

The Great Gatsby: (e) Colours

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

- ❖ **Lesson focus:** To explore Fitzgerald's use of colours in the novel, and their effects.
- ❖ **Opening exercise:** Write the word 'Red' in the centre of the board.
 - Ask students to brainstorm other words (not necessarily just single words) which can be used to describe some kind of red, including some of the more fanciful ones that might appear on a paint chart.
 - Discuss
 - Why there are so many
 - What associations each has
 - Why you might use different ones in different circumstances.
- ❖ **Textual examination:** Hand out nine sheets of A3 paper, each having one of the following written boldly in the centre:
 - Grey / Pink/red / Gold / White / Silver / Green / Yellow / Blue / Other.
 - Students skim the novel for references to colours and write the appropriate quotation (and page reference) on the relevant sheet.
 - Let the sheets circulate freely so that students can write down whatever they find. (This is much quicker, and more fun, than separate students or groups having one colour each.)
 - The sheets can be photocopied and distributed to the students afterwards.
 - ☞ (*The Great Gatsby*: Imagery and symbolism > Colour imagery)
 - ☞ (*The Great Gatsby*: Imagery and symbolism > Light)
 - ☞ (*The Great Gatsby*: Synopses and commentary)
- ❖ **Discussion ideas:** When enough time has been given, collect in the sheets and read out examples of what has been written.
 - Try to identify what connotations each colour has in the novel.

(This will be difficult for 'Other', but here students can note the range of other colours which are used in the novel. This is worthy of discussion in itself.)

 - ☞ (*The Great Gatsby*: Imagery and symbolism > Colour imagery)
 - Note:
 - Yellow can be seen as decayed gold and therefore representative of greed or moral decay
 - Grey can suggest dullness or unimportance
 - Blue suggests unhappiness and can also be associated with dreams.
- ❖ **Recreative task:** Create a collage which illustrates Fitzgerald's use of colours in the novel.
 - Use either original artwork or found pictures.
 - Try to make your collage show what Fitzgerald achieves in his use of colours.
 - ☞ (*Literary context of The Great Gatsby* > Artistic expression in the modern world)
- ❖ **Critical task:** How does Fitzgerald's use of colours in *The Great Gatsby* help him to create a picture of a corrupt society? Refer in detail to two or three specific passages in your answer.
 - ☞ (*The Great Gatsby*: Synopses and commentary > Chapter 7)
- ❖ **Extension task:** Go back to some of the quotations referring to colours which were found earlier.
 - Look at the other words which are used in association with the colours.
 - Write notes on the way that these other words add to the use which Fitzgerald is making of the colours themselves.
 - ☞ (*The Great Gatsby*: Synopses and commentary)