfsheim." Then Tom accuses Gatsby of various shady activities. How does Daisy feel about this information?
45. They all leave the hotel. When Nick, Tom, and Jordan pass the gas station on the way home, we learn that George Wilson has locked his wife, Myrtle, in the house. What happens to her as soon as she escapes?
46. George Wilson says, "You don't have to tell me what kind of car it was! I know what kind of car it was!" Whose car is he talking about?
47. Nick sees Gatsby on the Buchanan grounds (toward the end of the chapter). Who does Nick now realize was driving the car referred to above?

Chapters VIII – IX

48. Who watches all night outside Daisy's house? What time does this person come home?
49. Where was Gatsby when Daisy married Tom? Where did Gatsby go when he returned to the United States?
50. Before leaving to go to work, Nick shouts to Gatsby, "They're a rotten crowd. You're worth the whole damn bunch put together." To what bunch is he referring?
51. At his office, Nick speaks on the phone to Jordan Baker. What does he say to her proposal that they meet that afternoon?
52. Alone with Michaelis, the grieving George Wilson points out an expensive leather and silver dog leash, apparently new. Who probably gave it to his wife?
53. The next-to-last paragraph of Chapter VIII speaks of "the laden [i.e., loaded] mattress." Where is this air mattress found? What is its load, "its accidental burden?"
54. Whose body is found "a little way off in the grass?" How did this person probably die?
55. Who is responsible for Gatsby's funeral arrangements? Besides Nick, the minister, the postman, and some servants, who comes to the funeral?
56. Before leaving the East to go back home, Nick says he wants "to leave things in order." To whom does he have to talk?
57. Later Nick meets Tom Buchanan in New York. What had Tom told George Wilson the day after his wife, Myrtle, was killed?
58. "They were careless people...they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made..." Who are "they?" Which "other people" or person cleans up their mess?