

# The great gatsby and the lost generation essay sample

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



**Abstract:**

The Great Gatsby is regarded as the most widely taught and widely read American literary classic. A classic is a work that continues to be read and becomes part of the equipment of educated people long after its willing or unwilling readers still know the things that the author knew. The conflicts between the old value and the new value had a great impact on Fitzgerald, which were demonstrated in the Great Gatsby as the basement of the corruption of the American dream. Lost Generation is a literature school original in American in the twentieth century.

Lost Generation refers to the generation after the World War I. Meanwhile, it also refers to the young writers who lived as expatriates in Western Europe for a short time. The Lost Generation is also called the Sad Young Man by F. Scott Fitzgerald in his book which describes the disillusioned younger generation after the First World War. This thesis, based on the knowledge and discussion in the course of History and anthology of American literature, analyzes what the Lost Generation was like in the novel The Great Gatsby, and finally to draw a conclusion about why Gatsby a representative figures of the Lost Generation.

**Key words:** The Great Gatsby, the Lost Generation, the American Dream, love, F. Scott Fitzgerald

### 1. An over view of The Great Gatsby

The Great Gatsby is a novel by American author F. Scott Fitzgerald. The book was first published in 1925, and it has been republished in 1945 and 1953.

There are two settings for the novel: on Long Island's North Shore, and in New York City. The book is set in 1922 from the spring to the autumn.

## 2. 1 Backgrounds of The Great Gatsby

All great novels are great social history. F. Scott Fitzgerald was a social realist and a social historian, but his technique was not reportorial. He transmuted actual people, places, and events into fiction. Fitzgerald was concerned with evoking the sense of time and place associated with his characters' behavior. The material of his writing was recognizable in 1925 and identifiable now. He selected details for their power to generate reader confidence in the story and the characters. Accuracy for its own sake is essential; but Fitzgerald was much more concerned with the evocative power of detail. Thus the list of the people who attended Gatsby's parties includes no actual figures; yet their names and the impressionistic descriptions convey an overview of a social order at a certain point in American history.

## 1. 2 Brief introduction of The Great Gatsby

The Great Gatsby is the story of millionaire Jay Gatsby as told by Nick Carraway, a Midwesterner who lives on Long Island but works in Manhattan. Gatsby's enormous mansion is adjacent to Carraway's modest home. Nick learns that Gatsby is in love Daisy Buchanan, Nick's cousin and the wife of Tom Buchanan, an acquaintance of Nick's from Yale. Gatsby and Daisy had once been in love, but Daisy married Tom while Gatsby was in Europe during the Great War. In the aftermath of this, Jay Gatsby abandoned his old identity and amassing a fortune through bootlegging and other "shabby" activities. Gatsby chose the site of his house in Long Island because it was

across the bay from Daisy's house. He lead a extravagant lifestyle and dazzling parties every weekend , which are simply the attempts to impress and allure Daisy to come.

Nick manages to get Gatsby and Daisy together, and while the meeting is awkward at first, Gatsby soon relaxes and invites Nick and Daisy back to his mansion. Gatsby and Daisy begin to see each other secretly with some frequency. Nick and Gatsby also become close, as Nick is one of the only people who continues to support Gatsby despite the myriad rumors that circulate around the man. Buchanan eventually confronts Gatsby in Manhattan about the affair, and the two argue at length about who it is that Daisy genuinely loves. Daisy claims to love both of them, but she decides to return to Long Island with Gatsby, not her husband. Daisy drives Gatsby's car, but she accidentally kills a woman on the side of the road, and then speeds off. It turns out that this woman is Buchanan's girlfriend Myrtle—she had only run out to see the car because she thought it was Buchanan's. Myrtle's husband blames Buchanan for the death, but Buchanan informs him that it was Gatsby's car that killed the woman. The mechanic goes to Gatsby's house, where he shoots Gatsby and then himself. Daisy refuses to confess to her crime, and only a few people, including Gatsby's father Henry, show up for Gatsby's funeral

2. The lost generation appear in The Great Gatsby

2. 1 Character in The Great Gatsby

### (1) Jay Gatsby

Why is Gatsby so great? Since Gatsby was a little boy, he wanted to pursue a floweriness world beyond described. As a matter of fact, Gatsby who lived in the west egg was the creature of the Plato cause of himself. He is the son of the god... so he must devote his life to the god and devote himself to the greatness, vulgar and fancydan love. Once he falled in love with the " golden lady", " those unspeakable longing of him is hang together with the brief breath of her". She became the avatar of his dream, no matter Dasiy was, even she was in love with someone else; no matter Dasiy's voice was, even it was full of money, he still sticked to his original intention, and try to revive an old dream doggedly. The clinging pursueing of his dream and the spirit of devoting himself exceeds the mundane love between man and woman.

In order to revive an old dream, he thrown himself in a way of illegal means to get wealth with no hesitated. He is a bootlegger. Worse, he seems to hide other more sinister secrets. But then, he showed no interest in the wealth itself and never indulged in dissipation. How to explain this? From the beginning of this novel, the relater declared that he would never appraise someone easily, but he was assured and bold with justice when cryed that:" They are a rotten crowd, you're worth the whole damn bunch put together. " to Gatsby. This is just the key point to answer why Gatsby is so great. His soul is suffering, but he never regrets.

### (2) Nick Carraway

The narrator, Nick Carraway, begins the novel by commenting on himself: he says that he is very tolerant, and has a tendency to reserve judgment.

Carraway comes from a prominent Midwestern family and graduated from Yale; therefore, he fears to be misunderstood by those who have not enjoyed the same advantages. He attempts to understand people on their own terms, rather than holding them up to his own personal standards. Fitzgerald establishes Nick Carraway as an impartial narrator; he is not, however, a passive one. Although he is inclined to reserve judgment, he is not entirely forgiving. From the novel's opening paragraph onward, this will continue create tension in Nick's narrative. Despite the fact that Gatsby represents all that Nick holds in contempt, Nick cannot help but admire him. The first paragraphs of the book foreshadow the novel's main themes: the reader realizes that Gatsby presented, and still presents, a challenge to the way in which Nick is accustomed to thinking about the world. It is clear from the story's opening moments that Gatsby will not be what he initially appears: despite the vulgarity of his mansion, Nick describes Gatsby's personality as "gorgeous."

### (3) Daisy Buchanan

Daisy, who stinks of money at every pore, always likes to dress white frock and skirt just like an angel. As a matter of fact, the soul of her is full of stains or spots. This role is partially based on Fitzgerald's wife, Zelda, Daisy is a beautiful young woman from Louisville, Kentucky. She is Nick's cousin and the object of Gatsby's love. Like Zelda Fitzgerald, Daisy was in love with money, ease, and material luxury. She was capable of affection (she seemed genuinely fond of Nick and occasionally seemed to love Gatsby sincerely), but not of sustained loyalty or care.

She was indifferent even to her own infant daughter, never discussing her and treating her as an afterthought when she was introduced in Chapter VII. In Fitzgerald's conception of America in the 1920s, Daisy represented the amoral values of the aristocratic East Egg set. The final car ride she took with Gatsby determines her lot for her. That car ride is like the toss of a coin. Head, she goes with Gatsby; tail, she goes with Tom. Gatsby allows her to take the steering wheel and she runs over Myrtle Wilson, Tom's mistress. That's an accident, of course. But what Daisy does after that reveals her character more than anything else. She lets Gatsby take the blame for the murder and escapes with her husband to some mysterious place.

## 2. 2 F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Lost generation

The Great Gatsby was published by Scribners on 10 April 1925. The quintessential tale of the glory and tragedy of American aspiration won Fitzgerald great critical respect. It also helped create a caricature of the era that continues to this day. "The popular impression of the Twenties as a time of hedonism, alcoholic orgies, and high jinks is in some part based on misreadings of Fitzgerald's fiction," wrote Matthew J. Bruccoli, a Fitzgerald scholar. "Gatsby's party has become the quintessential Twenties party. Fitzgerald's characters have become confused with the cartoons of sheiks in raccoon coats and flappers in short skirts. Fitzgerald's view of the Twenties was serious and complex, for he recognized the glamour as well as the waste, the charm as well as the self-destruction." Fitzgerald's writing brought in a solid income, but the couple's lifestyle took a toll.

They drank heavily—him more than her—and fought viciously. Both flirted with other people. Zelda was also creative, pursuing both dance and writing, but her unique personality was starting to seem more unbalanced than charming. The couple—like the rest of the nation—was living on borrowed time. In October 1929 the stock market crashed, triggering the Great Depression. Six months later, Zelda suffered her first nervous breakdown. Things would never be so good again, for Fitzgerald or for his characters. In Fitzgerald's 1931 story " Babylon Revisited," a newly-sober American expatriate named Charlie navigates the streets of Paris, reflecting on the good times of just a few years earlier, and thinks, " I spoiled this city for myself. I didn't realize it, but the days came along one after another, and then two years were gone, and everything was gone, and I was gone."

### 3. Conclusion

Most of the characters in the novel attach a lot of value to wealth. In the process they sacrifice human values. They have no real concern for anyone, no love in their hearts. There's only greed and lust in their multifarious colours and shades. Today, more than 80 after its publication, the novel remains immensely relevant since the quest for wealth has assumed gargantuan proportions in the age of globalisation. Like Nick in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald found this new lifestyle seductive and exciting, and, like *Gatsby*, he had always idolized the very rich. Now he found himself in an era in which unrestrained materialism set the tone of society, particularly in the large cities of the East. Even so, like Nick, Fitzgerald saw through the glitter of the Jazz Age to the moral emptiness and hypocrisy beneath, and part of



him longed for this absent moral center. In many ways, *The Great Gatsby* represents Fitzgerald's attempt to confront his conflicting feelings about the Jazz Age. Like Gatsby, Fitzgerald was driven by his love for a woman who symbolized everything he wanted, even as she led him toward everything he despised.

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