

Hello AP English Language and Composition Students,

My name is Jason Witt, and I will be your teacher this school year. I am very excited to meet all of you, to teach all of you, and to see you all grow as writers and thinkers through the class. The AP English Language and Composition course places a heavy emphasis on rhetoric, which simply means being able to argue a position and being able to analyze how others argue their position. To this end, as we read works of literature during the coming school year, we are going to focus not only on the plot and characterization at work in the stories, but also (and perhaps more importantly) how the work as a whole addresses/argues a theme, idea, etc. For the summer reading assignment, you are going to have the opportunity to practice reading an entire text through a given “lens,” and what better text to do this with than F. Scott Fitzgerald’s classic novel *The Great Gatsby*? This novel is considered one of the great works of American literature, and this is largely because it is a fairly simple story with numerous profound implications. We are going to discuss the novel in some depth during the first few weeks of the school year, but for the summer reading assignment, I am going to ask you all to do a thematic reading of the novel.

For this assignment, students will first need to acquire and read a copy of *The Great Gatsby* by F, Scott Fitzgerald. As students read, they will select one of the following themes from *The Great Gatsby* and will read the entire book from the perspective of the theme:

- **Identity vs Persona: The People We Really Are vs The People We Pretend to Be**
- **Struggles Between Socio-Economic Classes (e.g. the wealthy, the poor, the middle class)**
- **Gender Roles: Traditional vs Non-Traditional (how do the male and female characters in the novel either conform to or subvert the expectations of their gender?)**
- **What will characters do to achieve the American Dream, and is it attainable for everyone?**

For each chapter, students will read the selection examining how that particular theme appears and/or is addressed in the selection. The student should write five observations relating to that theme as it is presented in the chapter, and should find and write down at least one direct quote from the chapter which can connect to that theme. Students may hand-write their observations/quotes on a sheet of paper or in a journal, or they may type them out on a Google Doc. I will collect these when we return to school in the fall.

If you have any questions relating to the assignment or the class in general, don’t hesitate to contact me. My email address is jwitt@caschools.us, and I will be checking my email daily. Thank you all, and I’m looking forward to meeting you all this school year!

Sincerely,

Jason Witt
High School English Teacher
Christian Academy of Louisville