





## **Understanding The Great Gatsby Technique – Symbolism**

A symbol is something that represents itself, but also represents something other than itself. For instance, in The Great Gatsby, the green light on Daisy's dock across the water represents itself, because it actually exists in the world of the novel. However, the green light also represents Gatsby's desire for Daisy, and for love in general. When we first see Gatsby, he is reaching through the fog towards the green light, which establishes his motivation. Even some other passages of the novel use the color green in this symbolic way. In addition, the "green light" traditionally means that one is authorized to proceed, as in traffic or business. Gatsby believes that because he has accomplished so much financially and socially that he has earned the "green light" to pursue Daisy, despite the fact that she's now married. While he does receive some of her attention, the truth is that his desires end up unsatisfied; the "green light" was a false signal. Ultimately, Gatsby ends up paying an enormous price for following his desires.

Find five quotes that show green lights or green imagery. Write the quotes with the page numbers on the left. On the right, explain what the green symbolizes for Gatsby or other characters.

Quotes	Effects
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	



## **Understanding The Great Gatsby Theme – Violence**

Many readers are shocked by some of the violence in a novel which otherwise seems to be a kind of love story. What is especially disturbing to many is that much of the violence is directed towards women. Some critics have seen the men's mistreatment of women as a reaction to the growing women's rights movement of the time, when women were becoming more powerful through the suffrage movement as well as their involvement in prohibition. As the political power of women grew, so did their sexual power. Marriage was being redefined, with divorce becoming more prevalent than it had been, especially among the rich. Women began wearing more revealing clothing than the earlier generation, and media figures like Mae West exemplified the powerful sexual woman who controlled men on movie screens through her boldness and flirtatiousness. Some critics think that all of this female empowerment scared men so much, especially at the thought of their social dominance being challenged, that violence towards women began to appear in books and movies as a reaction.

Find five quotes that show violence towards women in the novel. Write the quotes with the page numbers on the left. On the right, identify the real reasons behind the violence.

Quotes	Reasons
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	



## **Understanding The Great Gatsby Theme – Wealth**

One of the reasons Nick Carraway and many of the others characters are drawn to Gatsby is because of his lavish lifestyle, with its wild weekend parties and expensive cars and houses. Scores of freeloaders attend Gatsby's parties to share his wealth and extravagance, but only three people attend his funeral to mourn his death and discuss his pain. One of the issues that the novel raises is the real usefulness of wealth. For Gatsby, wealth brings him a great deal of companions, but never really brings the friendship or love that he needs. His wealth brings him lots of distractions, entertainment, and liquor, but never real happiness. Also, considering how so many people flock around Gatsby to experience a bit of his expensive lifestyle, the reader is forced to wonder if they ever understand that his money never seemed to satisfy his real needs.

Find five quotes that deal with the issue of wealth – either the desire for money or the use of it. Write the quotes with the page numbers on the left. On the right, identify the effects that wealth and money have on the characters in the novel.

Quotes	Effects
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	

