The Great Gatsby Socratic Seminar

Questions

* Type your answers to the following 12 questions. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.
* You must supply textual evidence as part of your responses; be sure to include the page number for use as reference during the discussion. Remember to answer all aspects of the questions with full explanations. Yes/no answers will receive no credit; you must explain WHY.
* Each response must be at least ½ page typed in MLA format.
* You will be graded on your typed responses AND on your participation in the discussion.
* When answering questions, keep in mind the thematic concepts, symbols, and other literary elements used by F. Scott Fitzgerald.
* If you are absent from the discussions, you will be expected to write an essay.
* Please submit your typed response to turnitin.com by 8am on the date this assignment is due.

1. A) What is the significance of the novel’s title? Is Jay Gatsby truly great? B) Is he “worth the whole damn bunch put together?”
2. If you were to select one passage from the novel to represent one of the five major characters (Gatsby, Nick, Daisy, Tom, or Jordan), which passage would best reflect that character’s personality and why?
3. A) How are marriage and love depicted in the novel? B) How successful is the marriage between Daisy and Tom Buchanan? C) How is the marriage between Myrtle and George Wilson depicted? D) Why did Nick become involved with Jordan? E) Why did he break off the relationship? F) Judging from their actions, how do these various characters define love?
4. A) Compare Tom Buchanan’s relationship with his wife, Daisy, to his relationship with Myrtle Wilson. B) What does he want from each woman? C) Does he love either of them?
5. A) What is the American Dream? B) Do any of the characters in the novel find their American Dream? C) How does Fitzgerald relate Gatsby’s dream to the American Dream? D) Does the novel praise or condemn Gatsby’s dream? E) Has the American Dream changed since Gatsby’s time? How? Why? F) What seems to be the author’s message concerning the Dream as found in the last four paragraphs of the novel?
6. What does Fitzgerald mean when he writes that “Jay Gatsby of West Egg, Long Island, sprang from his Platonic conception of himself?”
7. A) What does the novel say about materialism? B) What, if any, are the similarities between the 1920s American society and the 21st Century American society with regard to materialism?
8. A) Why is the novel narrated from Nick’s perspective? In the opening pages, Nick says he is “inclined to reserve all judgments”. B) Do you agree that he is an impartial observer? C) What are his character flaws and how might they affect his narration. D) As narrator, how does his outlook influence our perception of characters or events?
9. How, if at all, does Nick’s impression of Gatsby change between the moment of their first meeting and the moment Nick decides to return to the Midwest?
10. Some critics suggest that although Gatsby is the principal figure in the action of the novel, Nick is the most significant character because of his moral development. Exactly what does Nick learn from his experiences in the East?
11. A) What is Fitzgerald’s purpose in detailing the characters’ past lives and experiences? B) What is Gatsby trying to recapture and how do his memories and experiences impact his goal? C) To what extent is he successful? D) Why do some critics view this novel as a precautionary tale? ) Is reminiscing about the past a benefit to one’s physical and emotional development? E) What is the author’s view concerning this?
12. Write one questions you would like to ask and provide your response.