A NEW MUSICAL

THE GREAT GATSBY

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

WELCOME TO THE

THE GREAT GATSBY

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

Thank you for bringing your students to experience **"The Great Gatsby: A New Musical,"** a tale of love and ambition during the Roaring Twenties. This live theatre experience promises to captivate and leave a lasting impression. To enhance this journey, we created an Educators' Guide featuring articles, activities, and discussion questions that immerse students in the narrative and themes of the show.

The Pre-Show Guide
Provides context on the musical's historical and cultural setting, literary significance, and adaptation process, offering insights into the era and characters.

The Post-Show Guide
Encourages reflection on the experience and connections to contemporary themes, along with fun and engaging creative exercises.

Our goal is to spark curiosity and imagination, and we are excited to share this magical experience with you and your students.

The ensemble of "The Great Gatsby: A New Musical" perform New Money with choreography by Dominique Kelley.

A GATSBY FOR ALL

“The Great Gatsby” offers universal themes that can resonate with diverse student populations through various teaching approaches: historical context exploration, guided discussions, creative debates, and interactive activities.

Many students may connect with Jay Gatsby's journey as he navigates social boundaries and pursues his dreams despite his background.

The novel's exploration of aspiration, identity, and social dynamics remains relevant to contemporary students from varied backgrounds, making “The Great Gatsby” a valuable text in American literature classrooms.

“THIS PRODUCTION IS A BIG, BOLD, BROADWAY VERSION OF ‘THE GREAT GATSBY.’ IT’S THRILLING TO SEE THESE INDELIBLE CHARACTERS AND ICONIC MOMENTS FROM THE NOVEL COME TO LIFE ON STAGE. THIS STAGE PRODUCTION, WHICH HONORS THE NOVEL AND ITS HISTORY WHILE ALSO SPEAKING CLEARLY TO TODAY’S AUDIENCES, IS A TERRIFIC NEW ITERATION OF THIS CLASSIC WORK.”

- THE ESTATE OF F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

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All activities will be in gold sections. We recommend educators to choose 1-2 activities per section.

GLOSSARY + SYMBOLS

ACTIVITY:
"Use the Word"
(Grades 6-8)

Choose 2-3 symbols or terms from the glossary. Have students teach each term to the class using examples from the musical.

American Dream
The belief that anyone can achieve prosperity through effort; the novel exposes how that promise can be corrupt.

Automobiles
Gleaming status symbols of modern freedom that double as instruments of danger—most tragically in Myrtle's death.

Bootlegging
The illicit liquor trade during Prohibition; Gatsby's rumored source of wealth, underscoring his moral compromise.

Daisy's Voice
Nick hears money in her voice, making it the seductive sound of privilege that lures Gatsby toward illusion.

Dr. T. J. Eckleburg
Faded billboard eyes above the Valley of Ashes, read as an unblinking witness to the era's moral decay.

East Egg and West Egg
Twin peninsulas on Long Island: East Egg embodies inherited wealth; West Egg houses flashy self-made fortunes like Gatsby's. Based on the two sides of the Manhasset Bay; Port Washington and Great Neck respectively.

Flappers
Liberated young women of the 1920s whose fashion, short hair, and attitudes captured the era's rebellion against Victorian norms.

Green Light
A distant beacon on Daisy's dock—Gatsby's symbol of hope that forever retreats as he approaches.

Jazz Age / Roaring Twenties
The post-WWI decade of exuberance, new music, and excess that frames the novel's underlying restlessness.

Old Money vs. New Money
Social divide between inherited wealth (Tom, Daisy) and newly acquired riches (Gatsby), driving much of the story's tension. New Money was often associated with bootlegging and stock market speculation.

Pink Suit
Gatsby's flashy outfit that marks him as nouveau riche —ammunition for Tom's ridicule during their confrontation.

Prohibition
The 1920–1933 federal ban on alcohol, spawning speakeasies and organized crime; the backdrop to Gatsby's soirées. The ban created an abundance of illegally sold alcohol that sold for much cheaper than alcohol had, previous to the ban.

Speakeasy
An illegal bar selling alcohol during Prohibition.

Valley of Ashes
The industrial wasteland between West Egg and New York City, symbolizing forgotten laborers and the rot beneath the dream.

OBJECTIVE: Become familiar with the terms used in "The Great Gatsby" for a better understanding of the story's circumstances, setting, themes, and characters.

PRE-SHOW GUIDE

BECOMING GATSBY
ADAPTATION AND INSPIRATION

Gatsby's character was partly inspired by MAX GERLACH, a mysterious bootlegger whom Fitzgerald befriended in New York. Known for his opulent style and habit of referring to himself as "the Great," Gerlach embodied the self-made myth and grandeur that would define Jay Gatsby. His real-life persona, complete with rumors of underworld ties and a made-up past, helped shape Fitzgerald's vision of a man chasing legitimacy through reinvention.

BECOMING GATSBY
ADAPTATION AND INSPIRATION

Another of Fitzgeralds's inspiration for Gatsby was Trimalchio, a 1st-century freedman from Petronius' Satyricon, who embodied vulgar wealth, lavish excess, and social ambition. In fact, Fitzgerald's original title for "The Great Gatsby" was Trimalchio in the West Egg (which was incidentally vetoed by his wife Zelda and his beloved editor Maxwell Perkins.)

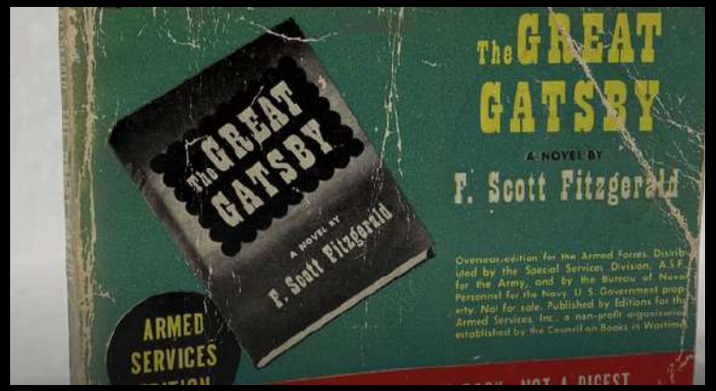
BECOMING GATSBY
ADAPTATION AND INSPIRATION

1925

F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" was published, capturing the essence of the Jazz Age with its story of ambition, love, and tragedy. Initially receiving mixed reviews and moderate sales, the novel **found its place as a classic** in American literature over the decades, earning its reputation as one of the greatest novels of the 20th century.

1945

In 1945, as part of the **Armed Services Editions** program, 155,000 copies of "The Great Gatsby" were distributed to American soldiers during WWII. This initiative played a significant role in reviving interest in the novel, which had not achieved substantial success during Fitzgerald's lifetime.



"American History Unbound: When 'The Great Gatsby' Went to War," Griffin Catalyst (YouTube, Apr 24 2025).

1974

A film adaptation of "The Great Gatsby", starring Robert Redford and Mia Farrow, brought Fitzgerald's vision to the silver screen. While faithful to the novel in its narrative, the movie's lush visuals highlighted the decadence of the era and introduced new audiences to Gatsby's story.

"The Great Gatsby (1974)"
Director Jack Clayton; starring Robert Redford & Mia Farrow.

BECOMING GATSBY
ADAPTATION AND INSPIRATION

Adaptation: A movie, television drama, or stage play that has been adapted from a written work, typically a novel.

2000

A **television film adaptation** featured Toby Stephens as Gatsby and Mira Sorvino as Daisy, providing a modern interpretation while honoring the original story. Meanwhile, Broadway composer Jason Howland was inspired by "The Great Gatsby's" timeless themes and aimed to create a musical adaptation that captures the jazz-infused energy of the era while exploring the emotional depth of Fitzgerald's characters.

"The Great Gatsby (2000) (TV) Trailer" Trailer Mov (Daily Motion, 7/11/2016)

2013

Baz Luhrmann's adaptation of "The Great Gatsby," featuring Leonardo DiCaprio, infused modern vibrancy into the classic story. By using contemporary music, the film highlighted the timeless themes of F. Scott Fitzgerald's narrative. The soundtrack included artists like Jay-Z and Lana Del Rey, contrasting with the 1920s setting and emphasizing the exploration of wealth, love, and the American Dream.

"The Great Gatsby (2013)" - The Mysterious Mr. Gatsby Scene (2/10) | Movieclips-TM & © Warner Bros. (2013)

2019-2021

Development of the musical began when producer Chunsoo Shin (known affectionately as "Mr. Shin") assembled his creative team. The first outline was written in 2019, work paused for the pandemic, and then the first songs (including first iterations of New Money + Roaring On) were written in June 2021.

How 'The Great Gatsby' on Broadway Was Created With Writers Kait Kerrigan & Nathan Tysen" BroadwayWorld (Youtube Jan 31, 2025)

2022

Early workshops and readings of **"The Great Gatsby: A New Musical"** provided invaluable feedback from actors and audiences alike.

These sessions shaped the musical's structure, helping the creative team refine its songs, characters, and emotional arcs.

Creative Team Roundtable

2023

The musical premiered at the **Paper Mill Playhouse in New Jersey.** Garnering critical acclaim, it demonstrated the enduring power of Gatsby's story and the resonance of its themes in today's world. "A feast for the eyes and the ears," declared The Star Ledger, praising its intricate set design and evocative score by Jason Howland.

The 2023 Paper Mill Playhouse production was a significant milestone, becoming the highest-grossing show in the theater's history. The entire run sold out before the first performance.

"Character Breakdown: THE GREAT GATSBY Cast Unpacks Their Roles' BroadwayWorld (YouTube, Aug 12, 2024)

2024

"The Great Gatsby: A New Musical" debuted on Broadway, bringing Gatsby's world of opulence and heartbreak to life while achieving notable commercial success, drawing near-capacity crowds, and a steady influx of new, younger theatregoers reflecting its wide appeal.

The Original Broadway Cast of "The Great Gatsby"

THE JAZZ AGE: HISTORICAL CONTEXT

OBJECTIVE: Gain a clear understanding for the historical backdrop of the novel/musical.

ANOTHER ARREST MADE IN PONZI CASE

THE CALEDONIAN-RECORD

LATEST EDITION

ST. JOHNSBURY, VERMONT, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 18, 1920

PRICE TWO CENTS

Women Win Vote

NEWPORTERS ENJOY SAIL AND PICNIC

FAIRBANKS A. A. PLAYS ROYAL GIANTS FRIDAY

ST. JOHNSBURY WOMEN PLEASED OVER VICTORY

WOMEN WIN 51-YEAR BATTLE FOR THE BALLOT

Tennessee Legislature's Vote for Equal Suffrage Gives Women the Ballot

THE JAZZ AGE & THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE

The Jazz Age was an influential period characterized by the emergence of jazz music as a powerful symbol of freedom and rebellion. This era was significantly shaped by the Harlem Renaissance, which underscored the important contributions of African American culture, fundamentally influencing the music and ethos of the time. The 1920s, as depicted in Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby," were marked by wealth, consumerism, and social changes, including the rise of flappers and shifting gender roles, which challenged traditional norms. This period was defined by a complex interplay of glamour and disillusionment, with the pursuit of the American Dream often revealing its darker aspects.

Why do you think the 1920s, with its cultural excess and contradictions, continues to captivate modern audiences?

Educators: Discuss these themes with your students or ask them to brainstorm their own!

- A critique of the American Dream and its unattainable ideals.
- Characters driven by their ambitions, desires, and flaws, often leading to tragic outcomes.
- A vivid portrayal of the contrasts between the wealthy elite and the working class.
- Themes of love, identity, and the passage of time, resonating across generations.
- Symbolism, such as the green light and the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, emphasizing dreams and moral decay.

How does The Great Gatsby reflect the values and contradictions of the Jazz Age?

ACTIVITY:

In The Great Gatsby, we learn about Gatsby's relentless pursuit of his dream. Compare Gatsby's dream to historical or cultural figures.

e.g., Alexander Hamilton, Celie, Walter Younger

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

Integration of novel + musical evidence. Clarity and rhetoric.

THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE:

OBJECTIVE: Gain a clear understanding for the historical backdrop of the novel/musical.

Definition: The Harlem Renaissance was a flourishing of African American art, literature, music, and intellectual thought in the 1920s, centered in Harlem, New York. It celebrated Black culture, history, and pride, and challenged existing racial stereotypes. While the Harlem Renaissance was a specific cultural movement for African Americans, its impact on the Jazz Age and broader society was profound, influencing both Black and white audiences across America**.**

- **Real-Life Examples:**
  - **Langston Hughes:** One of the most prominent voices of the Harlem Renaissance, Hughes wrote poetry that emphasized African American experiences and pride. His work also critiqued the disillusionment of the American Dream, a theme central to "The Great Gatsby."
  - **Duke Ellington:** As a composer and bandleader, Ellington brought jazz into mainstream culture. His music symbolized both the vibrancy of Black culture and its impact on the broader society.
  - **Bessie Smith:** Known as the "Empress of the Blues," Smith's music spoke to the emotional struggles of African Americans, especially women, while also becoming incredibly popular with diverse audiences across the nation.

Educators: Discuss These Themes with Your Students or Ask Them to Brainstorm Their Own!

- The role of music, particularly jazz, in expressing cultural identity and emotional depth.
- The influence of African American artists and writers on broader cultural movements, reflected in the show's adaptation of "The Great Gatsby."
- The contrast between societal expectations and individual freedom, echoed through the struggles in both the real life experiences during the Harlem Renaissance and the characters of "The Great Gatsby."

Why do you think the 1920s, with its cultural excess and contradictions, continues to captivate modern audiences?

ACTIVITY:

Discuss how both Gatsby's pursuit and the Renaissance's cultural ambitions were shaped by societal limitations and aspirations for freedom.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

Integration of novel + musical evidence. Clarity and rhetoric

GIVING THE *1920'S* A 2020'S SPIN

OBJECTIVE: Understand the inspirations behind the creative choices made in the choreography, and what these choices help communicate about the story.

ACTIVITY (All grade levels)

- ***Key Moments:*** *Identify a few standout movements or poses. What made them memorable?*
- ***1920s References:*** *Do any movements draw from the Charleston, Black Bottom, or other Jazz Age dances?*
- ***Modern Moves:*** *Can you spot viral or contemporary dance influences? Why include them?*
- ***Themes:*** *How does the choreography support themes like reinvention, illusion, or ambition?*

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

Integration of novel + musical evidence
Clarity and Rhetoric
Drawing connections between current events and history

CHARACTER PROFILES

ACTIVITY:
"Like & Subscribe"
(Grades 6-8)

Choose one character and create a social media profile for them.

Include details about their personality, goals, and key relationships.

Share your profile and discuss how it connects to the themes of "The Great Gatsby."

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:
Character voice fidelity
Integration of novel + musical evidence

Jeremy Jordan

Jay Gatsby
A self-made millionaire known for his extravagant parties, Gatsby is driven by his obsessive love for Daisy Buchanan. Born as James Gatz, he reinvents himself to escape his humble beginnings and pursue the American Dream. Gatsby symbolizes ambition, hope, and the tragic cost of idealism.
Key Question: Why do you think Gatsby's dream is both his greatest strength and his ultimate flaw?

Eva Noblezada

Daisy Buchanan
Beautiful and charming, Daisy represents both the allure and the emptiness of Gatsby's dream. Married to Tom Buchanan, she struggles between her love for Gatsby and her attachment to wealth and status. Daisy's character reveals the shallow and materialistic values of the Jazz Age elite.
Key Question: Is Daisy a victim of her circumstances, or is she responsible for the harm she causes?

Noah J. Ricketts

Nick Carraway
The novel's narrator and Gatsby's neighbor, Nick provides an outsider's perspective on the decadence and moral decay of the Jazz Age. Though fascinated by Gatsby, Nick is ultimately disillusioned with the world of East and West Egg.
Key Question: How does Nick's role as a narrator shape the story? Can we trust his perspective?

John Zdrojeski

Tom Buchanan
Daisy's wealthy and arrogant husband, Tom embodies the entitlement and cruelty of old money. He is unfaithful and controlling, representing the darker side of privilege and power.
Key Question: How does Tom's character contrast with Gatsby's?

Samantha Pauly

Jordan Baker
A professional golfer and Daisy's friend, Jordan is independent, cynical, and morally ambiguous. She becomes romantically involved with Nick but ultimately highlights his discomfort with the dishonest and superficial world of the wealthy.
Key Question: What does Jordan's character reveal about gender roles and independence in the 1920s?

Sara Chase

Myrtle Wilson
Tom's mistress and the wife of George Wilson, Myrtle longs to escape her life in the Valley of Ashes. Her pursuit of wealth and status ends in tragedy, symbolizing the dangers of chasing the American Dream.
Key Question: How does Myrtle's story parallel Gatsby's pursuit of his dream?

Paul Whitty

George Wilson
Myrtle's husband, George is a struggling mechanic in the Valley of Ashes. His devotion to Myrtle and his grief underscore the theme of moral decay and the harsh realities faced by those outside the elite.
Key Question: How does George's character reflect the consequences of ambition and betrayal?

OBJECTIVE: Clearly identify and communicate each character's objectives, perspective, and voice.

MUSICAL SYNOPSIS

Act I: The Allure of the Green Light

Roaring On – New York City. 1922. Nick Carraway narrates what brought him from his home in St. Paul, Minnesota to Manhattan. On his arrival, he is drawn in by the carefree world of parties, alcohol, money, and underworld dealings.

Absolute Rose – The history of the summer really begins the night Nick visits his cousin Daisy Buchanan, and her husband Tom, across the bay in East Egg. Daisy delights in the reunion, and even attempts to set up Nick with her best friend, the famous amateur golfer, Jordan Baker.

New Money – Jordan invites Nick to join her at Gatsby's party. Suddenly, they are immersed in the glitzy, gaudy, over-the-top world of West Egg.

For Her – In Gatsby's private study, Nick discovers he and Gatsby were both soldiers in the Great War. Gatsby reveals that before he shipped out, he and Nick's cousin Daisy were sweethearts, and Gatsby's love has driven him in everything he's done since. Gatsby asks Nick to invite Daisy over for tea so that he can see her again. Nick demurs, unsure what to do.

Valley of Ashes – A few days later, George Wilson is working at his garage in Queens, when Wolfsheim comes by to finalize some shady business. Wilson hopes that he'll be able to put away enough money to move out to Ohio with his wife, Myrtle. George confides all of this to the old billboard featuring the oversized bespeckled eyes of a long-retired oculist Dr. T. J. Eckleburg.

Second-Hand Suit – Tom and Nick pull up for gas on their way to the city, and offer a ride to Myrtle who is coincidentally also headed into Manhattan. As they drive, however, Myrtle reveals that not only is she cheating on Wilson with another man, but she is in fact Tom's mistress.

MUSICAL SYNOPSIS

For Better or Worse – Daisy confesses to Jordan that Jay Gatsby was the soldier she fell in love with before Tom, and although she wrote him letters while he was at war, she thought he had died. It's no secret to Daisy or Jordan that Tom has affairs, so Jordan asks why Daisy can't have one too. Daisy considers her position and decides she can't see Jay Gatsby ever. She wouldn't trust herself.

The Met– Now up in Harlem, Nick finds himself mingling with strangers in a long, drunken, debaucherous night while Tom and Myrtle carry on their affair. The party ends abruptly when Tom and Myrtle quarrel and Tom breaks her nose. Horrified by Tom's behavior, Nick decides to grant Gatsby his request for a tea with Daisy.

Only Tea– The morning of the tea, Gatsby anticipates seeing Daisy again after five years. He has organized everything in his life toward this reunion and wants everything to be perfect, but at the last minute, his nerves get the better of him and he runs away. Daisy arrives with Jordan, believing that her matchmaking has succeeded. When she discovers Gatsby is there, she is shocked but glad. Eventually, Gatsby offers Daisy a tour of his mansion.

My Green Light – Once inside the mansion, Gatsby takes Daisy to the balcony he built facing the green light at the end of her dock just across the bay. Daisy admits that if she had known Gatsby were alive, perhaps everything would be different. The two give in to the passion and hope that fueled their love.

MUSICAL SYNOPSIS

Act II: The Crack in the Facade

Shady – The summer roars on as Wolfsheim explains how everyone is involved in questionable activities. Crates of illegally transported booze stack up at Wilson's garage. Tom makes up with Myrtle for breaking her nose, Jordan and Nick secretly continue their affair, as do Daisy and Gatsby. Gatsby shirks his business operations with Wolfsheim, focusing instead on throwing a themed party - inviting Daisy to bring Tom with her and wear the dress that she wore the night they first fell in love.

Better Hold Tight – When Jordan enters, wearing a doily of a debutante dress, the two playact the role of the debutante and the soldier. They surprise themselves when Jordan proposes to Nick and Nick accepts.

Past Is Catching Up to Me – Gatsby sees Nick and Jordan together, and feels more committed to making Daisy his than ever.

La Dee Dah With You - The party commences. Gatsby introduces a surprise guest – Gilda Gray who sang at the officer's ball where he met Daisy. Gilda and the Sugars entertain the guests with singing and tap dancing.

Go - Gatsby follows Daisy to the gardens and she breathlessly suggests they drive off together. Tom enters andtries to cajole Daisy into leaving by suggesting they drive into the city and go to the Plaza Hotel. Gatsby jumps on the idea and, grabbing Nick and Jordan, creates a plan for them to all head into the city in two cars.

MUSICAL SYNOPSIS

Made to Last – At the Plaza, Tom confronts Gatsby and Daisy. When faced with the reality of leaving Tom, having to give up her child, and living life as a divorced woman, Daisy's will to leave with Gatsby breaks. In a flex of his confidence, Tom allows Gatsby to drive Daisy home in Gatsby's car.

For Better or Worse (Reprise) - While Tom goes to get his car, Nick and Jordan are left to consider their impulsive engagement in a more sober light

One-Way Road – Meanwhile, Myrtle – unable to get a train or a cab at this late hour, walks the highway toward the Plaza to confront Tom. She has an epiphany that the same philandering that led Tom to her will continue, and decides instead to return home with the promise of raising a family with George. As Myrtle turns back, she is hit by a car and killed.

God Sees Everything – Wilson wails over Myrtle's dead body, as Tom arrives in his car with Nick and Jordan. When Tom hears that it was a yellow car that killed Myrtle, he tells Wilson that Gatsby was driving. Wilson assumes that Gatsby was the rich man Myrtle was going around with. Nick wants to tell the cops what they know, but Jordan insists that it would only destroy more lives. They argue and break off their engagement for good. Wilson pleads with his only friend, the billboard, for justice to be done for Myrtle's death.

For Her (Reprise) - Nick goes to Gatsby's and finds him alone by the pool. When he learns that Daisy is back home with Tom, he insists Gatsby leave town immediately. But Gatsby, in a more deluded state than ever, insists he can't leave because Daisy could return at any moment. Nick leaves as Gatsby goes to take a swim in his pool. Wilson shows up and, convinced he has found his wife's killer, shoots Gatsby before taking his own life.

MUSICAL SYNOPSIS

Finale: The Illusion Shatters

New Money (Reprise) - The partygoers from earlier in the summer circulate the party circuit, spreading rumors about Gatsby. But none of them care enough to show up at his funeral.

Beautiful Little Fool – Disgusted and disillusioned, Nick decides to return home to St. Paul, but before he leaves, he pays a visit to Daisy, who to his surprise is also packing to go. Unable to contain his judgment, Nick confronts Daisy over her role in the events of the summer. She explains that he will never understand her life and choices by offering him a small insight into her world – the story of the birth of her child.

Finale: Roaring On– On his last night in New York, Nick grapples with his own ability to reserve judgment. He pictures Gatsby, still reaching for the green light, and chooses to emulate that hope. As the summer replays in his mind, the partygoers and New York City rise up again, but this time rather than be swept up, he holds strong against the current - even as the past threatens to swallow him up.

ACTIVITY (All Grades) Have students choose a song from the synopsis, pick 2-3 lines that vividly evoke Gatsby's world or core themes, write a brief analysis of their significance, discuss their insights in small groups, and then share standout lyrics with the class to deepen understanding of the novel's themes.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: Integration of novel + musical evidence. Clarity, rhetoric, and audience awareness.

OBJECTIVE: Clearly identify and communicate the core themes of "The Great Gatsby."

STEP INTO THE STORY

This activity encourages students of **all grade levels** to explore ***"The Great Gatsby"*** through performance, helping them understand how dialogue, movement, and character interpretation bring the story to life.

BEFORE CLASS

1. Print out copies of the ***Step Into the Story*** and **Quote Cards.** **(SEE END PAGES OF PACKET)**
2. Cut out the Quote Cards so that students can be assigned different lines.
3. Decide if you want students to experience the entire synopsis or only certain sections to avoid spoilers.

IN CLASS

1. Have students stand in a circle.
2. Hand out the Quote Cards, ensuring each student has a character line.
3. As you read through the synopsis, students step forward and perform their assigned lines when cued.
4. After finishing, discuss how the characters' words and actions reveal themes, class divisions, and motivations in the story.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Clarity and rhetoric.
Character voice integrity.
Integration of novel and musical evidence.

Pictured: The Original Broadway Cast of The Great Gatsby

OBJECTIVE: Step into each role and line from The Great Gatsby, to better understand its themes and characters.

JOBS AT GATSBY: BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Book
Kait Kerrigan

Music
Jason Howland

Lyrics
Nathan Tysen

Design & Production Heads

Scenic & Projection Designer – Paul Tate dePoo III
Costume Designer – Linda Cho
Lighting Designer – Cory Pattak
Sound Designer – Brian Ronan
Hair & Wig Designers – Charles G. LaPointe, Rachael Geier
Makeup Designer – Ashley Ryan
Orchestrations – Jason Howland, Kim Scharnberg
Dialect Coach – Deborah Hecht
Casting – C12 Casting (Stephen Kopel, Jillian Cimini)

Marketing & Press

Marketing Supervision – Brand-Nexus, Michele Groner
Advertising – SpotCo
Press Representative – Vivacity Media Group
Social Media – Katharine Quinn (ATS)
Fight & Intimacy Director – Rocio Mendez

Creative Team

Director – Marc Bruni
Music Producer – Billy Jay Stein
Music Director & Additional Arrangements – Daniel Edmonds
Music Coordinator – John Miller
Music Supervision & Arrangements – Jason Howland
Associate Director – David Ruttura
Choreographer – Dominique Kelley
Associate Choreographers – Cedric Dodd, Charlie Sutton

Management & Stage Operations

Production Management – Juniper Street Productions
Production Stage Manager – Brian Bogin
Company Manager – Elizabeth M. Talmadge
General Management – Foresight Theatrical (Mark Shacket, Andrew Joy)

OBJECTIVE: Put research skills to the test by clearly outlining what each role entails and how someone might pursue a career in that role.

(ALL GRADE LEVELS) Have students choose a backstage role that excites them and craft a one-page mini-profile. Use online resources to research your chosen role. What does this role do day-to-day? What skills and training are needed? Who does this position work with most closely?
(GRADES 9-12) Describe two realistic entry routes: for example, internships, assistantships, or related fields. Write 2-3 sentences on why this role fits your strengths or passions.
RESOURCE: Check out **Drama Arts Toolkit from PBS** for more insight into these roles!

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA: Clarity and rhetoric. Drawing from personal experience. Use of reputable current sources.

DESIGN SPOTLIGHT

Bringing "The Great Gatsby" to life meant creating a world that captures the energy of Gatsby's legendary parties, the contrasts of old and new wealth, and the quiet loneliness lurking beneath the spectacle. The scenic, costume, lighting, sound, and projection designers worked together to ensure the visual storytelling was as evocative as Fitzgerald's prose.

ON COSTUME DESIGN

"For Gatsby, we fused old-money tailoring with new-money flair: bespoke pinstripes, silk ties, and shoes polished to a mirror shine. His transformation from James Gatz is subtle—a frayed cuff here, a weathered pocket watch there. Daisy's wardrobe is all chiffon and pearls, but her hemlines rise as her resolve crumbles."

"This is a story where characters present one image to the world while concealing their true selves. The costumes had to reflect both the dazzling glamour of the Jazz Age and the quiet tensions beneath the surface."

— Linda Cho, Costume Designer

ON LIGHTING & SPECIAL FX

"The scale of the production is enormous. We have 130 moving lights, 250 conventional lights, haze, low fog, pyro effects, water effects, and strobes. Gatsby's parties needed to feel overwhelming in their energy, but we also had to craft intimate, isolated moments like the 'My Green Light' scene where everything strips back to a single spotlight."

— Cory Pattak, Lighting Designer

ON SCENIC & PROJECTION DESIGN

"The show moves between Gatsby's mansion, the Valley of Ashes, the Buchanan estate, and the Plaza Hotel. We used a combination of physical set pieces and integrated projections to transition fluidly between these locations without losing momentum. The goal was to create a seamless, immersive world where audiences wouldn't always know what was physical and what was digital."

"The scale of Gatsby's world is both intimate and grand, full of excess but deeply personal. Finding a way to balance those extremes visually was our biggest challenge."

— Paul Tate dePoo III, Scenic Designer

Illusion vs. Reality

Daisy's Costumes: *"Her white gowns are layered with sheer fabrics—beautiful but transparent, like her promises."* (Cho)

Pictured: Amber Davies and Frances Mayli McCann

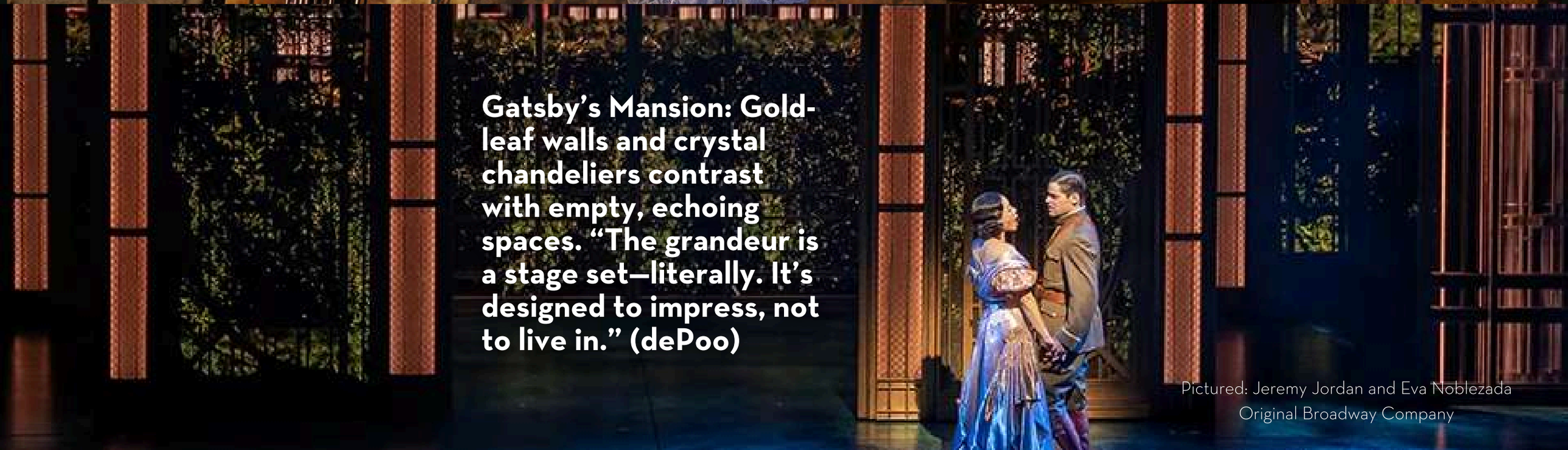
The Green Light: "It's ever-present, even when you don't see it. We found ways to let it glow faintly in the distance, making it feel like a presence haunting Gatsby." (dePoo)

Pictured: Jamie Muscato and Frances Mayli McCann

The American Dream

Valley of Ashes: A monochromatic wasteland dominated by the billboard of T.J. Eckleburg's eyes. "We used industrial scaffolding and ash-gray textures to symbolize the cost of capitalism." (dePoo)

Pictured: Charlie Pollock



Gatsby's Mansion: Gold-leaf walls and crystal chandeliers contrast with empty, echoing spaces. "The grandeur is a stage set—literally. It's designed to impress, not to live in." (dePoo)

Pictured: Jeremy Jordan and Eva Noblezada
Original Broadway Company

TECH TABLE

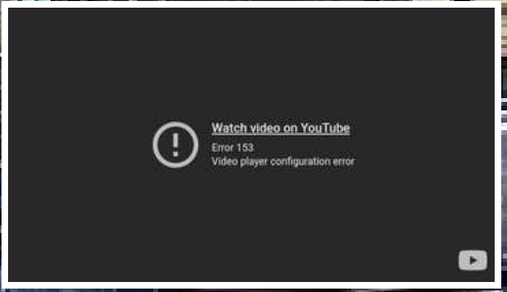
The Valley of Ashes:
500 pounds of recycled paper pulp were used to create the ash-covered ground.

Sound Design:
The orchestra includes a 1920s-era coronet and a theremin for eerie, otherworldly moments.

Gatsby's Parties:
Over 200 costume changes occur in the first 20 minutes. Quick-release zippers and magnetic closures keep the chaos seamless.

The Green Light:
Powered by a custom LED rig, it's visible even when "off," haunting every scene.

"I try to talk to directors more about what a scene feels like, rather than what it looks like. I don't want them talking to me about lighting. If they say "I think it's blue light"...yeah no. I'd rather them say 'I think it feels unsettling, or oppressive, or playful or dangerous.'" — Cory Pattak. Lighting Designer



DRAMATIC CONCEPTS: Teaching Tools

GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES:

- Where and when does the story take place? Consider setting as both time and place.
- What are the characters' relationships to one another?
- What are the social, economic, and political factors that affect the characters?
- What events occurred before the first scene that influence the story?

CENTRAL CHARACTER:

- Who is the central character of "The Great Gatsby?" Is it Gatsby, Nick, or someone else?
- What is their objective, what do they want most in the world?
- What is their motivation, why do they want it so badly?
- What conflicts stand in their way? (Conflicts actively oppose the character's wants, whereas obstacles are simply barriers.)

CHARACTER OBJECTIVES & CONFLICTS:

- What do the other main characters want, and how do their goals conflict with one another?
- How do these conflicts drive the story forward?

DRAMATIC CONCEPTS: Teaching Tools

OBJECTIVE: Dive deeper into the key themes and lessons the story is presenting. How do the circumstances and characters contribute to these themes?

THEMES IN GATSBY:

Challenge students to think about "The Great Gatsby's" underlying messages. Ask them to brainstorm what they believe the show is about. Some key themes might include:

- The pursuit of the American Dream
- Class and privilege
- The illusion of wealth and success
- Love, obsession, and idealization
- Corruption and moral decay
- The past vs. the future

JOURNAL IT! (GRADES 9-12)

Ask students to journal on a theme from "The Great Gatsby" that resonates with them. Then, encourage them to connect it to other works of literature, films, or historical events that explore similar themes.

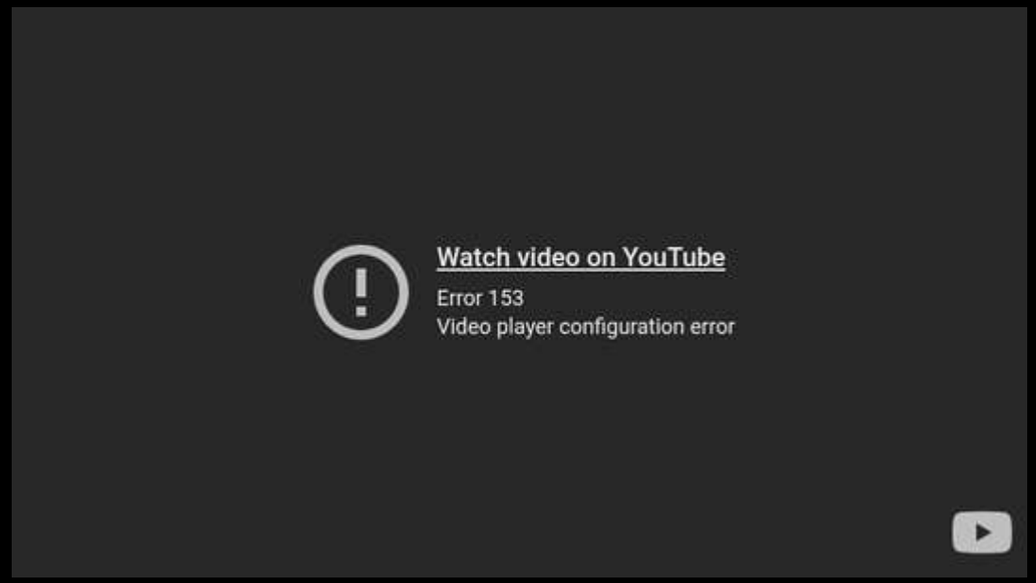
ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Integration of novel + musical evidence. Clarity and rhetoric. Strong display of understanding of key themes.

PREDICTIONS & DISCUSSION:

- If stopping at Act I: What do you think will happen next? How will the conflicts resolve?
- If reading the full synopsis: What is the climax of the story? How does it address Gatsby's main conflict?
- How do the characters change by the end? What is their journey, and how does it reflect the play's themes?
- After seeing the show, compare students' predictions to the actual production and discuss any surprises or new interpretations.

ANALYZING "FOR HER": ACTIVITIES



Lyric Study:

Print out the lyrics for "For Her"
Have students read the lyrics individually or in small groups and complete the accompanying reading comprehension questions.

Class Discussion:

Analyze the song's key themes, metaphors, and how it reflects Gatsby's ambition and illusion.

Listening & Reflection:

Play "For Her" from the original cast recording. Use the discussion questions to guide a full-class conversation about how the music and lyrics shape our understanding of Gatsby.

OBJECTIVE: Examine the lyrics and understand how the song pushes forward the key themes and character motivations of "The Great Gatsby."

"FOR HER"

Music and Lyrics by Jason Howland and Nathan Tysen
From "The Great Gatsby: A New Musical"

I'VE DONE IT ALL FOR HER
PUT UP EACH WALL FOR HER ALL THE PLANS I LAID
ALL THE OPTIONS WEIGHED EVERY PRICE I PAID FOR HER
I WENT TO WAR FOR HER
BRAVED FOREIGN SHORE FOR HER BOTTLED UP THE GUILT
THEN I WENT FULL-TILT
RIVALED VANDERBILT FOR HER
DAISY

YOU FIGHT AND RETURN ONLY TO LEARN
THAT YOU HAVE LOST HER DAISY
MY WAITING IS THROUGH
IF YOU BRING HER TO ME I'LL BE INDEBTED TO YOU
I'VE COME SO FAR FOR HER THE FINEST CAVIAR FOR HER

EVERYTHING I OWN
EVERY PARTY THROWN
ALL THE NIGHTS ALONE FOR HER
DAISY

SHE SLIPPED THROUGH MY HANDS NO ONE UNDERSTANDS
HOW SHE HAS CHANGED ME DAISY
I NEED ONE MORE CHANCE
IF YOU BRING HER TO ME
I WILL KNOW AT A GLANCE
DO THIS GOOD TURN FOR ME
AND I CAN GUARANTEE
WHEN ALL IS DONE I'LL BE FOREVER IN YOUR DEBT
THIS TIME I WON'T LET GO
HELP ME TO MAKE IT SO
TRY AS ONE MIGHT YOU KNOW THAT THERE IS NO FORGETTING HER
DAISY

YOU FIGHT AND RETURN ONLY TO LEARN
THAT YOU HAVE LOST HER DAISY
I NEED ONE MORE CHANCE AM I CHASING A DREAM?
I WILL KNOW AT A GLANCE
I'VE DONE IT ALL FOR HER PUT UP EACH WALL FOR HER BUCKED
THE STATUS QUO JUST ONE PIECE TO GO
NOW SHE HAS TO KNOW
IT'S ALL FOR HER

DISCUSSION TOPICS

1. What does the green light represent in this song?
2. How does Gatsby's interpretation of it compare to its meaning in the novel?
3. How does the song start softly and build to a crescendo?
4. What does that progression say about Gatsby's state of mind?
5. Does Gatsby's belief in the green light feel hopeful or tragic? Why?
6. What does this song tell us about Gatsby's core desire?
7. How does it set up his arc for the rest of the musical?

Movement & Staging:
Have students stage their own interpretation of "My Green Light"—how would they visually represent Gatsby's longing?

Lyric Rewrite:
Ask students to rewrite the lyrics of "My Green Light" from Daisy's perspective. How would her version differ from Gatsby's?

Compare & Contrast:
Have students compare "My Green Light" to other famous "I Want" songs in musical theatre ("The Wizard and I" from Wicked, "The Room Where It Happens" from Hamilton, etc.). How do they convey longing and ambition?

POST-SHOW GUIDE

COMPREHENSION & DISCUSSION

BASIC STORY COMPREHENSION REFLECTION

- Who are the main characters in “The Great Gatsby?”
- What are their defining traits and motivations?
- How do their relationships evolve over the course of the story?
- How does the setting influence the characters?
- What key events drive the narrative forward?

DISCUSSION AND/OR JOURNALING TOPICS

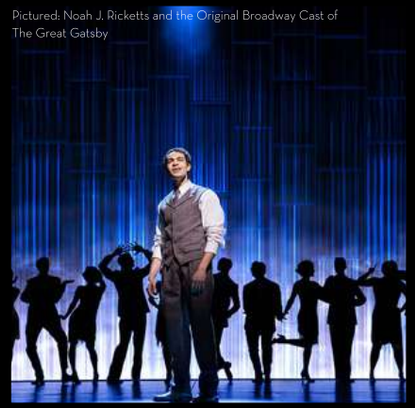
- What themes in “The Great Gatsby” stood out the most to you?
- How do the musical’s songs enhance or change the way the story is told?
- In what ways do the design elements (costumes, lighting, sets) influence your understanding of the characters and themes?
- How does Gatsby’s mansion reflect his inner desires and struggles?
- What moments do you think were the most visually striking on stage?
- If you could step into the world of “The Great Gatsby,” which character’s perspective would you want to experience?

Pictured: Eva Noblezada and John Zdrojeski

Pictured: Jamie Muscato and Frances Mayli McCann

Pictured: Paul Whitty

Pictured: Sara Chase


Pictured: Noah J. Ricketts and the Original Broadway Cast of The Great Gatsby

Pictured: Corbin Bleu, Rachel Tucker, Jon Robyns

OBJECTIVE: Dive deeper into “The Great Gatsby” and reflect on the ways the experience of the show enriched the understanding of the novel.

GETTING THE CONVERSATION STARTED

QUICK REFLECTION:

Before leaving the theater, on the way back to school, or even in the lobby, ask students to jot down five words that describe or represent their experience watching **"The Great Gatsby: A New Musical."** Students should expand on two of these words in a journal entry or online discussion forum.

EXTENDED VERSION:

An alternative approach is to have students free-write about their experience at the show as soon as possible after the performance. Encourage them to be detailed in recalling moments that stood out to them, as well as their emotional responses.

Next, have students:

- Circle ten words that stand out from their writing.
- Narrow that list down to three words.
- Choose one word that best represents their experience and share it with the class.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA:

Clarity and rhetoric. Strong perspective and personal connection. Integration of novel + musical evidence.

SENTENCE FRAMES AND STARTERS:

The musical number that stood out to me the most was _____.

The most memorable part of the show for me was _____.

The most interesting character was ____ because _____.

OBJECTIVE: Dive deeper into "The Great Gatsby" and reflect on the ways the experience of the show enriched the understanding of the novel.

REFLECTION DISCUSSION

Following the performance, engage students with the following discussion questions.
These can be discussed in groups or used as journal prompts.

THE GREAT GATSBY AS A LIVE PERFORMANCE

- What was your overall reaction to **"The Great Gatsby: A New Musical?"** Cite a specific moment.
- How did seeing the musical live affect your understanding of the story and themes? What key themes stood out in the performance?
- How did the music and orchestrations impact the storytelling?
- Which song revealed something new about a character?
- Did any staging choices differ from your expectations?

OBJECTIVE: Dive deeper into "The Great Gatsby" and reflect on the ways the experience of the show enriched the understanding of the novel.

PRODUCTION ELEMENTS AND DESIGN DISCUSSION

OBJECTIVE: Dive deeper into "The Great Gatsby" and reflect on the ways the experience of the show enriched the understanding of the novel.

DESIGN ON A DIME

(Grades 6-9)

Ask students to recreate an iconic visual moment from **"The Great Gatsby: A New Musical"** using classroom objects (books, backpacks, chairs, phones, etc.). Have them explain their choices to the class.

ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

Clarity and rhetoric.

Integration of novel + musical evidence.

- Is there a particular moment in the show that you keep revisiting in your mind?
- What production elements supported that moment the most?
- How did lighting and projections establish different moods and settings throughout the show?
- What stood out about the costumes and hair design? How did they help define characters and social status?

THEMES IN CONTEXT TODAY

How are women represented in the musical compared to the novel?

OBJECTIVE: Connect the themes of "The Great Gatsby" to current day events and discussions around gender.

WOMEN & MODERN CONNECTIONS

OBJECTIVE: Connect the themes of "The Great Gatsby" to current day events and discussions around gender.

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How do gender, class, and public image shape women's agency in **"The Great Gatsby"** and today?
- What would Daisy, Jordan, or Myrtle say about a current debate on women's rights, wealth, or fame?

SUGGESTED THEMES OF DISCUSSION

- Reproductive rights & bodily autonomy
- Equal pay & NIL in women's sports
- Domestic labor and the "mental load"
- Wealth inequality & social climbing
- Media framing of women / public image
- Violence against women & institutional silence

THE WEST EGG GAZZETTE! (Grades 8-12)

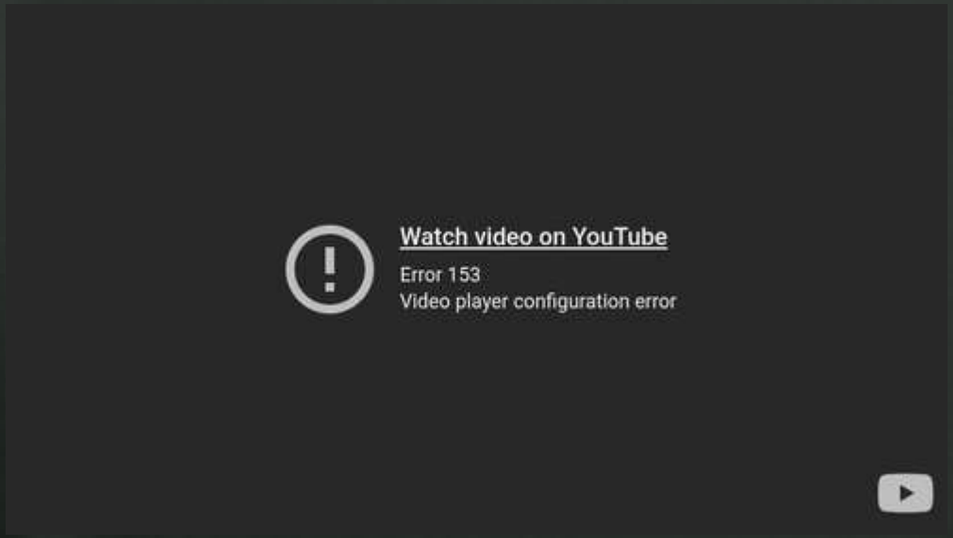
Ask students to write an Op-Ed on one of the following topics above and the ways "The Great Gatsby" still resonates with modern discussions around gender inequality today. 500-700 words.

Assessment Criteria

- Character voice fidelity
- Integration of novel + musical evidence
- Use of reputable current sources
- Counterargument / limitations
- Clarity, rhetoric, and audience awareness

WRITING A REVIEW

Encourage students to take on the role of a theater critic and write a review of "The Great Gatsby: A New Musical."



Their review should include:

- Analysis of the performance: What themes, plot points, and characters stood out?
- Production elements: How did set, costumes, lighting, and sound contribute to the experience?
- Personal assessment: Did the musical achieve its artistic intentions?

Remind students to back up their opinions with specific details and examples.

SENTENCE FRAMES:

The plot point when _____ happened helped push forward the theme of _____.

The character that I found most interesting was _____ because _____.

The musical achieved its artistic intentions because _____.

THANK YOU

We're so glad you joined us in exploring the world of
"THE GREAT GATSBY: A NEW MUSICAL."

Whether you're diving into Fitzgerald's novel, bringing scenes to life in your classroom,
or experiencing the magic of live theatre,
THANK YOU FOR INSPIRING THE NEXT GENERATION OF STORYTELLERS.

We'd love to hear from you!
SHARE YOUR CLASSROOM EXPERIENCE WITH US @BWAYGATSBY:

APPENDIX

STEP INTO THE STORY
(TEACHER VERSION)

ACT I

The lights rise on Nick Carraway, who narrates his arrival in New York. He rents a small cottage in West Egg, next to the opulent mansion of the mysterious Jay Gatsby. Meanwhile, across the bay, Daisy Buchanan and her husband Tom live in East Egg, enjoying old money wealth. Gatsby, who throws extravagant parties, is obsessed with rekindling his past romance with Daisy.

(1) NICK: The very first time I saw Gatsby's name, if only I knew then that I would never be the same.

(2) ENSEMBLE: Where's the party, and can you take me there?

Nick visits the Buchanans for dinner, where he meets Jordan Baker, a professional golfer with a sharp wit. Tom, a brute of a man, is carrying on an affair with Myrtle Wilson, a woman from the bleak "Valley of Ashes."

(3) DAISY: I think everything's terrible, anyhow. Everybody thinks so—the most advanced people. That's because everybody's rich and sophisticated, and I suppose we are the most advanced people.

Nick is soon swept into Gatsby's world. At one of Gatsby's famous parties, he finally meets the man himself. Gatsby extends an invitation to Nick for a private lunch, where he reveals that he and Daisy were once deeply in love. Gatsby has spent years amassing wealth in hopes of winning her back.

(4) GATSBY: Can you see through the mist? Look across the bay. Can you see the green light?

Nick agrees to help Gatsby reunite with Daisy. Gatsby meticulously prepares for their meeting, held in Nick's humble home.

(5) GATSBY: It is tea, it's only tea... and a rewrite of the stars.

Daisy is overwhelmed when she sees Gatsby again. The two spend the afternoon together, reliving their past. Meanwhile, Tom becomes suspicious of Gatsby and Daisy's rekindled relationship. He confronts Gatsby at the Plaza Hotel, exposing Gatsby's questionable business dealings.

(6) TOM: He's slick and he's fast and he'll run out of gas. None of this was made to last.

(7) JORDAN: You leave a trail of lies that never ends. (8) GATSBY: Daisy, tell him. You never loved him.

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Daisy, overwhelmed by the confrontation, drives Gatsby's car home with him. On the way, she strikes and kills Myrtle Wilson in the Valley of Ashes. Gatsby takes the blame, believing Daisy will choose him in the end.

(9) GATSBY: I've done it all for her. Put up each wall for her.

ACT II

Tom manipulates George Wilson into believing Gatsby is responsible for Myrtle's death. Meanwhile, Daisy withdraws from Gatsby and stays with Tom.

(10) DAISY: The best thing a girl can be in this world is a beautiful little fool.

Gatsby waits outside Daisy's house, convinced she will come to him.

(11) GATSBY: So what's an hour more? She's gone to set things straight, and I'm prepared to wait for her.

(12) NICK: They were careless people, Tom and Daisy. They smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money.

But Daisy never calls. The next day, Wilson, driven mad with grief, arrives at Gatsby's mansion. He shoots Gatsby while he floats in his pool and then turns the gun on himself.

(13) WILSON: You've got the eyes of God, Doc. Who's gonna be His hands?
(14) ENSEMBLE: Look how he tricked 'em, now he's a victim. Well, at least he made a splash.

Nick is left to pick up the pieces. No one attends Gatsby's funeral except him. He realizes that Gatsby's dream—the green light—was always just out of reach.

(15) NICK: Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter. So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

(16) NICK: The light across the water is always out of reach. So why do we keep reaching?

NICK: The very first time I saw Gatsby's name, if only I knew then that I would never be the same.

ENSEMBLE: Where's the party, and can you take me there?

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DAISY: I think everything's terrible, anyhow. Everybody thinks so—the most advanced people. That's because everybody's rich and sophisticated, and I suppose we are the most advanced people.

GATSBY: Can you see through the mist? Look across the bay. Can you see the green light?

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NICK: I shook hands with him; it seemed silly not to, for I felt suddenly as though I were talking to a child.

STEP INTO THE STORY
(READER VERSION)

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Pause for quote readers 1 & 2

Nick visits the Buchanans for dinner, where he meets Jordan Baker, a professional golfer with a sharp wit. Tom, a brute of a man, is carrying on an affair with Myrtle Wilson, a woman from the bleak "Valley of Ashes."

Pause for quote reader 3

Nick is soon swept into Gatsby's world. At one of Gatsby's famous parties, he finally meets the man himself. Gatsby extends an invitation to Nick for a private lunch, where he reveals that he and Daisy were once deeply in love. Gatsby has spent years amassing wealth in hopes of winning her back.

Pause for quote reader 4

Nick agrees to help Gatsby reunite with Daisy. Gatsby meticulously prepares for their meeting, held in Nick's humble home.

Pause for quote reader 5

Daisy is overwhelmed when she sees Gatsby again. The two spend the afternoon together, reliving their past. Meanwhile, Tom becomes suspicious of Gatsby and Daisy's rekindled relationship. He confronts Gatsby at the Plaza Hotel, exposing Gatsby's questionable business dealings.

Pause for quote readers 6, 7, & 8