

# [The great gatsby: gatsby’s illusion of himself](https://assignbuster.com/the-great-gatsby-gatsbys-illusion-of-himself/)

[](https://assignbuster.com/)[Literature](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/literature/), [American Literature](https://assignbuster.com/essay-subjects/literature/american-literature/)

F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby is considered a novel that   
embodies America in the 1920s. In it, the narrator, Nick Carroway, helps his   
neighbor Jay Gatsby reunite with Daisy Buchanan, with whom he has been in love   
with since 5 years before, during World War I. The affair between the two fails,   
however, and ends in Gatsby being shot and killed. The reason that this was   
inevitable is that Gatsby created a fantasy so thoroughly that he became part of   
it, and he fell with it when reality came crashing down.

The basis of all of this is Gatsby's obsession with Daisy and with   
meeting her. He did not want to deal with the reality that confronted him upon   
returning from the war. Fortunately, he had " an extraordinary gift, a romantic   
readiness," and he found in Daisy someone to focus this on. She is perfection   
to him, something for which he can strive, so he puts all of his energy into   
finding her again. He uses his inherited money to travel around the country,   
searching; when he runs out, he goes into the drug business, then oil, then   
liquor. He clips out articles about Daisy from every newspaper he can find; he   
buys a huge, romantic house that he hopes will merit her approval. The parties   
that he throws every night in hopes that she will come become almost famous for   
their extravagance and the variety of people that come.

A result of this is that Gatsby creates an illusion around himself,   
also. His past is shrouded in mystery and speculation: some favorites of the   
party-goers' theories on why he is so free and generous with his resources are   
that he once killed a man and that he was a German spy during the war. He does   
nothing to discourage these rumours; rather, he often adds to them. He lets   
people believe that he was an Oxford man and that his money was inherited from   
his father, when in fact he only attended Oxford for a short time and his money   
all came from outside his family. Jay Gatsby is not even is real name, but part   
of the illusion of his identity; his real name is James Gatz.

This involved deception does result in a meeting with Daisy. After years   
of staring at the green ight at the end of her dock like a symbol of all of his   
yearning, he arranges for a meeting at Nick's house. Gatsby of course tries to   
make it perfect, hiring men to cut Nick's lawm and decorate his house with   
flowers, and " unexpectedly" showing up after Daisy's arrival. At this first   
reunion Gatsby is childishly nervous and embarrassed. He has decorated his house   
with lights, and he takes her on a tour of it. When later she does come to one   
of his parties and he detects that she is not enjoying herself, he discontinues   
them.

Gatsby, however, cannot plan for reality. While he and Daisy are driving   
in his car, Daisy accidentally hits Myrtle Wilson, a woman who lives above a   
service station in New York. Her husband, George, thinking that Gatsby was   
driving, comes and shoots him in the pool. This, however, is merely symbolic of   
reality crashing down on what Gatsby had created. Firstly, his fantasy could not   
have ever worked because Daisy is not perfect. She is instead more like her   
husbad, Tom: reckless and spontaneous. In fact, Daisy was probably planning on   
leaving with Tom anyway. He had suspected her and Gatsby's affair and found out   
about his bootlegging operation. This darker side of him is what primarily   
destroyed her illusion about Gatsby. He, on the other hand, probably still   
believed in her to the end; the knowledge that Daisy was leaving with Tom would   
have ha devastating effects perhaps equal to even his murder.

This hopefulness was the basis of what made Gatsby great and why the novel   
was so representative of the 1920s. The American attitude was one of hopes and   
dreams and the illusions created fromt hem. And oftentimes the meeting with   
reality had tragic consequences as it did with Gatsby.

Category: English