

The Great Gatsby

Chapters 1–3

by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Pre-Reading Vocabulary Practice

Optional Post-Reading Quiz Included

Practice words: complacency, condescending, convey, feigned, grotesque, intimation, poignant, supercilious, vacuous, vulnerable

PRE-READING ACTIVITY

Vocabulary Preview 2

Answer Key — Preview 3

Caution: share only if self-checking

OPTIONAL POST-READING QUIZ

Vocabulary in Context 4

Answer Key — In Context 5

Caution: do not share with students

About the Pre-Reading Activity (open-dictionary; ungraded or completion grade):

Students preview 10 words from the upcoming reading, each in a sentence that supports understanding. They choose the best meaning from 3 choices.

About the Optional Post-Reading Quiz (use after reading, or skip):

Same words, now in real excerpts from the text, with questions that build reading and analytical skills.

Vocabulary Sections for this Book:

Section 1 · Chapters 1–3 · Nick Carraway arrives in West Egg

Section 2 · Chapters 4–6 · Gatsby's guests and a summer reunion

Section 3 · Chapters 7–9 · The end of Gatsby's summer parties

Bold = this section. Other sections are available at verbalworkout.com.



verbalworkout.com

(all resources free)

Vocabulary Preview

The Great Gatsby

Chapters 1–3

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____

Read each prompt. Then choose the best meaning for the bold word.

1. Years of easy success bred a dangerous **complacency** in the team.

- A. quiet exhaustion
- B. smug self-satisfaction
- C. bitter rivalry

2. He explained the rules in a **condescending** tone.

- A. treating others as inferior
- B. speaking with great excitement
- C. showing little interest

3. A good poster can **convey** its message in seconds.

- A. to shorten or simplify
- B. to communicate or express
- C. to repeat or echo

4. He **feigned** surprise when they shouted 'Happy Birthday!'

- A. quickly hid
- B. loudly expressed
- C. pretended or faked

5. The carnival mask was so **grotesque** that the children shrieked.

- A. strange and unfamiliar
- B. dark and frightening
- C. ugly and distorted

6. Her trembling voice was an **intimation** of bad news.

- A. a faint hint or sign
- B. an open declaration
- C. a sworn promise

7. The soldier's last letter home was deeply **poignant**.

- A. formal and stiff
- B. long and rambling
- C. deeply moving or touching

8. The **supercilious** clerk barely glanced at the customers.

- A. arrogant and scornful
- B. shy and uncertain
- C. busy and distracted

9. She gave a **vacuous** stare when she heard the question.

- A. curious and eager
- B. empty or blank
- C. angry or hostile

10. A lonely teenager is often **vulnerable** in a new school.

- A. easily hurt or swayed
- B. rebellious and defiant
- C. cheerful and outgoing

Reading Helpers

(Not quizzed — helpful for this text.)

West Egg and East Egg — fictional Long Island communities divided by social status;

West Egg is associated with newer wealth, East Egg with established wealth

a beautiful little fool — Daisy's bitter wish that her daughter be pretty but unaware of women's limits and disappointments, since ignorance might spare her pain

old sport — an old-fashioned British-style address meaning "old friend"; Gatsby's habitual, somewhat rehearsed expression

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary Preview

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#	KEY
1	B
2	A
3	B
4	C
5	C
6	A
7	C
8	A
9	B
10	A

Vocabulary in Context

The Great Gatsby

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Name _____ Date _____ Period _____ Score _____ / 10

Read each excerpt carefully. Then choose the best answer to each question.

1 *"In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since."*

As it is used in the passage, the word "vulnerable" most nearly suggests that the young Nick was...

- A. frequently ill and frail
- B. impressionable and easily shaped
- C. quick to take offense

2 *"... frequently I have feigned sleep, preoccupation, or a hostile levity when I realized by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon ..."*

It can reasonably be inferred that Nick feigns sleep or distraction whenever he...

- A. senses someone about to confide in him
- B. feels genuinely tired and bored
- C. disagrees with a stranger's opinion

3 *"Now he was a sturdy straw-haired man of thirty with a rather hard mouth and a supercilious manner."*

In the passage, Tom Buchanan is characterized as...

- A. reserved and quietly courteous
- B. anxious to win Nick's approval
- C. haughty and disdainful toward others

4 *"There was something pathetic in his concentration, as if his complacency, more acute than of old, was not enough to him any more."*

The detail that Tom's complacency "was not enough to him any more" mainly serves to...

- A. show he has grown humbler with age
- B. hint at unease beneath his smugness
- C. stress how content he feels with life

5 *"But I didn't call to him, for he gave a sudden intimation that he was content to be alone — he stretched out his arms toward the dark water in a curious way, and, far as I was from him, I could have sworn he was trembling. Involuntarily I glanced seaward — and distinguished nothing except a single green light, minute and far away, that might have been the end of a dock."*

The passage most strongly suggests that Nick does not call out to Gatsby because...

- A. Nick has not been introduced to him
- B. Gatsby's manner hints he wants solitude
- C. Gatsby stands too far away to hear

6 *"This is a valley of ashes — a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air."*

As used here, "grotesque" chiefly works to...

- A. render the scene twisted and ugly
- B. lend the gardens a quaint charm
- C. present the land as lush and fertile

7 *"... East Egg condescending to West Egg."*

Which detail best supports the idea that class lines persisted at the party?

- A. East Egg holding itself above West Egg
- B. guests forgetting their social rank
- C. the two Eggs mixing as equals

8 *"... between the numbers people were doing 'stunts' all over the garden, while happy, vacuous bursts of laughter rose toward the summer sky."*

In context, the word "vacuous" emphasizes...

- A. the loud volume of the laughter
- B. the genuine joy of the guests
- C. the empty, mindless laughter

9 *"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 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."*

Which statement about Gatsby's smile is best supported by the passage?

- A. It mirrored how you wished to seem
- B. It hid Gatsby's true feelings
- C. It made others feel judged

10 *"... poor young clerks who loitered in front of windows waiting until it was time for a solitary restaurant dinner — young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life."*

Which choice best describes the narrator's attitude toward the lonely young clerks?

- A. amused, mocking detachment
- B. cold, indifferent dismissal
- C. wistful, melancholy sympathy

ANSWER KEY

Vocabulary in Context

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#	KEY	NOTE
1	B	Here 'vulnerable' means impressionable, not physically weak — the less obvious sense.
2	A	
3	C	
4	B	Character comprehension.
5	B	
6	A	
7	A	Theme comprehension.
8	C	
9	A	
10	C	

Teacher Context: Chapters 1–3

Nick Carraway moves to West Egg and reconnects with his cousin Daisy and her husband Tom Buchanan, meets the golfer Jordan Baker, and discovers Tom's affair. He attends one of his mysterious neighbor Jay Gatsby's lavish parties and finally meets Gatsby himself. The novel's nine chapters are grouped three to a section to keep the quiz sections balanced.