

# The great gatsby essay

Literature, American Literature



The Great Gatsby Essay Discuss Nick Carraway's character. How reliable is he as a narrator? What aspects of his character make him an effective narrator? Nick Carraway is not only a character in the novel *The Great Gatsby*, he is also the narrator. This is very important because it makes him a central figure, like Gatsby. He is so involved in the plot that he becomes quite important and significant in the story. The whole novel is told by Nick and in a way he discovers his own development throughout the events of the book. As Nick says of himself, he is "both within and without." This is related to the fact that he is both a character and a narrator in the story. It gives a great success as to how Gatsby's story is told. Nick is a young man from Minnesota who moves to New York in the spring of 1922 to learn about the "bond business." The bond business refers to Nick's choice of career as an investment broker. He rents a house in West Egg, which is in Long Island; a wealthy area inhabited by the rich people. Nick lives next door to a man named Jay Gatsby, which throws magnificent parties every Saturday night. Nick is different to the other residents of West Egg. He went to Yale and has social connections in East Egg (His cousin Daisy and Tom Buchanan), another area of Long Island home to the well-known upper class. The first paragraphs show Nick's qualities. His father always told him to not criticize anyone because "the people in the world haven't had the advantages that [he] had." Therefore, Nick has a tendency to reserve all judgments. This quality allows him to become involved with Gatsby, Tom, Daisy and Jordan. During the first part of the novel, however, Nick acts just as an observer and doesn't get involved. Nevertheless, we notice that he cannot maintain that position and ends up getting involved especially with Gatsby. As seen in the

end, he alone is left to organize his funeral. When Nick moves east, he realizes that it's full of false values, wealth and sophistication of the people. His own moral sense is held back. Nick's ancestry roots in the Middle West are the origin of his moral capacity. The Buchanans, Jordan and mainly Gatsby all lack these traditions. This is shown by the way they transfer in a meaningless way from place to place or party to party. When Nick decides to go back to the Middle East, he is symbolically returning to a world of moral rights and personal tradition. His reason for moving back to the Midwest was to escape the disgust he feels for the people surrounding Gatsby and his life. Nick greatly admires Gatsby, despite the fact that Gatsby represents everything Nick disrespects about New York. He also says at the end of the novel that he "disapproved of him from beginning to end." This in a way is interesting because he makes no secret of his own reservations. Gatsby evidently possesses a challenge to Nick's usual ways of thinking about the world, and Nick's struggle to come to terms with that challenge changes everything in the novel. Nick helps to give the book a great deal of drama and intensity by filling us in with all the action and details through his own memory. The fact that he is limitedly involved puts him in a place where he can tell the story completely and directly. This makes him reliable because he maintains himself outside the main action in order to describe and comment on the events. Nick makes a good narrator because he is open-minded, honest, quiet and a good listener. This makes him trustworthy, as others tend to talk to him and tell him their secrets. Gatsby especially becomes close to Nick and trusts him, treating him as a close friend. Nick states that there is a "quality of distortion" to life in New York, and this

lifestyle makes him lose his balance, especially early in the novel. Nick observes Daisy and Gatsby's affair yet maintains it confidential. In conclusion, at the end of the novel, Nick reflects that Gatsby's dream of Daisy was ruined by money and dishonesty, just like the American dream of happiness and individuality. It has fallen to pieces simply by the pursuit of wealth. Nick believes that both " Gatsby's dream and the American dream is over."