

AP English Language and Composition/English 11  
Sourced Argument Paper: *The Great Gatsby*

As we think about the themes we have isolated that have come from *The Great Gatsby*, we end up with some larger questions that also relate to our own society:

- Is the American Dream attainable in our time?

Or, in a different stasis: What is the American Dream in the 21st century?

We also come up with some literary questions that we can grapple with:

- How does *The Great Gatsby* relate to the movement of modernism?
- Is Nick Carraway a reliable narrator?

You may choose a literary or a larger-world prompt (which will probably take you to sociological sources).

In the case of each prompt, students must decide on the definition of terms: For the purposes of the paper, what is the American Dream? What is modernism? Sometimes we have an idea, one particular take on the topic, that we wish to pursue. If so, that idea needs to be articulated early in the paper and remain a focus of research and of topic sentences throughout the paper.

For this paper of five to eight pages, AP students are required to use ten credible sources, at least five of which are scholarly. Grade-level students are required to use five credible sources, at least two of which are scholarly. (In class, we will discuss how to differentiate between scholarly sources, credible popular sources, and sources not appropriate for us to use in a paper like this.) We will begin working in groups so that we can share sources, but the source choice and the writing of the paper will be individual.

Here, at the beginning of the project, we will develop a tentative thesis, do a little rudimentary research to make sure our ideas are viable, and then refine the thesis in light of what we find.

We will work in class this week on the research for the paper, but then you will do some writing outside of class while in class we begin different work. The schedule will feature some workdays in class as long as everyone is using the workdays appropriately for English work.

With each paper assignment, write the current version of your thesis at the top of your paper.

More on the back=>

Here are some steps associated with this paper:

Decide on a topic and begin research

Work in groups to begin to amass sources

Set forth a bibliography in MLA style

Write a stasis grid for five sources

Write an annotated bibliography

Write a rhetorical analysis of one source

this week

next week

Wednesday 5 December

Wednesday 12 December

Wednesday 12 December

Friday 21 December

After Christmas:

Write a Rogerian letter (AP only)

Refine your bibliography

Write a thesis statement and extensive informal outline

Write the final argument paper