

The Great Gatsby
Thematic Quotes

Directions: Each of the following excerpts is taken from the novel and has a great significance in terms of one or more of the following:

- theme (illusion/reality, materialism, etc.)
- character revelation
- plot significance (development, foreshadowing, resolution or the development of conflict)

For each quote, be able to identify the speaker and explain what significance it holds (from above). NOTE: Page numbers listed will vary from addition to addition.

“So he invented just the sort of Jay Gatsby that a seventeen-year-old boy would be likely to invent, and to this conception he was faithful to the end.” 99

“He didn’t get it.” 101

“By God, I may be old-fashioned in my ideas, but women run around too much these days to suit me. They meet all kinds of crazy fish.” 104

“She saw something awful in the very simplicity she failed to understand.” 108

“Can’t repeat the past?” he cried incredulously. “Why of course you can!” 111

“I wanted someone who wouldn’t gossip. Daisy comes over quite often—in the afternoons.” 114

“I’ve been here too long. I want to get away. My wife and I want to go West.” 123

“There is no confusion like the confusion of a simple mind and as we drove away Tom was feeling the hot whips of panic.” 125

“Nowadays people begin by sneering at family life and family institutions, and next they’ll throw everything overboard and have intermarriage between black and white.” 130

“From the ballroom beneath, muffled and suffocating chords were drifting up on hot waves of air.” 133

“...only the dead dream fought on as the afternoon slipped away, trying to touch what was no longer tangible, struggling unhappily, undespairingly, toward that lost voice across the room.” 135

“So we drove on toward death through the cooling twilight.” 137

“Oh, my Ga-od! Oh, my Ga-od! Oh, Ga-od! Oh, my Ga-od!” 140

“So I walked away and left him standing there in the moonlight—watching over nothing.” 146

“They’re a rotten crowd,” I shouted across the lawn. “You’re worth the whole damn bunch put together.” 154

“God sees everything.” 160

“You see, they’re tennis shoes, and I’m sort of helpless without them.” 170

“He had shown it so often that I think it was more real to him now than the house itself.” 173

“I knew I had guessed right about those missing hours.” 180

“They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their cast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made...” 181

“So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.” 182