

## The Great Gatsby Discussion Questions

### CHAPTER 1

1. How does Nick describe himself at the beginning of the book? Why do you think Fitzgerald chose him to be the narrator?

At the beginning of the book, Nick describes himself as tolerant, inclined to reserve judgment about others, and a good listener. Fitzgerald likely chose him as the narrator because, as an observant outsider, Nick can provide an objective, reliable account of events and insights into the other characters.

2. How does Nick describe Tom Buchanan? Daisy? What kind of relationship do they have (and not just that they are cousins/old college buddies)?

Nick describes Tom as arrogant, aggressive, and imposing in stature. He depicts Daisy as charming and vivacious but also cynical and superficial. Though married, Tom and Daisy have an unhappy relationship marred by infidelity and lack of communication.

3. Who is Jordan Baker? What does Nick find appealing about her?

Jordan Baker is a professional golfer and a friend of Daisy's. Nick finds Jordan cynical but also finds her self-assurance and dishonesty fascinating.

4. What is Gatsby doing when Nick first sees him?

When Nick first sees Gatsby, Gatsby is standing alone on his lawn, stretching his arms out toward the dark water.

5. How does the tone of Nick's description of Tom reveal Nick's feelings about Tom? What is significant of Tom's reference to the book he is reading?

The tone of Nick's description of Tom reveals Nick's contempt for Tom's arrogant sense of entitlement and narrow worldview. Tom's reference to the racist book he is reading further establishes him as close-minded and bigoted in Nick's view.

6. How would you describe Daisy's state of mind during dinner? What does she say and do that helps reveal her inner conflicts?

During dinner, Daisy speaks and acts erratically, suggesting inner turmoil over her unhappy marriage and her lingering feelings for Gatsby. She makes exaggerated remarks, insincere outbursts, and flights of fancy to avoid confronting reality.

7. Why does Daisy describe her childhood as a "white girlhood"? Why does Daisy hope that her daughter ends up to be a "beautiful little fool"?

Daisy describes her childhood as a "white girlhood" to emphasize her privileged upbringing as a wealthy white woman protected from life's harsher realities. She hopes her daughter grows up to be a "beautiful little fool" so she can enjoy a carefree life of parties and luxury like Daisy did.

8. Nick thinks that, given the state of their marriage, Daisy should leave Tom, but it is clear to him that she has no intention of doing so. What indication is there that Tom and Daisy are closely linked despite their marital difficulties?

Though unhappy, Tom and Daisy are bound together by their wealth, social status, and dependence on one another to maintain their extravagant lifestyle and self-absorption.

9. Why does Daisy speak in such exaggerated phrases? Why does Nick feel she is trying to be a cynic (believe the worst about people/life)?

Daisy speaks in exaggerated phrases as a means of glossing over painful truths and exercising a childlike flight of imagination. Nick feels she does this to adopt a pose of sophisticated cynicism about love and relationships.

# Gatsby Discussion Questions Chapter 1

**Kevin Thomas Smith**



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