

# Great gatsby – the jazz age

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



The Jazz Age was the period during the 1920's ( ending with the great depression) when jazz music and dance became popular. The birth of jazz music is often credited to the African americans but expanded and over time was modified to become socially acceptale to middle-class white americans. Jazz music really came into its own and became the definition of music to most people. This music played an important role in peoples lives .

The great gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald has many themes, which were all set in the jazz age.

Not all people of the jazz age were wealthy and famous, but most of the characters fitzgerald wrote about were. During this time , there was a boom in production and the ammount of money that many people had was beyond belief, we today, know this as the American Dream, which was set place in the Jazz Age. Tom, Daisy, Nick and Gatsby were the type of people who did buy liquor despite prohibitibion.

They had expensive objects such as Gatsby having his Rolls-Royce ( An english brand refering to the Rolls Royce motor company ) Nick has his books, and Tom and daisy had their car.

Cultures focuces shifted to glamour, advertising, consumer goods, new jazz music, automobiles and magazines. This era resulted in the creation of... bootleggers ( Bootleggers were criminals who smuggled illegal alcohol, especially during the american prohibition and other times where alcohol was illegal ) Gangsters- A gangster is a criminal who is a member of a gang. And Flappers- A Flapper was a " new breed" of young western women in the 1920's who wore skirts, bobbed their r hair , listened to jazz and flaunted

their disdain for what was then considered acceptable behavior. Flappers were rebellious and more independent.

Radios had now started to spread jazz music through the country, making it popular. The jazz age had now been more socially acceptable by the society, and was distinguished as the "Anything goes" era. This time period, people started to relax with trying to save money, and drinking and dancing had become a common past time. People started to rebel against what was known as socially acceptable and push the limits to what was considered normal. Many Americans found new wealth and enjoyed the booming economy. Women began smoking and drinking in public, a practice unheard of in previous years. However, with these bold changes in culture came a shift in the morals of the American People.

One of the most obvious forms of materialism is the pursuit of money. In *The Great Gatsby* money is more useful for where it can take his characters, such as a lavish home in East Egg or a day trip to a New York Apartment, than for what it can buy them. Fitzgerald connected the jazz age to *The Great Gatsby* very well. With the gaining of money and spending it recklessly, came parties. Gatsby throws extravagant parties as evidence by the number of guests, the food, the drinks, and the entertainment.

The reason Gatsby threw these wild parties was to gain the attention of his love Daisy. He wanted to flaunt off his money because during this era, money meant a lot about your life style. However even with the grand scale of his parties, none of his guests seem to know who Gatsby is, some even coming up with wild stories to explain his mystery. Most of these guests are simply there to enjoy the glamour which they believe to be the American Dream.

Gatsby's parties are typical for this time period. On his extravagant festivities "charm, notoriety [and] mere good manners weighted more than money as a social asset." (p. 3, 3. paragraph). Proofs for this statement can be in all the gossip about Gatsby that is talked by his guests. Interesting at this point is that most of his guests do not even know him and spread rumours about him all the same. That's how he got his notoriety: "I'll bet he killed a man." (p. 39, 9). The good manners are reflected by gentlemen who always offer a helpful hand to charming ladies.

At Gatsby's parties "people were not invited - they went there [...] came for the party with a simplicity of heart that was its own ticket of admission." (p. 36, 23-29) For this spontaneous society Gatsby's huge "party lawn" is an amusement park, a place animated with chatter and laughter where "casual innuendo and introductions forgotten on the spot" (p. 36, 6f) are on the agenda. Since these parties are very large, there is time for privacy when anybody wants it and time for intimate moments without anybody realizing.

Before the jazz age, Many americans had wanted someone to look up to as royalty to help them create their own. This is where hollywood was introduced. People were now being recognized as "stars" and now being recognized from movies, and radio's. These people lived lavish lifestyles and were considered americas royalty, as to this day.

Amongst all of the glamour of the jazz age, there was a feeling that the culture of America was morally bankrupt. Many americans shared the emotional crash that was present in many of Fitzgerald's novels, however it was hidden under the energy of the time period. This sence of emotional loss was present in the Great gatsby, as well as in the hearts of american people

of the Jazz age. Many times in history we find that the “booming prosperity hides the underlying distress that cultures experience” (which is a quote we found said by F. Scott Fitzgerald that I found). This is evident in the false, corrupted values, materialist and disillusionment of the jazz age. Fitzgerald does a super job of taking the bad with the good, and highlighting not only the prosperity of the jazz age in his novels, but the despair and moral corruption as well.

The stunning similarity between *The Great Gatsby*, and the Jazz Age can be traced back to the life of F. Scott Fitzgerald in the early twentieth century. These insights to Fitzgerald's way of living are present in the topics of his works as well as writing style. It is this nuance of life in the 1920's that allow the reader to fully put themselves in not only the emotions of the characters but the history of the time period. The Jazz Age itself was a glamorous time for America, but through further research it is apparent that much despair and convolution was present under the surface of the era. This moral corruptness, materialistic ideals, and disillusionment was captured in a snapshot of The Jazz Age in the classic work of literature *The Great Gatsby*.