

# [Sweltering summer heat in "the great gatsby”](https://assignbuster.com/sweltering-summer-heat-in-the-great-gatsby/)

Heat can be described as the increase in temperature until it becomes intolerable or unbearable. In literature, many authors use heat as a symbolic device to represent elements such as love, confusion and anger. In The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald also uses the sweltering heat to enhance the mood and setting of the novel. The novel starts in spring but the climax occurs during the hottest days of the summer. In this essay, I will attempt to show that Fitzgerald effectively uses heat to show the passion between Daisy and Gatsby, the increasing tension between Gatsby and Tom and the difference between the wealthy and the poor classes.

The sweltering heat represents the love and passion between Gatsby and Daisy. In chapter five, Nick secretly arranges Gatsby to meet with Daisy. However, their reunion begins among a pouring rain and it proved to be awkward and melancholy. Their love reawakens just as the sun begins to come out. After they realize they still love each other, they continue to meet secretly usually under the cover of Gatsby’s many parties. In chapter six, Daisy and Gatsby leave Tom at the party so that they can be alone together.

The readers can see that their passion for each other has reached a boiling point and they finally decide to reveal their relationship to Tom. They decided to reveal their relationship over lunch at Daisy’s house. Fitzgerald attempts to show the passion and tension among Tom, Gatsby and Daisy by stating that the day was broiling and definitely the warmest of the whole summer. In addition, we can also see that their love for each other has intensified through many situations. For instance, when Tom goes out of the room to get some cold drinks, Daisy kisses Gatsby on the mouth, right infront of Nick and Jordan.

This shows that Daisy loves Gatsby so much that she can do anything infront of anyone. In the afternoon, the five of them decide to go to New York City to cool off. Tom thinks this is the perfect opportunity to spend some time with Daisy alone in the car. Daisy, however, rejects Tom flatly and states that she prefers to ride with Gatsby in another car. Therefore, we can see that Daisy’s love for Gatsby is as intense as the summer heat. Although the hotness symbolizes love and passion, it can also symbolize anger and frustration. In chapter seven, there is a built up of tension and onflict between Gatsby and Tom as Tom slowly realises that there is something going on between Gatsby and Daisy. The building up of tension can also be related to the building up of heat, as the temperature becomes hotter in the afternoon. The whole build-up eventually culminates in a confrontation between Tom and Gatsby. Gatsby tells Tom that Daisy never loved him and she is going to leave him. On the other hand, Tom fights back by revealing that Gatsby is a bootlegger. At the end of the confrontation, Tom is victorious, as he knows that Daisy will never see a criminal.

Meanwhile, in the Valley of Ashes, a similar situation takes place. George Wilson, who loves his wife deeply, finds out that she is having an affair behind his back. He locks her in the attic in order to prevent her from escaping. This shows readers that George is very angry because he used to listen to everything that Myrtle says and obeys all her orders. The dramatic change in George’s personality can also be related to the change in the weather; the transition from spring to summer. Myrtle, on the other hand, does not give in easily; she breaks down the attic door and runs out of the house while calling George a coward.

This sudden burst of anger might also be due to the sweltering heat that must have built up in the attic. Therefore, Tom and Gatsby’s confrontations as well as George ad Myrtle’s argument show that the sweltering heat fuels the anger in all the characters. The heat also symbolizes the differences and conflicts between the wealthy and poor classes. Fitzgerald portrays the wealthy class to be without morals and compassion. He constantly uses the “ cool” image to describe the wealthy class. For instance, when Nick walks into Daisy’s house, he seems Daisy and Jordan lying on the enormous couch enjoying the singing breeze of the fans.

This gives readers an image that although it is an extremely hot day, Daisy and Jordan seem to be enjoying themselves by doing nothing. In addition, Daisy orders Tom to make them cold drinks and later tells him to order some ice. The poor class, however, cannot enjoy any of those luxurious things. George Wilson can only stand in the shade with the support of the doorway. At the end of chapter seven, Tom and Daisy are enjoying “ cold” fried chicken and bottles of ale, which also symbolizes the coldness of the wealthy class.

Another difference between the two classes is shown through Gatsby and Tom’s love for Daisy. Gatsby’s love and passion for Daisy is deep and cannot be expressed on terms of money. However, Tom’s love for Daisy is cold and shallow. He has many affairs and does not bother to deny the fact. Once again, we can see the difference between the wealthy and poor classes. The poor class is more compassionate and knows truly how to love. The wealthy class, on the other hand, might seem more elegant and refined but deep down, they are shallow and lack compassion.

Daisy, who appeared to love Gatsby deeply and would do anything just to be together with him eventually gives in to the lure of being protected by Tom’s money and power. In conclusion, Fitzgerald uses the sweltering summer heat to enhance the mood and setting of the novel. This is most apparent because the climax of the story takes place during the hottest day in the summer. In addition, the heat depicts the increasing passion between Daisy and Gatsby most importantly, the differences between the wealthy and the poor classes back in the 1920s.