

Selecting and Introducing Quotations: *The Great Gatsby*

Directions: When writing your paper, you will need to identify important passages that relate to your topic. After analyzing the passage, you will determine which parts of the quotation are necessary to include in your writing and how you will incorporate them in your writing. Today, you will practice these skills using last night's *Gatsby* reading.

Step 1: Identify passages that 1) interest you and 2) start to develop a pattern

Over the last few classes, we started identifying passages that interest us and looked for patterns in Fitzgerald's writing. We talked about Fitzgerald's use of colors (green light and grey imagery in the Valley of Ashes) and his introduction of characters through possessions (Gatsby's mansion, Tom's Colonial, and George's garage). Today we will look at how he describes homes and what these descriptions reveal.

Specific Passages for Analysis (we already analyzed them in class too)

- 1) Gatsby's Mansion (page 5)
- 2) Tom's Colonial (page 6)
- 3) George's Garage (chapter 2)

Step 2: Analyze the passages to try to figure out a meaning

In class, we looked at the passages about the homes and determined that they all help to develop the characters – emphasizing Gatsby's mystery, solidifying Tom's power, and exposing George's poverty.

Step 3: Come up with a rough idea for a thesis.

The thesis can and should change as you closely analyze the passages and develop your argument. Let's start with the rough thesis that we came up with on the first day of discussion:

Fitzgerald introduces his characters with vivid descriptions of their homes to criticize how society defines individuals by wealth.

Step 4: Write a topic sentence for 1st body paragraph and then organize your analysis notes on that passage to support your topic sentence.

One topic sentence for a body paragraph: *Nick's description of Gatsby's mansion exposes his neighbor's mysterious personality and motivations.*

- 1) Talk about Gatsby's house as symbolic of hiding something
 - a. "Hotel de Ville in Normandy" – it's foreign style, sticks out from other homes
 - b. "beard of raw ivy" – ivy makes it appear older than it is, but it's thin signifying that it is relatively new
 - c. "inhabit" – as though he merely occupies the residence instead of owning it
- 2) Possibly talk about Gatsby's first action (maybe another body paragraph)
 - a. "trembling" – showing hesitation, fear, some kind of vulnerability
 - b. Seen from a distance in the dark in his back yard – hidden from view, private scene
 - c. Both descriptions mirror the mystery and failure at concealing his weaknesses, just as Nick spies him at night looking across the water

Another topic sentence for another body paragraph, builds off of ideas from above paragraph: *Not even a full page later, Fitzgerald provides a concise description of Tom's house to emphasize the strength and power of Mr. Buchanan.*

- 1) Talk about Tom's house as symbolic of power

- a. “colonial”
 - b. “red and white”
 - c. Set back on his property, extravagant not gaudy, but clearly fitting in with elegant surroundings
- 2) Possibly talk about Tom’s first action (maybe another body paragraph)
- a. “riding pants”
 - b. Standing out front with his legs apart
 - c. Boots bursting against his calves
 - d. Muscles visibly moving under his coat

Another topic sentence for another body paragraph, builds off ideas from above paragraph: *As Fitzgerald exposes Gatsby’s and Tom’s personalities through the vivid imagery of their homes, Fitzgerald simultaneously exposes how Nick evaluates people and their social classes - Nick against Gatsby and Gatsby against Tom - revealing society’s superficial valuations of personal worth.* For instance, within the same paragraph of describing Gatsby’s house, Nick comments on his own residence, as though this comparison punctuates his thought. Through this comparison, Nick degrades his own house as a “small eyesore,” while his neighbor’s lavish homes are valued at over 200 times the value of his own property. . .

- 1) “eyesore” – revealing his own self-consciousness of not fitting in, being ugly or less in this setting
- 2) “less fashionable of the two” – not as popular or valued, not what people want or would choose out of the two
- 3) “most superficial tag” – façade of demeaning the value or implying that the property lacks a high value
- 4) “bizarre” – strange, almost amusing reputation of where he lives, because it’s still highly valued, calling out the ridiculousness with this comparison/valuation standard

Step 5: Combine ideas into sentence.

Now that you thoroughly analyzed the passages and clearly organized your notes, you should start writing the body paragraph. It is normal to write out your ideas first through rough sentences, then go back and sentence-by-sentence revise your writing to improve transitioning and development of analysis. Once you have proofread your paragraph, make sure that you go back and revise your topic sentence so that all of your ideas prove that paragraph’s topic sentence (mini-thesis).

Nick's description of Gatsby's mansion exposes his neighbor's mysterious personality and motivations. For instance, Gatsby's house is covered in a "raw ivy," making his property appear older and prestigious. But, this ivy is "a thin beard," indicating that the house is new – as though Gatsby is trying to make his property look older and more prestigious.

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