

Applied Practice

The Great Gatsby
STAAR Reading

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

RESOURCE GUIDE

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APPLIED PRACTICE
Resource Guide
The Great Gatsby
STAAR Reading Version

Teacher Notes

A Note for Teachers.....	5
A Note about Format	6
Strategies for Reading Practices	7

Student Practices

Reading Selections.....	11
Paired Selections and Graphic.....	37

Answer Key and Explanations

Reading Selections Answer Key.....	53
Reading Selections Answer Explanations	59

Student Progress Chart

Individual Student Correlation Chart.....	79
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Read the next two selections and the viewing and representing piece and answer the questions that follow.

Reading Selection 1

Read the selection from Chapter 5 of *The Great Gatsby* which begins "When I came home to West Egg" and ends "'Who is 'Tom'?' she asked innocently" (pages 81-83). The paragraph numbers and first words of each paragraph are listed below.

- 1 "When I came home to West Egg"
- 2 "At first I thought"
- 3 "'Your place looks like'"
- 4 "'Does it?'"
- 5 "'It's too late'"
- 6 "'Well, suppose we take'"
- 7 "'I've got to go to bed'"
- 8 "'All right'"
- 9 "He waited"
- 10 "'I talked with Miss Baker'"
- 11 "'Oh, that's all right'"
- 12 "'What day would suit'"
- 13 "'What day would suit'"
- 14 "'How about the day'"
- 15 "He considered for a moment"
- 16 "'I want to get the grass cut'"
- 17 "We both looked"
- 18 "'There's another little thing'"
- 19 "'Would you rather put it off'"
- 20 "'Oh, it isn't about that'"
- 21 "'Not very much'"
- 22 "This seemed to reassure"
- 23 "'I thought you didn't'"
- 24 "'Trying to'"
- 25 "'Well, this would interest'"
- 26 "I realize now"
- 27 "'I've got my hands full'"
- 28 "'You wouldn't have to do'"
- 29 "The evening had made me"
- 30 "'Don't bring Tom'"
- 31 "'What?'"
- 32 "'Don't bring Tom'"
- 33 "'Who is 'Tom'?'"

Reading Selection 2

The Scandal that Rocked Baseball

- 1 In the years following World War I, corruption and scandal were rampant in America. One of the greatest and most widely followed scandals of the era was the one that rocked a beloved American institution—baseball. Eight players from the Chicago White Sox were charged with throwing the 1919 World Series, and the “Black Sox scandal,” as it came to be known, captivated the nation.
- 2 In 1900, the Chicago White Stockings team was formed. In 1902, the team, which was owned by Charles Comiskey, changed their name to the White Sox. Although the team was successful during its early years, winning the American League championship in its first year and the World Series in 1906, in the eight years following 1906 the team was in a slump, often losing more games than they won. Determined to turn his team around, Comiskey built a new ballpark in 1910 and began hiring star players, including Joe Jackson, Eddie Collins, and Happy Felsch. The White Sox won the 1917 World Series, and by 1919 they had the best record in the American League.
- 3 Despite their success, all was not well with the White Sox. The players were grossly underpaid, but the “reserve clause” in their contracts prevented them from changing teams without the owner’s permission. In addition, Comiskey was known for treating his players unfairly, promising bonuses they never received, and even charging them for laundering their uniforms. The players had no union and thus no bargaining power, but even worse, the team was divided into two distinct factions. One group, comprised of educated players, managed to negotiate salaries for themselves of up to \$15,000 per year. The other group’s salaries averaged \$6,000, giving rise to rivalries and resentment.
- 4 Blissfully unaware of such problems, the American public returned to the ballparks in record numbers during the first post-war season, and the interest in the World Series of 1919, in which the Chicago White Sox would meet the Cincinnati Reds, was so great that officials increased the number of games in the series from seven to nine. Another group with particular interest in the series was the gamblers, who had become fixtures in the ball parks and were rumored to have bribed players to throw games from time to time. By 1919, the number of gamblers had soared, and the underpaid, resentful players made perfect targets for them. One such player was Arnold “Chick” Gandil, the first baseman for the White Sox. A member of the lower paid White Sox faction, Gandil had reportedly offered insider tips to gamblers occasionally. For example, Gandil would pass on information that a fellow player was ill or

injured. Gandil is widely acknowledged to have been the ringleader in the 1919 scandal. Several weeks before the Series, he approached a gambler, Joseph Sullivan, and said that he could convince his teammates to lose if Sullivan would pay them \$100,000. A deal was struck, and Gandil set about enlisting the support of his fellow White Sox.

- 5 Gandil knew that for his plan to succeed, he had to convince the two most powerful White Sox pitchers, Eddie Cicotte and Claude "Lefty" Williams, to participate. Without their support, there was no way to insure that the team would lose. When approached by Gandil, Williams expressed interest, and Cicotte saw the prospect of getting even with Comiskey, who had treated him shabbily. Comiskey had promised Cicotte a bonus of \$10,000 if Cicotte won thirty games. However, after Cicotte had won twenty-nine games, Comiskey benched him for the rest of the season, thus denying him the bonus. Cicotte agreed to participate in Gandil's plan in exchange for \$10,000 up front. Other players who joined Gandil were Fred McMullin, Charles Risberg, and Happy Felsch. The level of involvement, if any, of the team's star, "Shoeless" Joe Jackson, has never been made clear. Jackson claimed that he refused to be part of the plan. Gandil, knowing that the gamblers would want Jackson on board, told them that Jackson had agreed to participate. Whether Gandil simply said this to appease the gamblers or Jackson really did agree is a subject of dispute that has never been settled satisfactorily. Buck Weaver is another of the eight players whose degree of involvement is unclear.
- 6 Meanwhile, Joseph Sullivan was trying to raise the \$100,000 to pay the players. He involved several other gamblers in the plot, but the man who provided most of the money was Arnold Rothstein, a notorious New York gambler. When F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote *The Great Gatsby*, he included a character named Meyer Wolfsheim, who supposedly "fixed the World Series back in 1919." When Gatsby is asked why Wolfsheim is not in jail, he replies, "They can't get him, old sport. He's a smart man." This proved true of Rothstein, the obvious inspiration for Wolfsheim.
- 7 The White Sox were expected to win the World Series and were favored by the early gamblers' odds at five to one. As the Series got under way, Chicago lost the first game 9-1. However, the players did not receive the \$20,000 Gandil had been promised. They agreed to lose the second game as long as they had the money by the end of the next day, and they did lose that game 4-2. Owed \$40,000 for throwing the two games, the players received only \$10,000 and began to wonder about continuing with the agreement. When Chicago won the third game, many of the gamblers who had bet on individual games rather than the series as a whole, lost an enormous amount of money. Sullivan paid the players \$20,000 before game four, and Chicago lost that game as well

as game five. Now, however, the gamblers missed yet another payment, and the players decided that with no more money coming in there was no reason to continue to lose. After all, if they won the Series, each player would receive \$5,000. Accordingly, Chicago won games six and seven. But before game eight, Arnold Rothstein, who had bet on the Series rather than on individual games, sent one of his men to talk to pitcher Lefty Williams, who was scheduled to pitch the following day. Rothstein's man told Williams that Rothstein wanted the series to end the next day, and he threatened to harm not only Williams, but also Williams's wife, if Chicago did not lose the eighth game. The next day, the White Sox lost 10-5, ending the World Series.

- 8 The following year, rumors of gambling being widespread in baseball became more numerous. When a Cook County grand jury convened in September of 1920 to look into allegations that the Chicago Cubs had thrown a game, the investigation soon expanded to include baseball in general and the 1919 World Series in particular. The grand jury called players, managers, owners, and gamblers to testify. Apparently at the urging of Charles Comiskey, Joe Jackson and Eddie Cicotte confessed to involvement in the fix. Eventually, the eight White Sox players were indicted, along with several gamblers, but no indictment of Arnold Rothstein was handed down.
- 9 The White Sox players' trial was held in 1921. After a month of hearing testimony, the jury acquitted all the defendants, citing lack of evidence. Nevertheless, the owners of baseball teams feared that the scandal might have harmed baseball irreparably. They decided that the three-man national baseball commission should be replaced by a single, independent commissioner with complete power to act. The first commissioner, Federal Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis, spoke out vehemently against "crooked players" who threatened to undermine baseball and immediately banned all eight White Sox players from the game. None of the eight men were ever allowed to return to professional baseball.



Illustrated by Charles Smith

Use the selection from *The Great Gatsby* to answer the following questions.

1 In paragraph 3, the author uses a simile to —

- A foreshadow Gatsby's suggestion that he and Nick go to Coney Island
 - B hint at Gatsby's fun-loving nature
 - C indicate how spectacularly large Gatsby's house is
 - D emphasize that the novel is set in America in the twenties
-

2 Which quotation most strongly suggests that Gatsby is anxious about Daisy's visit?

- F *"Let's go to Coney Island, old sport."*
 - G *"suppose we take a plunge in the swimming pool"*
 - H *"What day would suit you?"*
 - J *"I want to get the grass cut"*
-

3 Read the following dictionary entry.

suit (sōōt) *v.* **1.** to adapt **2.** to please **3.** to provide with clothing
4. to make appropriate

Which definition best matches the meaning of the word *suit* as it is used in paragraphs 12 and 13?

- A Definition 1
- B Definition 2
- C Definition 3
- D Definition 4

ANSWER KEY

[TEKS correlations in brackets]

Reading Selection 1

1. B human observers [1(B)]
2. G modest [1(B)]
3. C the narrator is concerned with accuracy [5(C)]
4. F restless [5(B)]
5. C is not very close to Tom and Daisy [5]
6. J provides a contrast to the description of Tom in paragraph 7 [5]
7. A threatening [5(B)]
8. J *Turning me around* [5(B)]
9. Answers will vary. A good answer will mention Nick's comments on Tom's past glory as a college football star and Nick's statement that Tom was destined to "drift on forever" seeking the "dramatic turbulence of some irrecoverable football game." Though Daisy might believe the move is permanent, Nick does not believe it is. He knows Tom is too restless to stay in one place for too long. [5]
10. Answers will vary. A good answer will point out that Tom is presented in this passage as arrogant and supercilious. However, he does seem to want Nick's approval. His statement that "I've got a nice place here" shows that he wants Nick to admire the colossal estate and thus think highly of Tom. [5(B)]

Reading Selection 2

1. A is not financially well off [8]
2. H understandable [5]
3. B Nick's position as a narrator [5(C)]
4. H difference between appearance and reality [2(A)]
5. D Definition 4 [1(E)]
6. H considers Myrtle to be beneath Daisy's social class [5(B)]
7. A straightforward [5(C)]
8. Answers will vary. A good answer will point out that at first Nick merely records conversations between guests. As the party continues, he mentions details such as Mr. McKee being asleep in a chair and the little dog looking through the smoke and groaning. Everyone has been drinking whiskey, and as the party goes on, people "lost each other, searched for each other, found each other a few feet away." The final description of the violence toward Myrtle and the confused efforts to help her as people "stumbled here and there among the crowded furniture" shows that the party has become completely chaotic. [5]
9. Answers will vary. A good answer will note that the only apparent reason Myrtle decides that her husband is not a gentleman and is not "fit to lick [her] shoe" is that he could not afford his own suit at the time they married. Seeing Tom on the train, with his "dress suit and patent leather shoes," Myrtle concludes that this is the kind of "gentleman" she wants. Ironically, Tom is far from being a true gentleman, as evidenced by his brutality toward Myrtle and his belief that she had no "right to mention Daisy's name." [7]