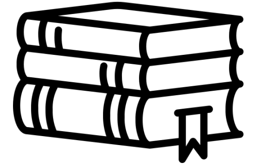
A-Level English Literature
Bridging Work



Name: ______________________

Form: ______________________

Instructions
There are three tasks to complete, each should take around 50 minutes. You will need access to the internet for tasks one and two. Please bring this to your first lesson.

Further reading
If you have completed these tasks, it is recommended that you buy a copy The Great Gatsby and read it – you will be expected to complete this by the end of the first term. Additionally, you will need to complete wider reading as you progress through the course, especially as you will be able to choose your own texts for coursework. Choose one of these recommended texts and read it.

Pre-1900
- *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde
- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- *Dracula* by Bram Stoker
- *War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells
- *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen

Post-1900
- *1984* by George Orwell
- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison
- *The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath
- *A Thousand Splendid Sons* by Khaled Hosseini
- *The Bloody Chamber* by Angela Carter

TASK ONE: the background of The Great Gatsby

One of the key texts that you will study is The Great Gatsby. This is quite a complex text, so before you read it, complete the following research and then read the contextual information on the next page.

1. Find out who wrote the text, when it was published and where it is set.

2. There are a lot of characters in the text, create a character map below.

3. Read a number of summaries (Sparknotes, Cliffnotes etc). Summarise the plot below in 10 bullet points.

4. This novel is often characterised as a novel of the Jazz era. Look up and explain what is meant by this term.

5. Read the biographical context about the author's life. Highlight important information and bullet point five things you think may have influenced his writing.

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in 1896 in Minnesota, USA, to a family of some social standing although little money. It seems likely much of Fitzgerald's interest in society life began in his youth in Minnesota when he would play and associate with the rich children of the neighborhood — dancing, sailing, swimming, sledding — all the time knowing he was never entirely a part of their society. Fitzgerald's father was unsuccessful in business and the family spent much of his youth living off the generosity of their rich relatives, the McQuillans. The McQuillans ensured Fitzgerald had a good education and paid for him to attend Princeton University in 1913. He did not graduate but instead joined the army in 1917, although he never saw action.

In 1918, while assigned to Camp Sheridan, near Montgomery, Alabama, Fitzgerald met and fell in love with then 18-year-old Southern Belle debutante Zelda Sayre. She came from a wealthy family and refused marriage until he was able to support her financially, so Fitzgerald moved to New York and took up work in an advertising agency. He had been writing throughout his youth and his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, was published in 1920. Fitzgerald and Zelda married and became synonymous with life in the 1920s: drinking, dancing and extravagant living. They travelled extensively in the USA and Europe and in 1921 Zelda gave birth to the couple's only child, a daughter named Frances. In 1922, the couple rented a house in the Great Neck, Long Island, and they embarked on a riotous year which provided the background for The Great Gatsby. He was seduced by the wild and extravagant life of the rich, and he wanted to be at the heart of it, like Gatsby, but he was also aware of the moral emptiness and the hypocrisy beneath the excitement. Fitzgerald himself acknowledged that he "was pushed into the position not only of spokesman for the time but of the typical product of that same moment."

The couple's drinking habits became excessive and took its toll on Fitzgerald's writing. Their marriage was also plagued with financial difficulties, and Fitzgerald had to write many short stories for publication in magazines to fund their lifestyle. Zelda began experiencing mental illness in the 1920s, and had to be institutionalized in 1930. She resided in different institutions until her death in 1948. Although he remained married to Zelda until the end, her mental illness redefined their marriage. Fitzgerald could not provide the support she needed at home and worked hard to keep her comfortably in the institutions. He eventually met and fell in love with Sheilah Graham, a movie columnist, with whom he spent the last few years of his life.

The Great Gatsby, Fitzgerald's third novel, was first published in 1925 to limited success. He continued to write novels, short stories and screenplays until his death in 1940. By then, he had slipped into relative obscurity; his personal life was chaotic and his literary reputation fragile. Despite having once been the golden boy of the Jazz Age, upon his death, many of his obituaries were condescending, capitalizing on his personal hardships. However, after World War II, interest in his work began to grow. By the 1960s, he had risen to secure a place among the great twentieth century American authors.

Five bullet points:

TASK TWO: the setting of The Great Gatsby

The novel is set in 1920s New York.

1. Research what life was like in 1920s New York and bullet point or mind map this below. You might want to divide this up into different sections such as lifestyle, crime, class and women's roles.

2. Read the following critical interpretation about the setting of The Great Gatsby and in another colour, add to your list or mind map anything you have further found out about the significance of the New York setting.

TASK TWO: the setting of The Great Gatsby

Exam links

AQA (A): Paper 1 Love through the ages

AQA (B): Paper 1 Tragedy

OCR: Paper 2 American literature 1880–1940

New York, new man?

The Great Gatsby

Leonardo DiCaprio as Gatsby (2013)

Andrew Ward examines the significance of settings and locations in *The Great Gatsby*

In the wake of the American Civil War and looking ahead to Reconstruction, a *New York Herald Tribune* editorial (13 July 1865) urged: 'Go West, young man, go West and grow up with the country.' This became the slogan for an already well-established American idea of exciting westward expansion. Yet only 27 years later, the census of 1891 declared that the western frontier no longer existed.

In his 1893 essay 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History', Frederick Jackson Turner wondered what would then happen to the American spirit of idealistic progress without the western frontier. *The Great Gatsby* provides a new idea for the new century, to flip the frontier. All the central characters of Fitzgerald's novel are gripped by a new, automatic compulsion to go east instead, that is from the Midwest to the Eastern Seaboard and, ultimately, to New York City and Long Island.

This simple idea forces non-American readers to engage with a specifically American view of geography. West, East, Midwest, North and South are areas defined by the federal government as specific territories rather than relative concepts like they might be in the UK.

Moreover, these are more than simply broad geographical areas. They are associated with historical events, with different customs and expectations, even different states of mind that are not necessarily familiar to us. For example, the idea that the North–South divide is defined by the Mason Dixon Line (the state line between Pennsylvania to the north and Maryland to the south) was seared into the American consciousness by being the border between free and slave states during the Civil War. Therefore, the South would appear to start quite far north and with no intervening midlands.

Midwest: the place of origin

In *The Great Gatsby* Nick Carraway tells us that a journey to his Midwestern home really begins 'beyond the Ohio' (Ch. 9), a reference to the river that forms the eastern border of Ohio state. Rivers running more or less north–south have a particular resonance for Americans as important stages in the east–west development of the United States. Above all perhaps, it is the dynamic between the Midwest and the East, and this border therefore, that is at the heart of the novel.

In American culture the Midwest is associated with 'small-town' America where the majority live recognisably typical American lives. The stereotype is of a place and lifestyle that are parochial, conservative and unexciting: the counterpoint to the excitement of a metropolitan hub or a new frontier. Nick originates from an unnamed Midwestern city (Fitzgerald probably has his home city of St Paul, Minnesota in mind) but gravitates east first to study at Yale and then to become, with the blessing of his affluent family, a bond trader on Wall Street, renting a modest bungalow next to Gatsby's mansion in West Egg, Long Island. Yale, Wall Street, Long Island — all synonymous with respectability, success and wealth.

The other central characters share a similar trajectory. All are identified as Midwesterners by Nick. Tom and Daisy are from Chicago. Gatsby himself is from a humble farm in North Dakota. After an unsuccessful early attempt to use education as his escape route from farming (at St Olaf's College, not far from St Paul), Gatsby's chance encounter with Dan Cody on Lake Superior begins his rise to new wealth in West Egg.

East: a new frontier

The desirability of life in the East is defined by a certain freedom — for example, Jordan Baker's freedom to be independent, single, a professional golfer and flapper — and a materially opulent lifestyle. The Long Island set inhabit grandiose houses, attend glamorous parties and indulge in extravagant leisure pursuits such as polo or flying a hydroplane. Trips into Manhattan are exciting and eventful so that the nearby city is far from just a place of work or routine. It is a place of beauty and possibility:

> The city seen from the Queensboro Bridge is always the city seen for the first time, in its first wild promise of all the mystery and the beauty in the world.
>
> (Ch. 4)

This famous description idealises urban Manhattan in terms very similar to the way in which Long Island is seen towards the end as the original rural idyll:

> ...the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes — a fresh, green breast of the new world.
>
> (Ch. 9)

Both of these descriptions show New York and Long Island as an exciting frontier of possibility.

Transformations

Another reading of the New York locations is to see Manhattan as a place apart, a separate transformational frontier. This is perhaps most noticeable with Myrtle Wilson. Once summoned to cross into town by Tom she becomes a new woman, a rich man's mistress or even the rich lady herself in her Upper

Tom and Daisy are from Chicago. Gatsby is from a farm in North Dakota

Manhattan pied-à-terre in 'a long white cake of apartment houses', suggesting a level of glamour way beyond the Valley of Ashes (Ch. 2).

Fitzgerald signals her transformation with props such as the newly-acquired puppy and costume — 'an elaborate afternoon dress of cream colored chiffon which gave out a continual rustle as she swept about the room' (Ch. 2). To complete the queenly charade, she assembles courtiers in the shape of her sister Catherine and the McKees so she has an audience before which to affect contempt for Wilson and Daisy.

Perhaps Tom is transformed in Manhattan too. Manhattan reveals his animal brutality in the apartment when he breaks Myrtle's nose, and his white supremacist and misogynistic views are expressed most nakedly in the Plaza Hotel. In Manhattan, Tom becomes the novel's very own American psycho.

Nick, too, is a man transformed in Manhattan. On Long Island his profile is modest and periphery, but in town he becomes a glamorous, even roguish, romantic hero. He positions himself at the heart of central Manhattan in the most prestigious locations — Fifth Avenue, the Yale Club, the Plaza Hotel, Central Park. He has an outrageous affair with a married woman in Jersey City and seriously flirts with Jordan in restaurants and during car rides. On the eve of his thirtieth birthday, he is exploring in this transformative location the new man he might become.

Materialism

Many read Fitzgerald's presentation of New York-Long Island life as a critique of American materialism and America's loss of idealistic direction. In *Paradise Lost* David S. Brown explores the influence of the ideas of Thorsten Veblen and, particularly, Oswald Spengler on Fitzgerald's growing sense of pessimism about modern American life, mired in materialism and lacking moral purpose. The emptiness of the material life and the corruption just beneath its surface, represented by references to bootlegging, fixing and faking, are all part of 'the foul dust' Nick describes as almost — but perhaps not quite — subsuming the best of Gatsby's idealism.

Back to the Midwest

After 'the holocaust was complete' (Ch. 8), the Midwestern survivors return home. Nick uses the Buchanans' move back to Chicago as the opportunity to summarise and dismiss them. After all, rather than using the East as an exciting new frontier, Daisy reveals that the relocation from Chicago was, in fact, their attempt to escape the aftermath of one of Tom's 'sprees'. However, Nick's own return to the Midwest is conveyed as a positive experience. If the earlier implication was that the Midwest was a dull place to escape from, now it is revealed as Nick's spiritual home:

> That's my Middle West — not the wheat or the prairies or the lost Swede towns but the thrilling, returning trains of my youth and the street lamps and sleigh bells in the frosty dark and the shadows of holly wreaths thrown by lighted windows on the snow.
>
> (Ch. 9)

There is now a sense of magic about the place. The choice of words and details here suggests something akin to the feelings evoked on the Queensboro Bridge or when imagining the excitement of the Long Island Dutch settlers. It is as though the frontier has shifted again, westward once more. It also becomes the point of view from which Nick can attempt to make sense of people and events:

> I see now that this has been a story of the West, after all Tom and Gatsby, Daisy and Jordan and I, were all Westerners, and perhaps we possessed some deficiency in common which made us subtly unadaptable to Eastern life.
>
> (Ch. 9)

The way in which such disparate characters are linked by common origin and also by their failure to prosper as planned on the eastern frontier is an extraordinary yoking, supporting the idea that geographical locations and their significance hold a key to the novel.

South: where the heart is

Another aspect of this topic is biographical: the ways in which Fitzgerald conflates his own geographical affinities with the settings, characters and events of the novel. As a Midwesterner who spent much of his boyhood, education and early career in New York and New Jersey, he is clearly locating the main action of the novel on home turf. However, a less obvious aspect of the novel is the way in which it reflects his affinity for the South. This has perhaps two origins — first, his wife Zelda's background, having been born and raised in Alabama, and second, his own father's family and their roots in the South.

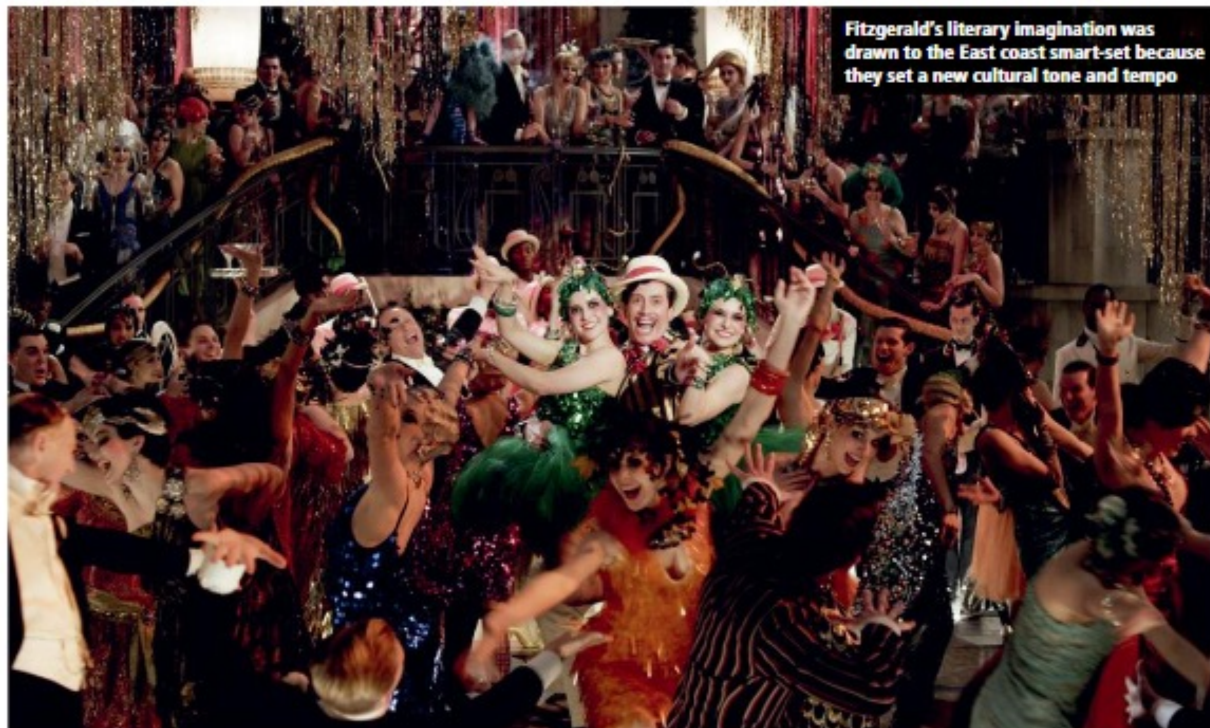
Daisy's presentation

One way in which Fitzgerald's affinity for the South is revealed is in his presentation of Daisy. Daisy Buchanan's adopted home city after her marriage is Chicago, but Daisy Fay (along with Jordan) was originally from Louisville, Kentucky. It is here where she meets new army recruit James Gatz, stationed at nearby Camp Taylor. This incident may mirror Fitzgerald's own first meeting with Zelda Fayre when he was stationed at Camp Sheridan outside her home town of Montgomery, Alabama. Daisy parallels Zelda as a socialite looking for a successful husband.

In the intervening five years since Gatsby last saw Daisy Fay, she had gravitated to a big city with decidedly unromantic and unglamorous associations as the home of Al Capone and the increasingly industrialised meat industry. Another transformative relocation. So, perhaps this southern setting is partly inspired by nostalgia for the early days of his courtship with Zelda but also a reference to the South as a mythical place of romantic glamour. (However, with works of fiction we must always remain wary of making too firm a link to the author's biography.)

Southern aspirations

Another way in which the novel reveals Fitzgerald's southern affinities is in his presentation of Gatsby's aspirations to live the life of a southern, aristocratic gentleman. Beyond Gatsby's ostentatious lifestyle of conspicuous consumption and all that for which Nick would normally have 'unaffected scorn', he sees an inspiring combination of courage, idealism and friendship


Fitzgerald's literary imagination was drawn to the East coast smart-set because they set a new cultural tone and tempo

that forms the basis of his bond with Gatsby. The code that Gatsby invests in his quest to revive his chivalric courtship of Daisy is the code to which Nick also aspires. He is at his most exuberant and poetic when trying to encapsulate the best of Gatsby: the 'extraordinary gift for hope', the 'romantic readiness' (p. 8), 'the green light, the orgiastic future' (Ch. 9).

Fitzgerald's literary imagination was drawn to the East coast smart-set because they set a new cultural tone and tempo, taking from small-town America the socialising power to shape a new civilisation, but his own values were not theirs. As Brown puts it: 'he never thought of himself as being part of the nouveau riche. His deepest allegiances, rather were to that rapidly fading complex of courtly, antebellum beliefs that were connected with his father's Chesapeake Bay roots' (Ch. 1).

Although a Midwesterner, Fitzgerald remained fascinated by the ancestry of his father to several pre-revolutionary Maryland families. He even saw himself as 'something of an "authentic" aristocrat' who was 'sentimental, nostalgic and conservative' by nature, retaining a 'boyish enthusiasm for the valour of Civil War generals and collegiate football heroes' and the commitment to 'individual glory, freedom and ambition' (p. 3). These are the same southern values that ultimately enthral Nick Carraway in the opening and closing paragraphs of the novel.

Although it is easy to see why New York and Long Island was the place so many wanted to be in the heady days of the Roaring Twenties, *The Great Gatsby* reveals a deeper yearning for the wisdom of Midwestern reflection and the refinement of southern gentility.

PRACTICE EXAM QUESTION

'In American literature, settings do much more than create atmosphere or form the backdrop to events: they are vital in developing the authors' themes and ideas.'

By comparing *The Great Gatsby* with at least one other text prescribed for this topic, explore the extent to which you agree with this view.

(30 marks, OCR-style)

EnglishReviewExtras

Get guidance for your answer at **www.hoddereducation.co.uk/englishreviewextras**

RESOURCES

Alberts, H. R. (2013) 'Mapping the 1920s New York City of *The Great Gatsby*', Curbed New York (9 May): **www.tinyurl.com/4m7j2s5a**

Brown, D. S. (2017) *Paradise Lost: A Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald*, Harvard University Press.

Fassler, J. (2013) '"That's my Middle-West": The most dazzling paragraph of *The Great Gatsby*', *The Atlantic*: **www.tinyurl.com/37ysb3nn**

Spengler, O. (2013) *The Decline of the West*, Windham Press.

Turner, F. J. (2008) *The Significance of the Frontier in American History*, Penguin Great Ideas.

Veblen, T. and Banta, M. (2009) *The Theory of the Leisure Class*, Penguin Classics.

Andrew Ward is an experienced examiner for A-level English literature.

TASK THREE: the opening to Chapter One

Read the opening pages of Chapter One of The Great Gatsby (printed below or available online), then complete the tasks at the end.

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

"Whenever you feel like criticizing anyone," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

He didn't say any more, but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence, I'm inclined to reserve all judgements, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores. The abnormal mind is quick to detect and attach itself to this quality when it appears in a normal person, and so it came about that in college I was unjustly accused of being a politician, because I was privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men. Most of the confidences were unsought—frequently I have feigned sleep, preoccupation, or a hostile levity when I realized by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon; for the intimate revelations of young men, or at least the terms in which they express them, are usually plagiaristic and marred by obvious suppressions. Reserving judgements is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat, a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth.

And, after boasting this way of my tolerance, I come to the admission that it has a limit. Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes, but after a certain point I don't care what it's founded on. When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction—Gatsby, who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. This responsiveness had nothing to do with that flabby impressionability which is dignified under the name of the "creative temperament"—it was an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again. No—Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men.

My family have been prominent, well-to-do people in this Middle Western city for three generations. The Carraways are something of a clan, and we have a tradition that we're descended from the Dukes of Buccleuch, but the actual founder of my line was my grandfather's brother, who came here in fifty-one, sent a substitute to the Civil War, and started the wholesale hardware business that my father carries on today.

I never saw this great-uncle, but I'm supposed to look like him—with special reference to the rather hard-boiled painting that hangs in father's office. I graduated from New Haven in 1915, just a quarter of a century after my father, and a little later I participated in that delayed Teutonic migration known as the Great War. I enjoyed the counter-raid so thoroughly that I came back restless. Instead of being the warm centre of the world, the Middle West now seemed like the ragged edge of the universe—so I decided to go East and learn the bond business. Everybody I knew was in the bond business, so I supposed it could support one more single man. All my aunts and uncles talked it over as if they were choosing a prep school for me, and finally said, "Why—ye-es," with very grave, hesitant faces. Father agreed to finance me for a year, and after various delays I came East, permanently, I thought, in the spring of twenty-two.

The practical thing was to find rooms in the city, but it was a warm season, and I had just left a country of wide lawns and friendly trees, so when a young man at the office suggested that we take a house together in a commuting town, it sounded like a great idea. He found the house, a weather-beaten cardboard bungalow at eighty a month, but at the last minute the firm ordered him to Washington, and I went out to the country alone. I had a dog—at least I had him for a few days until he ran away—and an old Dodge and a Finnish woman, who made my bed and cooked breakfast and muttered Finnish wisdom to herself over the electric stove.

It was lonely for a day or so until one morning some man, more recently arrived than I, stopped me on the road.

“How do you get to West Egg village?” he asked helplessly.

I told him. And as I walked on I was lonely no longer. I was a guide, a pathfinder, an original settler. He had casually conferred on me the freedom of the neighbourhood.

And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer.

There was so much to read, for one thing, and so much fine health to be pulled down out of the young breath-giving air. I bought a dozen volumes on banking and credit and investment securities, and they stood on my shelf in red and gold like new money from the mint, promising to unfold the shining secrets that only Midas and Morgan and Maecenas knew. And I had the high intention of reading many other books besides. I was rather literary in college—one year I wrote a series of very solemn and obvious editorials for the Yale News—and now I was going to bring back all such things into my life and become again that most limited of all specialists, the “well-rounded man.” This isn’t just an epigram—life is much more successfully looked at from a single window, after all.

It was a matter of chance that I should have rented a house in one of the strangest communities in North America. It was on that slender riotous island which extends itself due east of New York—and where there are, among other natural curiosities, two unusual formations of land. Twenty miles from the city a pair of enormous eggs, identical in contour and separated only by a courtesy bay, jut out into the most domesticated body of salt water in the Western hemisphere, the great wet barnyard of Long Island Sound. They are not perfect ovals—like the egg in the Columbus story, they are both crushed flat at the contact end—but their physical resemblance must be a source of perpetual wonder to the gulls that fly overhead. To the wingless a more interesting phenomenon is their dissimilarity in every particular except shape and size.

I lived at West Egg, the—well, the less fashionable of the two, though this is a most superficial tag to express the bizarre and not a little sinister contrast between them. My house was at the very tip of the egg, only fifty yards from the Sound, and squeezed between two huge places that rented for twelve or fifteen thousand a season. The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard—it was a factual imitation of some Hôtel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool, and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was Gatsby’s mansion. Or, rather, as I didn’t know Mr. Gatsby, it was a mansion inhabited by a gentleman of that name. My own house was an eyesore, but it was a small eyesore, and it had been overlooked, so I had a view of the water, a partial view of my neighbour’s lawn, and the consoling proximity of millionaires—all for eighty dollars a month.

Across the courtesy bay the white palaces of fashionable East Egg glittered along the water, and the history of the summer really begins on the evening I drove over there to have dinner with the Tom Buchanans. Daisy was my second cousin once removed, and I'd known Tom in college. And just after the war I spent two days with them in Chicago.

Her husband, among various physical accomplishments, had been one of the most powerful ends that ever played football at New Haven—a national figure in a way, one of those men who reach such an acute limited excellence at twenty-one that everything afterward savours of anticlimax. His family were enormously wealthy—even in college his freedom with money was a matter for reproach—but now he'd left Chicago and come East in a fashion that rather took your breath away: for instance, he'd brought down a string of polo ponies from Lake Forest. It was hard to realize that a man in my own generation was wealthy enough to do that.

Why they came East I don't know. They had spent a year in France for no particular reason, and then drifted here and there unrestfully wherever people played polo and were rich together. This was a permanent move, said Daisy over the telephone, but I didn't believe it—I had no sight into Daisy's heart, but I felt that Tom would drift on forever seeking, a little wistfully, for the dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game.

And so it happened that on a warm windy evening I drove over to East Egg to see two old friends whom I scarcely knew at all. Their house was even more elaborate than I expected, a cheerful red-and-white Georgian Colonial mansion, overlooking the bay. The lawn started at the beach and ran towards the front door for a quarter of a mile, jumping over sundials and brick walks and burning gardens—finally when it reached the house drifting up the side in bright vines as though from the momentum of its run. The front was broken by a line of French windows, glowing now with reflected gold and wide open to the warm windy afternoon, and Tom Buchanan in riding clothes was standing with his legs apart on the front porch.

He had changed since his New Haven years. Now he was a sturdy straw-haired man of thirty, with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner. Two shining arrogant eyes had established dominance over his face and gave him the appearance of always leaning aggressively forward. Not even the effeminate swank of his riding clothes could hide the enormous power of that body—he seemed to fill those glistening boots until he strained the top lacing, and you could see a great pack of muscle shifting when his shoulder moved under his thin coat. It was a body capable of enormous leverage—a cruel body.

His speaking voice, a gruff husky tenor, added to the impression of fractiousness he conveyed. There was a touch of paternal contempt in it, even toward people he liked—and there were men at New Haven who had hated his guts.

"Now, don't think my opinion on these matters is final," he seemed to say, "just because I'm stronger and more of a man than you are." We were in the same senior society, and while we were never intimate I always had the impression that he approved of me and wanted me to like him with some harsh, defiant wistfulness of his own.

We talked for a few minutes on the sunny porch.

"I've got a nice place here," he said, his eyes flashing about restlessly.

Turning me around by one arm, he moved a broad flat hand along the front vista, including in its sweep a sunken Italian garden, a half acre of deep, pungent roses, and a snub-nosed motorboat that bumped the tide offshore.

"It belonged to Demaine, the oil man." He turned me around again, politely and abruptly. "We'll go inside."

We walked through a high hallway into a bright rosy-coloured space, fragilely bound into the house by French windows at either end. The windows were ajar and gleaming white against the fresh grass outside that seemed to grow a little way into the house. A breeze blew through the room, blew curtains in at one end and out the other like pale flags, twisting them up toward the frosted wedding-cake of the ceiling, and then rippled over the wine-coloured rug, making a shadow on it as wind does on the sea.

The only completely stationary object in the room was an enormous couch on which two young women were buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon. They were both in white, and their dresses were rippling and fluttering as if they had just been blown back in after a short flight around the house. I must have stood for a few moments listening to the whip and snap of the curtains and the groan of a picture on the wall. Then there was a boom as Tom Buchanan shut the rear windows and the caught wind died out about the room, and the curtains and the rugs and the two young women ballooned slowly to the floor.

The younger of the two was a stranger to me. She was extended full length at her end of the divan, completely motionless, and with her chin raised a little, as if she were balancing something on it which was quite likely to fall. If she saw me out of the corner of her eyes she gave no hint of it—indeed, I was almost surprised into murmuring an apology for having disturbed her by coming in.

The other girl, Daisy, made an attempt to rise—she leaned slightly forward with a conscientious expression—then she laughed, an absurd, charming little laugh, and I laughed too and came forward into the room.

“I’m p-paralysed with happiness.”

She laughed again, as if she said something very witty, and held my hand for a moment, looking up into my face, promising that there was no one in the world she so much wanted to see. That was a way she had. She hinted in a murmur that the surname of the balancing girl was Baker. (I’ve heard it said that Daisy’s murmur was only to make people lean toward her; an irrelevant criticism that made it no less charming.)

Complete the following tasks on what you have read by bullet pointing at least three things for each question.

1. What can be inferred about the narrator Nick?

Complete the following tasks on what you have read by bullet pointing at least three things for each question.

2. What do you learn about Gatsby and/or Gatsby's house?

3. What do you learn about the differences between East Egg and West Egg?

4. What is implied about the home and lifestyle of Tom and Daisy Buchanen?

5. From your earlier research on context and setting in tasks one and two, what connections to this context can you see in the opening pages?