

Day 1: Research Paper Notes - Selecting a Topic and Developing a Message for Your Paper

1. Think about passages or patterns in the text that interest you

Examples:

Car imagery
Wolfshiem
Daisy

2. Identify a literary theory that relates to the text and these patterns

Examples:

Car imagery – Marxist/class analysis
Wolfshiem – Race theory
Daisy – Gender or Feminist analysis

3. Select appropriate passages for analysis – specific places where you see these messages emerge

Which example do we want to focus on for class today?

Daisy, using a feminist/gender analysis

Are there any patterns noticeable to help us focus on which examples to analyze?

Daisy and Myrtle are both in relationships that they want to get out of

Possible abuse in relationships?

Idea of escaping their situation, but forced into these relationships

Locked up, literally

Jordan isn't locked up or restricted – she isn't married – but she isn't depicted positively

Now, find examples of these interactions that might be important for your paper – it's better to have too many examples that you won't use all of versus not having enough and struggling to find enough content for your paper

4. Identify meaning/message of these examples by using the literary theory questions as a guide

Day 2: Thesis Statement – Writing a Tentative Thesis to Focus Ideas

1. Write a sample thesis statement

- a. Title of work
- b. Author
- c. Area of focus (what are you analyzing – lit device, character, relationship, etc.)
- d. Theme (message that readers take away – can't be plot recall or cliché ideas)

Fitzgerald exposes the plight of women in 1920s America –social expectations of the 1920s trapped women in unhealthy and unsatisfying relationships while their independence from relationships made them appear less attractive and elicited unsympathetic responses.

2. Write 2 more sample thesis statements with the same idea, but using different sentence structures and phrases – you are trying to find the clearest, most concise way to express your ideas

Day 3: Structure Ideas

1. Look at your thesis and divide it into parts – think about what claims you have to prove to prove your thesis.

Fitzgerald exposes the plight of women in 1920s America –social expectations of the 1920s trapped women in unhealthy and unsatisfying relationships while their independence from relationships made them appear less attractive and elicited unsympathetic responses.

- 1) Social expectations trapped women in unhealthy relationships
2) These forced relationships left women feeling unsatisfied
3) Independent women viewed as less attractive and undeserving of sympathy
2. Now we have to list our specific examples from the text under each category. The best way to start listing these examples is by referring to the examples we used when brainstorming our thesis. Then try to think of more examples to help prove each claim.
 - 1) Social expectations trapped upper middle class women in unhealthy relationships
 - a) Daisy locked in the bathroom after voicing her opposition to the marriage 4 times
 - b) Tom controlling in the relationship – cuts Daisy off
 - c) Tom bruising her finger
 - 2) Social expectations also trapped lower class women in unhealthy relationships
 - d) Myrtle locked in her room
 - e) Lack of communication between Myrtle and George
 - f) Myrtle's verbal abuse?
 - 3) These forced relationships left women feeling unsatisfied
 - a) Daisy's relationship with Gatsby
 - b) Myrtle's relationship with Tom
 - 4) Independent women viewed as less attractive and undeserving of sympathy
 - a) Possibility of Daisy's relationship makes her worth more in Gatsby's eyes
 - b) Jordan being engaged and out of reach of Nick leaves him feeling half in love with her

Day 4: Body Paragraph – Introducing Quotations

1. Context – where this example/argument fits within the context of your paper or what happened in the text right before this part
2. Punctuation – colon, comma, or nothing?
3. Quotation – focus only on words that you are going to analyze/explain. Extra words need to be cut or you will lose points in your paper

Jordan goes to Daisy's room thirty minutes before the wedding rehearsal dinner and finds Daisy inebriated and distressed at the thought of marrying Tom:

She groped around in a waste-basket she had with her on the bed and pulled out the string of pearls. "Take 'em downstairs and give 'em back to whoever they belong to. Tell 'em all Daisy's change' her mine. Say 'Daisy's change' her mine!" (Fitzgerald 81)

Despite Daisy's clear demands to help her end the marriage, Jordan gets the maid:

We locked the door and got her into a cold bath... she didn't say another word. We gave her spirits of ammonia and put ice on her forehead and hooked her back into her dress and half an hour later when we walked out of the room the pearls were around her neck and the incident was over. (Fitzgerald 81)

Fitzgerald highlights women's disempowerment when entering into their marriage by showing how Daisy expressed clear discontent for her impending wedding, yet gets forced into the marriage anyway. This clear disregard for her wishes is shown when Jordan recounts the past relationship of Daisy and Gatsby. Jordan remembers that thirty minutes before the wedding rehearsal dinner, she saw Daisy "grop[ing] around in a waste-basket... and pull[ing] out the string of pearls (Fitzgerald 81), showing Daisy's clear devaluation of the gift that her fiancée gave her before the wedding, and ultimately their relationship – as though it is worthless and should be discarded. Not only do her actions indicate her desire to separate herself from this marriage and lifestyle, but she also verbally expresses her desire to avoid the union by asking Jordan to "give 'em back to whoever they belong to," (81) further disassociating herself with Tom by acting like she doesn't even know who owns the expensive jewelry, as though they are foreign to her. Daisy strengthens her conviction of leaving Tom by repeating "Daisy's change' her mine" (81) – a clear, concise refusal of Tom's proposal. Without taking a moment to pause or wait for a response, Daisy refutes the impending marriage four times through her physical actions and verbal commands. But, after hearing Daisy's distinct refusal to end the relationship, Jordan and the maid invalidate Daisy's feelings by ignoring her claims and forcing her abandon this decision: "We locked the door, and got her in a cold bath" (81), literally trapping Daisy until she is ready to go to the dinner. By hiding her disheveled appearance and trying to clean her up, they prevent others from seeing Daisy's reaction, allowing them to maintain Daisy's social appearance. As they get her ready for the rehearsal dinner, they "gave her spirits of ammonia", as though to rouse her from an unconscious state, as though she had no control and was not acting like herself. Then they take the initiative to finalize her elegant, celebratory façade when they "hooked her back into her dress," securing her into the woman's role. Daisy's clear and vocal desire to end her relationship with Tom fails, because society forces her to stay in this relationship, ultimately maintaining social appearances.

Day 5: Analysis After Quotation

4. Explain the meaning of these words/examples and how they prove your topic sentence and ultimately your thesis
5. Transition into another example
6. Repeat steps 1-4

- The marriages of the women in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* . . . demonstrate the peculiar position of how a married woman's home becomes her prison" (Cornish 48)
- "The level of satisfaction in this relationship is tenuous" (Cornish 49)
- Daisy's life, being courted by military men and wealthy men from cities like Chicago and New Orleans, "seemed romantic" and glamorous to the sixteen-year-old Jordan, so she is understandably traumatized by Daisy's behavior the night before her wedding, which reveals to Jordan the truth about marriage in a patriarchal capitalist society (Froehlich 96)