***The Great Gatsby* Essay Topics**

CSI English 12

Nick says:  “I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known.”  When you

consider his role as narrator, do you believe that he is honest?  Are his depictions of others honest? If so, how does this affect the reader?  If he is not honest, why does he believe he is so?

If Gatsby represents the American dream, then what message was Fitzgerald trying to get across about the American dream? What does Fitzgerald have to say about the condition of the American dream in the 1920s — think about —dreams, wealth, time and the idea of America.

If Daisy represents the American Dream, then how do you think Fitzgerald views the American Dream? What does Fitzgerald have to say about the condition of the American dream in the 1920s — think about —dreams, wealth, time and the idea of America.

Is it okay to cheat in order to achieve the American dream? If yes, why? What is it about our culture that makes this okay? And is it really okay?

Explain how the novel does or does not demonstrate the death of the American Dream. Is the main theme of Gatsby indeed “the withering American Dream”? What does the novel offer about American identity? (Reference the characteristics of the American Dream within the body of your paper.)

Describe Fitzgerald’s satirical portrait of modern society using Gatsby’s parties as support.

Discuss Fitzgerald’s use of symbolism (this is a large topic that must be significantly narrowed – such as focusing on one symbol and analyzing it in detail - with a specific thesis). How does it function in the novel (consider discussing how it relates to theme, communicates information about characters, develops the plot, etc.)? Possible symbols to discuss include: colors, eyes of T.J. Eckleburg, clothing, cars, the green light, biblical allusions, characters’ houses, weather, water, music, celestial bodies (moon, stars, planets), nature’s bounty (flowers, shrubs, trees, fruit), etc.

Is what Gatsby feels for Daisy love, obsession, affection, or accumulation/objectification?  What is Fitzgerald’s message here? Consider discussing whether or not Gatsby can really love, given his characteristics.

Discuss the novel’s theme that the American Dream is corrupted by the desire for wealth. What does the novel and its theme offer about the American identity?

Create a topic of your own or alter one of the above topics. \*You must have this topic approved by me before you begin working on your essay.