



# The Great Gatsby

Initial Impressions



# The First Page- Read me!

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since. "Whenever you feel like criticizing any one," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had." He didn't say any more, but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a great deal more than that. In consequence, I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores. The abnormal mind is quick to detect and attach itself to this quality when it appears in a normal person, and so it came about that in college I was unjustly accused of being a politician, because I was privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men. Most of the confidences were unsought frequently I have feigned sleep, preoccupation, or a hos by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon; for the intimate revelations of young men, or at least the terms in which they express them, are usually plagiaristic and marred by obvious suppressions. Reserving judgments is a matter of infinite hope. I am still a little afraid of missing something if I forget that, as my father snobbishly suggested, and I snobbishly repeat, a sense of the fundamental decencies is parcelled out unequally at birth.

# Continued...

And, after boasting this way of my tolerance, I come to the admission that it has a limit. Conduct may be founded on the hard rock or the wet marshes, but after a certain point I don't care what it's founded on. When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction Gatsby, who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away.

# Meet Nick Carraway

Nick is the name of the story's narrator. He tells the story of 'The Great Gatsby' in **first person** with a **limited** view on the events in the story.

Task: Open a Google Doc and title it "The First Page". Share it with [plunkettr@mtaspiring.school.nz](mailto:plunkettr@mtaspiring.school.nz).

In your doc, explain what is meant by "first person, limited narration".

“In consequence, I’m inclined to reserve all judgments...”

Nick tells us that as a result of his father’s advice, he now “reserve(s) all judgements”.

Task: Answer the following questions in your Google Doc:

- What does he mean by this?
- How does this line set up our expectations that he will be a **reliable narrator**?
- Further down the page, Nick makes a statement that contradicts this original line. Write down the quote that indicates this.

“When I came back from the East last autumn I felt that I wanted the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever; I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart.”

Task: Answer the following questions in your Google Doc in relation to the above quotation.

- What does Nick mean when he says he wants “the world to be in uniform and at a sort of moral attention forever”?
- This sentence **foreshadows** the events to come in the novel. What do you think Nick has experienced in order to make him feel like this? Make sure you point out the specific terms or phrases in the quote that supports your answer.

“If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away.”

### Task:

In your Google Doc, write down the impression you get of Gatsby from these opening pages.

We have not met this character yet but their name is in the title of the novel.

Who is he? Be sure to identify specific words and phrases from the opening page to support your impressions.