The **Great Gatsby** Discussion Set #1 (Chapters 1-3)

1. According to our narrator, Tom has always wanted Nick to like him. Why might someone like Tom Buchanan care if someone such as Nick Carraway liked him?

2. Which details stand out to you in the descriptions of Gatsby's parties? What impression of the parties does Fitzgerald create generally?

3. Why do you think “Owl Eyes” makes such a big deal over Jay Gatsby’s personal library? (Hint: David Belasco was a celebrated theatrical producer and set designer.)

4. Nick notes that Gatsby’s “elaborate formality of speech just missed being absurd” and that Gatsby “was picking his words with care” in casual conversations. What does this imply?

5. After the birth of her daughter, Daisy says, “And I hope she’ll be a fool—that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.” (20) What does she mean by this?

6. Review the section describing the car crash at the end of Jay Gatsby's epic party (54-55). Is this just meant to be humorous or is it more meaningful? Explain.

7. How does Fitzgerald make Gatsby seem both unremarkable and extraordinary?

8. What are your initial thoughts on Nick Carraway? Do you like him? Would you trust him?
EXEMPLARY ANALYSIS: What makes the excerpt important or interesting? You might analyze imagery, theme, symbol, word choice, characterization, plot / conflict, or point of view.

9. From Chapter 1:

... I wanted no more riotous excursions with privileged glimpses into the human heart. Only Gatsby, the man who gives his name to this book, was exempt from my reaction—Gatsby who represented everything for which I have an unaffected scorn. If personality is an unbroken series of successful gestures, then there was something gorgeous about him, some heightened sensitivity to the promises of life, as if he were related to one of those intricate machines that register earthquakes ten thousand miles away. ... No—Gatsby turned out all right at the end; it is what preyed on Gatsby, what foul dust floated in the wake of his dreams that temporarily closed out my interest in the abortive sorrows and short-winded elations of men. (2)

10. From Chapter 3:

He smiled understandingly—much more than understandingly. It was one of those rare smiles with a quality of eternal reassurance in it, that you may come across four or five times in life. It faced ... the whole external world for an instant, and then concentrated on YOU with an irresistible prejudice in your favor. It understood you just so far as you wanted to be understood, believed in you as you would like to believe in yourself and assured you that it had precisely the impression of you that, at your best, you hoped to convey. (48)