

***The Great Gatsby* Literary Analysis Research Paper**

English III (Fall 2019)

TASK: Research a topic about the 1920s era and examine its role in the novel *The Great Gatsby*. You will write a three-page paper that discusses the historical background of the topic and analyzes its portrayal in the novel.

WHAT IS A LITERARY ANALYSIS RESEARCH PAPER?

A literary analysis research paper requires careful examination and evaluation of a work of literature or an aspect of a work of literature. This paper will incorporate historical research and analyze the accuracy of its presentation in a literary work.

First, you will research one specific topic to find out as much information as you can. You need to know factual, historically accurate details about your topic so you can inform your reader. You will compare the depiction of the 1920s in Fitzgerald's novel to the historical truth you learn about the 1920s. This process is how the paper becomes a literary analysis.

Secondly, you are going to analyze Fitzgerald's portrayal of your chosen topic in the novel and examine its purpose/role. You may find it helpful to choose one aspect of the work as the focal point (theme, point of view, characterization, symbolism, etc.) and ask questions about the purpose of that element in the work of literature. Some questions you might ask: Why does the author include certain details? How does an element contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole?

A great analysis begins with a specific thesis about a topic, discusses that topic in detail, provides specific evidence to support the claim of the thesis (research and quotes from the novel), and explains the significance of that evidence in reference to the overall topic.

RESEARCH TOPICS: Choose **one** topic about which to write. Use the guiding questions provided as you research your topic and analyze its presentation in the novel.

Class Structure of the 1920s - What are the levels of class structure? Describe the class structures in the 1920s. What are some examples of class structure in the novel? Why are those characters divided into their distinct social classes? What is Fitzgerald trying to tell readers about the attitudes and behaviors of people from different social classes? Compare old money vs. new money. Why is it difficult for people to ascend the social class ladder?

Prohibition – What was prohibition? Why was it instituted, and what were the effects of it? What are some examples of the effects of/references to prohibition in the novel? How does prohibition affect the characters in the novel? Are there references to speakeasies or bootleggers? What are the character's attitudes toward drinking alcohol and bootlegging?

Organized Crime and its Influences – Describe organized crime in the 1920s. What/who does it involve? What types of crimes do these people commit? How do they avoid being caught? What are some effects of organized crime? What are some examples of organized crime in the novel? What characters are responsible for these crimes? How do these crimes affect the novel's plot?

Lifestyle of the Fitzgeralds – F. Scott and Zelda Fitzgerald lived an extravagant lifestyle. Describe this lifestyle. Compare the lifestyle of the Fitzgeralds to Tom and Daisy's lifestyle and/or Gatsby's lifestyle. What are the similarities and differences? How does Fitzgerald mirror his lifestyle in this novel? What

are the benefits and downfalls of this lifestyle? What point might Fitzgerald be trying to make about this way of life?

The Jazz Age – What does this term mean? How did the 1920s earn this title? Describe the characteristics that defined the Jazz Age. Are any of these characteristics shown in the novel? How did people behave during that time? Why did they act this way? How do the characters in the novel portray the attitudes and behaviors of people during the Jazz Age?

Women in the 1920s – What was the role of women in the 1920s? How did their attitudes and behaviors change from previous years? Describe the central female character in the novel, Daisy, and compare her to a minor female character (Jordan or Myrtle). Discuss their attitudes, occupations, behaviors, etc. Are they portrayed in a positive or a negative manner?

New York and Long Island in the 1920s (playground of the wealthy) – Describe the culture of New York City and Long Island during the 1920s. What was happening in the city at that time? What role does location play in the novel? Could the story take place somewhere else? Discuss the main settings of the novel: East Egg, West Egg, Valley of Ashes, and New York City. Describe the people who live in each place. What activities/events occur in each location?

PAPER REQUIREMENTS:

Three Pages in Length: Points will be deducted from the final draft if the paper does not meet the length requirement. Your paper must be in proper MLA format: Times New Roman, 12-point font, double-spaced, 1-inch margins, first-page heading, and proper header with page numbers.

NOTE: When referencing literature, always use the present tense. For example, when you mention the novel, say, “Nick **walks** into the room,” instead of “Nick **walked** into the room.”

Three Sources: You must have *a minimum of THREE* sources (you are encouraged to have more) and you must list each source on your Works Cited page. The novel counts as one source.

Resources for your remaining two sources include databases, newspapers, magazines, journals, encyclopedias, books, and textbooks. **Focus your research in the NC WiseOwl database** as articles are scholarly and researched. Websites to avoid include blogs, Wikipedia, TruTV, E-Notes, ask.com, about.com, shmoop.com, SparkNotes, CliffsNotes, suite101.com, etc. You must choose legitimate, reliable sources; please check with me if you are unsure about the validity of a source.

You will create MLA citations for your sources using citations provided in NC WiseOwl, Oslis, Citation Maker, or Easybib. Links to these are located under the Media Center tab on the WCHS website.

Outline: To organize your paper, create a “bare bones” outline (see template and example) at the beginning of the research process. As you complete your research, you will fill in your Outline with more specific details.

You will also create your **thesis statement** during the Outline process. The thesis statement tells your reader what to expect: it is a restricted, precisely worded declarative sentence that states the purpose of your essay -- the point you are trying to make.

“Note Card” Worksheets: Each piece of historical research you include in your paper must have a corresponding “note card.” Each “note card” contains one piece of information quoted directly from the research, an appropriately worded paraphrase of the quoted information, and an MLA-formatted in-text

citation (see guidelines below). The paraphrase is what you will use in your paper. You should have a minimum of 6 “note cards” for the research section of your paper.

You must also have a note card for each piece of textual evidence from the novel you are including in your paper. You must have *a minimum* of 5 pieces of textual evidence that support your research topic. Each note card contains a direct quote from the novel, an MLA-formatted, in-text citation (see below), and an explanation of how the quote connects to your research. You should have a *minimum* of 5 note cards for this section of your paper.

You may use digital “Note Card” Worksheets or you may complete your worksheets by hand.

MLA-Formatted, In-Text Citations: Each source must be used and cited in your paper. The citation comes directly after the paraphrased information (from your research) or the direct quote (from the novel); the citation is enclosed in parentheses and punctuation follows the citation. Points will be deducted if a source is listed on your Works Cited page but not cited in the body of your paper, and if a source is cited in your paper but is not listed on the Works Cited page.

Examples:

- For a research article, use the author’s last name (or article title if no author is given) followed by the page number. Ex. **(Decker 4)**.
- For the novel, use author’s last name followed by the page number. Ex. **(Fitzgerald 27)**.

Turnitin.com – Submit your typed rough draft to turnitin.com on the due date. You will also be required to have a printed copy at the start of class for peer editing. If you do not have a printed copy, you will receive a ZERO on peer editing day.

Remember: Having no Works Cited page or in-text citations will result in a ZERO for the paper. You will also receive a ZERO if you do not submit your paper to turnitin.com.

Final Copy: Your final copy will include a three-page research paper with a proper heading on the first page and a Works Cited page at the end (not included in your page count). You will be responsible for having a printed copy at the start of class on the due date. If you do not have a printed copy at the start of class, you will lose one letter grade for each day it is late.

Library days are included so you will have access to printers. Plan accordingly!

***TENTATIVE RESEARCH SCHEDULE** (*Dates are subject to change)

Start Date/Select a Topic	Thursday, 10/24
Three Sources selected	Friday, 10/25
Works Cited Page due	Monday, 10/28
“Bare Bones” Outline & Thesis Statement due	Wednesday, 10/30
“Note Card” Worksheets due	Friday, 11/1
LIBRARY DAY w/Access to printers	Monday, 11/4
<i>Printed</i> Rough Draft due & upload to turnitin.com/Peer Edit day	Tuesday, 11/5
LIBRARY DAY w/Access to printers	Wednesday, 11/6
<i>Printed</i> Final Draft due & upload to turnitin.com	Thursday, 11/7