

Applied Practice

The Great Gatsby

Essential ELA

RESOURCE GUIDE

By F. Scott Fitzgerald

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READING PRACTICES

Practice 1

Read the passage from Chapter 1 of *The Great Gatsby* which begins “It was a matter of chance” and ends “We’ll go inside” (pp. 9-12) and choose the best answer to each of the following questions.

The paragraph numbers and first words of each paragraph are listed below.

1. “It was a matter of chance”
2. “I lived at West Egg”
3. “Across the courtesy bay”
4. “Her husband”
5. “Why they came east I don’t know”
6. “And so it happened”
7. “He had changed”
8. “His speaking voice”
9. “Now, don’t think my opinion”
10. “We talked for a few minutes”
11. “I’ve got a nice place here”
12. “Turning me around”
13. “It belonged to Demaine”

7. The words used in paragraph 7 to describe Tom create the impression of someone —
- A. threatening
 - B. hospitable
 - C. effeminate
 - D. anxious
8. In paragraphs 8-13, which phrase most clearly shows that Tom is a controlling person?
- A. “a touch of paternal contempt”
 - B. “some harsh, defiant wistfulness”
 - C. “his eyes flashing about restlessly”
 - D. “Turning me around”
9. In paragraph 9, Nick’s impression that Tom “approved” of him could potentially make him feel special in light of Tom’s —
- A. vulnerability
 - B. sense of superiority
 - C. friendly nature
 - D. independence
10. The point of view of this passage is —
- A. first-person
 - B. third-person, limited
 - C. third-person, omniscient
 - D. shifting
11. Why does the narrator say he does not believe Daisy’s statement that this move is permanent? Support your answer with evidence from the text. (short answer)
12. Why does Tom say what he does in paragraph 11? Support your answer with evidence from the text. (short answer)

VISUAL AND INFORMATIONAL ANALYSIS

Questions 1 and 2 refer to the visual representation below.



Illustrated by Charles Smith

1. The purpose of this cartoon is to —
 - A. make the viewer laugh
 - B. teach a lesson about honesty
 - C. explain how to return money found in a store
 - D. convince people to be responsible with their money
2. The cartoon's primary message about dishonesty is that it —
 - A. often leads to prison
 - B. is one way to obtain what one wants
 - C. is not worth the feelings of guilt
 - D. is easier than honesty in many situations

REVISING AND EDITING

SELECTION 1

Questions 1 – 10 refer to the following essay written on the American Dream as it is presented in *The Great Gatsby*. The author has asked you to read and comment on the essay. Carefully read the essay, look for any revisions that need to be made, and answer the questions that follow.

The American Dream

(1) The American Dream, a phrase that describes a belief in the promise of spiritual and material happiness, was perhaps best described by Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. (2) He said “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.” (3) The early American settlers believed that each person, regardless of their origins, could succeed in life by working hard and living a moral life. (4) In their new land of freedom, the settlers saw limitless possibilities. (5) But by the 1920s, the material aspect of the dream had so outpaced the spiritual aspect that the dream had become hopelessly corrupted. (6) At least that is the picture painted by F. Scott Fitzgerald in *The Great Gatsby*. (7) The failure and the corruption of the American Dream are at the heart of the novel.

(8) A clear line separates the rich Buchanans from the working class Wilsons. (9) While equality among people is a basic American ideal, the world of *The Great Gatsby* is one that highlights the fact that this ideal is not reflected in the reality of American life. (10) It is a world in which the old values have been replaced with the vulgar pursuit of wealth. (11) Myrtle Wilsons attempt to escape her social class by having an affair with Tom Buchanan only results in her becoming as vulgar and corrupt as the rich are. (12) Tom’s contempt for Myrtle is clearly shown when he breaks her nose because she insists she has a right to mention Daisy’s name.

(13) Although Myrtle’s ambition is selfish and shallow, Jay Gatsby’s desire is closer to the original American Dream. (14) In fact, at the end of the novel, Nick Carraway compares Gatsby’s hope to the sense of wonder the Dutch sailors must have had upon first seeing their new land. (15) Gatsby is an idealist with, as he says, “an extraordinary gift for hope.”

(16) Unfortunately, he attaches this extraordinary hope to a person who is not only unattainable, but spiritually bankrupt as well. (17) Daisy Buchanan, along with her husband, represent an American life filled with material luxuries but lacking any real purpose. (18) Sitting in her enormous house, this is evident when she laments to her guests, “What’ll we do with ourselves this afternoon, and the day after that, and the next thirty years?”

(19) Gatsby is a firm believer in self-made success. (20) He has transformed Jay Gatz, the son of poor farm people, into Jay Gatsby, millionaire host of lavish parties that he gives for the

sole purpose of impressing Daisy. (21) However, Gatsby has set his heart on the impossible; he wants to repeat the past. (22) This obsession with attaining the unattainable leads to the figurative “death” of “Jay Gatsby”; “Jay Gatsby” is the persona that he had created with such hopefulness. (23) This obsession finally leads to the literal death of Gatsby the man. (24) The only character in the novel with a hope and idealism that invites comparison to the dreams of the early American settlers is bound to be destroyed in a world in which the American Dream has become hopelessly corrupted. (25) As Nick comments at the novel’s end, “He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. (26) He did not know that it was already behind him.”

1. What is the most effective way to improve the organization of the second paragraph (sentences 8-12)?
 - A. Delete sentence 12
 - B. Move sentence 12 to the beginning of the paragraph
 - C. Move sentence 8 so that it follows sentence 10
 - D. Reverse sentences 9 and 10

2. The meaning of sentence 15 could be clarified by changing he to
 - A. Nick
 - B. Gatsby
 - C. Fitzgerald
 - D. the author

3. What is the most effective way to rewrite sentence 18?
 - A. Sitting in her enormous house, when she laments to her guests, “What’ll we do with ourselves this afternoon, and the day after that, and the next thirty years?” this is evident.
 - B. When she laments to her guests, “What’ll we do with ourselves this afternoon, and the day after that, and the next thirty years?” sitting in her enormous house this is evident.
 - C. This is evident when, sitting in her enormous house, she laments to her guests, “What’ll we do with ourselves this afternoon, and the day after that, and the next thirty years?”
 - D. This is evident when she laments, sitting in her enormous house, to her guests, “What’ll we do with ourselves this afternoon, and the day after that, and the next thirty years?”

4. What transition should be added to the beginning of sentence 20?
 - A. Nevertheless,
 - B. After all,
 - C. In other words,
 - D. Meanwhile,

Analytical Writing (Informational)

Read the following essay, “The Scandal that Rocked Baseball”, by Geoffrey Green.

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.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

Think carefully about the details Green includes in his essay.

Write an essay analyzing Green’s purpose for writing his essay and discussing whether Green is completely objective or whether he seems to have a particular point of view regarding the players and owners in the scandal.

Be sure to —

- clearly state your thesis
- organize and develop your ideas effectively
- provide relevant and specific evidence from the text
- choose your words carefully
- edit your writing for grammar, mechanics, and spelling