

# College great gatsby essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

The more things change, the more they stay the same“ The Times They are a-Changin’,” or so 60’s singer/songwriter Bob Dylan thought. But have we really matured enough as people to say that racism and prejudice are no longer words in the English vocabulary? Most people like to think so, but the facts paint a different picture. The novel, *The Great Gatsby*, by F. Scott Fitzgerald can be used to illustrate these points.

In the mid-20’s, when American author F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote *The Great Gatsby*, it was common to use words to describe African American people that today would be seen as offensive and degrading. Mainly the sole purpose of using such words were to depict African Americans as objects, not human beings. When Nick describes the “two Bucks” and a Negro girl passing them in a horse-drawn carriage with a white chauffeur he thinks to himself “Anything can happen now that we’ve slid over this bridge anything at all” This shows how people in Fitzgerald’s time reacted to free black families. Nick describes the black males as “Bucks” because that’s the name people used when they auctioned them off as slaves. He couldn’t just refer to them as “men” or “gentlemen” because it was inappropriate to give blacks a high status.

Throughout the novel discussing the downfall of the white race is a common topic. Tom and Daisy share thoughts about the downfall over dinner and Tom states that “If we don’t look out the white race will be-will be utterly submerged,” and Daisy follows that comment up with “We’ve got to beat them (minorities) down.” Because nobody looks the same and because people fear anything different, they had no choice but to fear minorities. If you were not wealthy and white, you were feared.

But racism wasn't the only degrading thing in the book; characters spoke condescendingly about people's financial status as well. If you lived in East Egg, you were wealthy and glamorous. If you lived in West Egg, you were well off but not nearly as wealthy as the people in East Egg. And because Nick lived in West Egg, Tom thought of himself as the better man. "Just because I'm stronger and more of a man than you are," declares Tom to Nick about his overrated ego. It wasn't only Nick who was the "outsider", Gatsby was as well. If Gatsby would've been rich in the beginning of his life, Daisy would have married him instead of Tom, and Daisy proudly admitted that to Gatsby, but sobbed when she had to tell Tom.

And now here we are in the late 90's and times are still pretty much the same. People still think they are better than you are if they are richer or are a different race. A recent article in the Sacramento Bee on Ex-Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke states facts that show we really haven't changed. Duke, who is running for U. S. Congress states proudly he will be "the first to stand up openly and proudly" to defend the rights of Christian whites. He and Edward Fields read a 30-minute speech blaming Jews and Israel for the ills of the world. They also stated that American culture is overly influenced by African Americans and other minorities and that that should come to an end. Duke ended his speech by saying, "If we lose European Americans, we lose America." How can this be any different than Tom's? "If we don't look out the white race will be-will be utterly submerged." It was scary for me to see how similar Duke's quote and the comment made by Tom in Fitzgerald's story are so similar after 70 something years. I guess that really does show that even after all of these years, we still have not changed. I think rapper

Tupac Shakur said it best when he said, " It's time for us as the people to start making some changesLet's change the way we eat, let's change the way we live, and let's change the way we treat each other. Because it's up to us as the people to survive." Bibliography: Great Gatsby, F. Scott Fitzgerald