

Great Gatsby: Characters

<p>Jay Gatsby</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> protagonist wealthy ('new' money) mysterious in love with Daisy desperate for money & social status ambitious & determined immoral vulgar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'he had vanished' 'period bedrooms swathed in rose and lavender silk' 'He hadn't once ceased looking at Daisy' (when first re-united) 'stretched out his arms toward the dark water...a single green light' 'he felt married to her' 'Jay Gatsby...sprang from his Platonic conception of himself'
<p>Nick Carraway</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> narrator city worker confidant to others honest tolerant / open-minded cousin of Daisy conflicting feelings about New York society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'I am one of the few honest people that I have ever known.' 'privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men' 'When I came back from the East...I wanted the world to be in uniform' 'I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it' 'I am slow-thinking and full of interior rules that act as brakes on my desires'
<p>Daisy Buchanan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wealthy (aristocratic) charming & beautiful affectionate shallow & false fickle & disloyal vacuous & lacks maternal feelings amoral / immoral? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'low, thrilling voice' 'bright eyes and a bright passionate mouth' 'I'm pretty cynical about everything' 'I hope she'll be a fool' The basic insincerity of what she had said' 'Her frightened eyes told that whatever intentions, whatever courage she had had, were definitely gone.'
<p>Tom Buchanan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wealthy (aristocratic) disloyal (affair with Myrtle) hypocritical (angry with D's affair) powerful (physically & metaphorically); violent dismissive dominant / bully sexist & racist restless; bored 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'it's up to us, who are the dominant race, to watch out' ' "Never heard of them," he remarked decisively.' 'hovering restlessly' 'compelled me from the room as though he were moving a checker to another square' 'hard mouth and a supercilious manner' 'arrogant eyes' 'a cruel body' 'I've got a nice place here'

Jordan Baker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nick's lover • Professional golf player • Cynical • Beautiful • Dishonest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'I enjoyed looking at her..a slender, small-breasted girl'; 'a...charming, discontented face' • 'self-sufficiency' • 'throwing her body backward...like a young cadet' • 'yawned Miss Baker'
Myrtle Wilson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tom's lover • Energetic; strives for something better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'intense vitality' • 'more violently affected moment by moment' • '...as though she had choked...in giving up the tremendous vitality she had stored so long'
George Wilson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhausted • Emotionally broken • In love with Myrtle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'blond, spiritless man, anaemic' • 'Wilson neither heard nor saw' (after M death) • 'He's so dumb he doesn't know he's alive.' (Tom of Wilson)
Owl Eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bespectacled • drunk • eccentric • Linked to theme of 'eyes' / Dr Eckleburg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'stout, middle-aged man, with enormous owl-eyed spectacles, was sitting somewhat drunk' • 'He shrugged his shoulders.' (after car 'crash')
Klipspringer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • freeloader • immoral & shallow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • '“boarder” ‘
Meyer Wolfsheim	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • immoral • involved in organised crime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'tiny eyes in the half darkness' • 'his eyes....roved very slowly all around the room'

Great Gatsby: Themes, Ideas & Context

1920s America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st WW just finished = sudden increase in stock market & wealth of a lot of people; new cynicism & immorality as old (Victorian) values now seemed meaningless and old-fashioned 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nick & G fought in WW1 • 'I decided to go East and learn the bond business. Everybody I knew was in the bond business, so I supposed it could support one more single man.'
(failure of) The American Dream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Original American Dream to Nick = discovering America for 1st time, freedom / individualism, ability to pursue & attain happiness • AD is corrupted by 1920s affluent society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AD now involves the pursuit of wealth & pleasure (as symbolised by Gatsby's parties); N sees this as a corruption of AD • G's love for D is symbolic of people's desire for AD; both involve an infatuation with a goal that is ultimately rather hollow
Class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'New' millionaires = West Egg • Old, aristocratic millionaires = East Egg 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G's wealth is without subtlety & he doesn't pick up on certain social cues (Sloane's invitation) • D & T's house is graceful, elegant, tasteful yet they are ultimately 'careless' and 'destructive' due to their lack of feeling
Valley of Ashes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place between West Egg & NYC where ashes from industrial waste are dumped • Represents the moral decay of the affluent society & the negative, soul-destroying impact they have on others, especially those less fortunate than themselves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'desolate area of land'
Pathetic Fallacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • G & D's reunion – pouring rain • T & G argue on hottest day of summer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The day agreed upon was pouring rain.' • 'relentless beating heat'
Doctor Eckleburg's Eyes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May represent God looking down on society • Also ambiguous; may represent the <i>lack</i> of any such omnipotent moral being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'look out of no face'