

The Great Gatsby: (b) The society of the novel

☞ refers to links on www.crossref-it.info

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- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To help to understand the society that Fitzgerald describes. (Note: this worksheet is based on Chapters 2 and 3.)
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Students search magazines and newspapers (or the internet) to each find a picture which they think encapsulates a particular societal group of any kind.
 - They should explain to the class why they have chosen their picture and what elements are significant.
 - This could be followed by a short piece of writing which seeks to provide the same image as the picture.

☞ (Social / political context of *The Great Gatsby* > Urbanisation and modernity)
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Read the first three paragraphs of Chapter 2, the description of the Valley of Ashes.
 - Each student writes down about 8 key words or phrases which help to create the picture of the scene or the mood created.
 - Repeat this for the first six paragraphs of Chapter 3.
 - Compare the words found and consider what Fitzgerald is doing.
 - Try to examine words/phrases precisely as well as gaining overall impressions.

☞ (*The Great Gatsby*: Synopses and commentary > Chapter 2; Chapter 3)
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** In a group, list all the people who are mentioned specifically at the two parties in Chapters 2 and 3.
 - Try to categorise them into groups.
 - Compare how different groups of students did this.
 - What impressions is Fitzgerald trying to create?

☞ (Social / political context of *The Great Gatsby*)

☞ (Themes in *The Great Gatsby* > Moral collapse)
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Imagine that a reporter is at the party in the New York apartment in Chapter 2. Write an *OK/Hello* magazine style report on events.
 - You could use the title *Town Tattle* which is mentioned in the chapter, and illustrate it if possible.

☞ (Characters in *The Great Gatsby* > The minor characters)

☞ (*The Great Gatsby*: Narrative devices > More voices: gossip and scandal)

☞ (Characters in *The Great Gatsby* > The minor characters)
- ❖ **Critical task:** By reference to specific details, show what impression of society is given through the picture of Gatsby's party in Chapter 3.

☞ (*The Great Gatsby*: Synopses and commentary > Chapter 3)
- ❖ **Extension task:** Try to find other writing, either fictional or factual, which describes 1920s America.
 - Match these texts with Fitzgerald's picture of the age.
 - Which aspects, if any, do you think Fitzgerald is 'fictionalising'?

☞ (Social / political context of *The Great Gatsby* > Class in 1920s America)

☞ (Social / political context of *The Great Gatsby* > The Jazz Age)