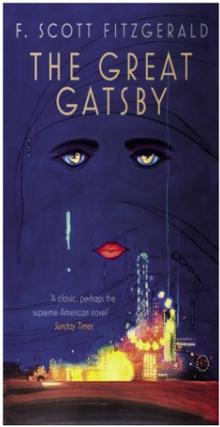




The Great Gatsby F Scott Fitzgerald (1925)



Assessment: Paper 2 Varieties in Language and Literature

Section B – Prose Fiction and Other Genres: one comparative essay question on *The Great Gatsby* (anchor text) and *Othello*

(30 marks) 1 hour 30 minutes



AOs

AO1 Apply concepts and methods from integrated linguistic and literary study as appropriate, using associated terminology and coherent written expression

AO2 Analyse ways in which meanings are shaped in texts

AO3 Demonstrate understanding of the significance and influence of the contexts in which texts are produced and received

AO4 Explore connections across texts, informed by linguistic and literary concepts and methods

Context

Author

F. Scott Fitzgerald grew up in New York City, attended private schools, and went to Princeton University. In 1917, Princeton put Fitzgerald on academic probation. He enlisted in the Army. On base in Alabama in 1918, he met and fell in love with Zelda Zayre, who refused to marry him unless he could support her. He returned to New York to pursue fame and fortune. The publication of his first novel, *This Side of Paradise*, in 1920, made Fitzgerald a literary star. He married Zelda one week later. In 1924, the couple moved to Paris, where Fitzgerald began work on *The Great Gatsby*. Though now considered his masterpiece, the novel sold only modestly. The Fitzgeralds returned to the United States in 1927. Fitzgerald published several more novels, including *Tender is the Night* (1933), but none matched the success of his first. Deep in debt because of their extravagant lifestyle, the Fitzgeralds began to spiral into alcoholism and mental illness. Fitzgerald died of a heart attack on December 21, 1940. Zelda died eight years later in a fire.



Historical

Fitzgerald coined the term "Jazz Age" to refer to the period more commonly known as the Roaring Twenties. Jazz is an American style of music marked by its complex and exuberant mix of rhythms and tonalities. *The Great Gatsby* portrays a similarly complex mix of emotions and themes that reflect the turbulence of the times. Fresh off the nightmare of World War I, Americans were enjoying the fruits of an economic boom and a renewed sense of possibility. But in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald stresses the darker side of the Roaring Twenties, its undercurrent of corruption and its desperate, empty decadence.

Literary

Modernist fiction attempted to represent the sense of emptiness and disillusionment that dominated Europe and the United States after World War I. In this way, *Gatsby* can be considered as related to such modernist works as James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925). But *The Great Gatsby* and all of Fitzgerald's works are best compared to those written by other Americans such as Ernest Hemingway, members of the "Lost Generation" of American writers who moved to Europe after World War I. All these writers depicted the reality, corruption, and sadness of the human condition, but Fitzgerald most effectively portrayed the American cultural moment he called the "Jazz Age."

On beginning *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald expressed his intention to use a 'self-consciously artistic style'.

Themes, symbols and motifs

Mortality and transience

Symbols and motifs: cars; accidents; dust and ashes.

Seeing and observation

Symbols and motifs: Dr TJ Eckleberg; the Valley of Ashes; Owl Eyes.

Innocence, hope and dreams (The American Dream')

The green light; the 'green breast of the New World'; water and Cody's yacht; the seasons— particularly Autumn.

Class and wealth

Symbols and motifs: Gatsby's mansion; colours— white, cream, gold, silver; clothes; the Buchanan mansion; horses; East and West.



Wider Reading/Further Study

Bloom, Harold, Ed. *F. Scott Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby*. New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 2003.

A collection of critical essays

Fitzgerald, F. Scott. *The Letters Of F. Scott Fitzgerald*. Ed. Andrew Turnbull. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1963.

This book is a collection of letters written by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The letters give a sense of the author's mindset as he wrote the novel.

The Cambridge Encyclopaedia of the English Language by David Crystal – great resource to dip in and out of for all aspects of the course

Film versions– try the 1974 Robert Redford version as an alternative to the more recent Baz Luhrmann version.



Past Paper Questions (comparison with *Othello*)

SAMS

Evaluate the effectiveness of the methods used by the writers of your two studied texts **to present individuals as outsiders from society**. In your response you must consider the use of linguistic and literary features, connections across texts and relevant contextual factors.

2017

Evaluate the effectiveness of the methods used by the writers of your two studied texts **to present the ways in which social constraints affect the behaviour of individuals**. In your answer you must consider the use of linguistic and literary features, connections across texts and relevant contextual factors.

2018

Evaluate the effectiveness of the methods used by the writers of your two studied texts **to present individuals who observe or experience significant change**. In your answer you must consider the use of linguistic and literary features, connections across texts and relevant contextual factors.

2019

Evaluate the effectiveness of the methods used by the writers of your two studied texts **to explore how an individual's identity is shaped, or revealed, by their interactions with other people**. In your answer you must consider the use of linguistic and literary features, connections across texts and relevant contextual factors.

2020

Evaluate the effectiveness of the methods used by the writers of your two studied texts to present individuals who are very contented, and/or very discontented, with their place in society.