**The Great Gatsby Essay!**
Choose one topic. Your essay should be carefully written and supported with a plethora of textual citations to support your thesis and claims. Use MLA format (check online or in textbook if you have questions). Developing your topic requires knowledge of the text and developed thinking, be sure to show evidence of both. 12 pt. font, times new roman, 1-inch margins, include a title, 4-5 pages (1200-1500 words). Timeline of due dates below.

1st Draft/Detailed Outline—15 points—due day 1, Week of April 22
   Peer comments—5-10 points in class
2nd Draft—25 points—due day 2, Week of April 22
   Peer comments—10-15 points in class
3rd Draft—35 points—due day 1, Week of April 29
   Peer editing—15-20 points in class
Final Draft—100 points—due day 2, Week of April 29

*Plagiarized or copied work receives 0 points!*

**Topics:**

- Carelessness—analyze the topic of carelessness. How is carelessness pivotal in the characters’ lives? How is carelessness related to childishness? Is Nick basically guilty of the same fault with which he charges the Buchanans? Consider Jordan and Myrtle too...

- Discuss Gatsby’s character throughout the novel. What makes Gatsby “great”? Why is this title appropriate? Is he heroic or foolish? Romantic or Realist?

- What role does the past play in the novel? Consider what Gatsby thinks about recovering the past. Think about relationships, symbols, and imagery that suggest time passage. Can we successfully deny or past, past selves, experiences? How does Nick emerge from his experiences with a bitter understanding of reality?

- Gatsby’s feelings—love or obsession? How do you know? Is his dream worthwhile?

- “They’re a rotten crowd—you’re worth the whole damn bunch,” Nick tells Gatsby, do you agree?

- How do Daisy or Jordan change throughout the novel? Trace the character from the beginning to the end of the novel. How/why/do they change? Or if they don’t, why not?

- What aspects of the 1920s are exemplified in the novel? What role does history play in the novel? In what ways does this work represent the age in which it was written?

- What does the geography of the novel suggest about its themes and characters? In what ways is setting important in *The Great Gatsby*? Think about the importance of New York. Or consider how the places people live (even houses) reflect their personalities.
• How does Gatsby represent the American dream? What does the novel have to say about the condition of the American dream in the 1920s—think about—dreams, wealth, time and the idea of America.

• Compare and contrast Gatsby and Tom. How are they alike? How are they different? Given the extremely negative light in which Tom is portrayed throughout the novel, why might Daisy choose to remain with him instead of leaving him for Gatsby?

• In Chapter 7, Nick says, “You can’t repeat the past” and Gatsby replies, “Can’t repeat the past…Why of course you can!” Gatsby then describes a moment when he had kissed Daisy. Describe how Gatsby sees the past and the present. How does Gatsby misuse the past and his memories in order to enliven the present?

• Nick says: “I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known.” When you consider his role as narrator, do you believe that he is honest? Are his depictions of others honest? If he is not honest, why does he believe he is so honest?

• Trace the use of the color in the novel. Which colors are attributed to which characters/situations/places/things? How does this imagery add emotion and depth to the descriptions?

• In what ways are Wilson and Gatsby similar? Dis-similar? To whom is Nick more sympathetic? With whom do you empathize?

• Is Tom most responsible for Gatsby’s death? Daisy? Myrtle? Gatsby himself? Give reasons why or why not each character is implicated in the murders/deaths.

• Are the rich different? In what ways are they different and how does it affect themselves, those around them and society?

• What do people see and not see, reveal and not reveal? Consider ‘blindness,’ vision, mistaken identity, TJ Ecklberg, Owl Eyes...

• Consider the love triangles and intersecting relationships, compare and contrast; do we feel the same about all these relationships? Why or why not?

• What are characters searching for, and do they find it? Why was this generation referred to as “The Lost Generation”? In what ways are these characters lost?

• Who is the real Jay Gatsby—relate the vision (fantasy) to Jimmy Gatz?

• How is love related to money?

• When does Fitzgerald use violence…and to what end?

• What does the novel say about compassion versus profit? Is greed is good?

• What recurring images are there and what do we learn from them? For example, consider water, when it’s used in actuality, and when it’s referred to through imagery.