



RESEARCH QUESTION: To what extent does *The Great Gatsby* reflect the 1920s?

INTRODUCTION

In order to fully appreciate *The Great Gatsby*, it is essential to research the historical and literary times in which the novel is set. The story of the rise and fall of Jay Gatsby does not pretend to be all inclusive and is certainly not a historical chronicle, but your research will enable you to identify allusions to certain critical events of the decade and to recognize the spirit of daring, excess and corruption that typified “the Jazz Age” for a certain segment of American society (predominantly the white middle and upper classes). (Photo of Scott and Zelda <http://englishtravelfashion.wordpress.com/2012/10/14/make-a-statement/>)

THE TASK

You will investigate two (2) of the following topics (one from Column A and one from B). The goal is to understand the history, culture and values of a “lost generation” as reflected in *The Great Gatsby*.

RESEARCH GROUPS AND TOPICS

There must be at least 3 people on each topic (2 groups will have 4 people since there are 17 in the class). The group will pick one topic from Column A (a serious historical topic) and one from column B (a “fun” topic relating to popular culture).

Column A (History)	Column B (“Youth Madness”)
The Temperance Movement, Prohibition and the rise of the “speakeasy” (18 th Amendment)	Fads and zany antics (flag pole sitting), fashion (flappers) and slang (“You’re the cat’s meow!”)
Organized Crime (Al Capone, Bugs Moran and the St. Valentine’s Day Massacre)	Movie icons (Charlie Chaplin, Rudolf Valentino, Greta Garbo, Douglas Fairbanks) and heroes (Charles Lindbergh)
Women in the 1920s: focus on liberation and rights issues (for example, Alice Paul and the Women’s Suffrage Movement that led to the 19 th Amendment)	Music (for example: Louis Armstrong and King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band) and dance (for example: the Charleston).
Mass consumption (especially Henry Ford and the impact of the assembly line produced automobile)	Advertising (as it reflected new products and the culture of mass consumption)
Lost Generation Writers of the 1920s (the expat circle of artists and writers surrounding Gertrude Stein in Paris, of which Fitzgerald was a prominent member)	Sports icons (baseball: Babe Ruth, boxing: Jack Dempsey, golf: Mildred Didrikson Zaharias) and the Chicago White Sox’s deliberate throwing of the World Series in 1919

PROCEDURE:

Conduct your research (see next page on how to proceed). Find **TWO** (2) different credible sources per person (total of 6 if you are a 3-person group or 8 if a 4-person group) for EACH of your two topics. Then prepare one annotated bibliography for Topic A **AND** one for Topic B per group. (Be sure to alphabetize by the author’s last name. If no author is given, alphabetize by the title of the source. Internet sources **MUST** include the access date.) Each annotation should include a summary of the source, evaluate the credibility of the source, and to reflect on the source’s usefulness for this project. Length: 1-2 paragraphs. (See samples here: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/>)

THE PRODUCT:

You will communicate the fruits of your research in the form of a popular medium of the 1920s (silent movie or radio show). **YES** it will be possible for research groups to work together on the final product. Silent movie people can organize a film festival of several films sponsored by various advertisers; radio show people can put together a half-hour program composed of 4-5 segments sponsored by various advertisers.

- Silent movie (black and white video)

Example (silent movie): Write a script for a 3-5 minute black and white silent movie with captions and an instrumental soundtrack that dramatizes the events leading up to the St. Valentine’s Day Massacre, starring gangsters Al Capone and Bugs Moran. The text must be very concise; the action will carry the story. Get ideas from the masters of silent film: Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks, Rudolf Valentino. Study the relationship between text and image.

- Radio show (sound recording)

Example (radio show): The same plot of the St. Valentine’s Day Massacre may be portrayed in oral form with expressive reading and appropriate sound effects. The only difference between this script and one for a silent movie is that your text must be much more detailed and colorful so that the audience may visualize the action. Each character is heard. Sound effects help indicate action. Get ideas from Garrison Keillor’s *A Prairie Home Companion* regarding organization and types of the different pieces that will comprise the radio program.

REFLECTION:

AFTER you have presented your project, you will write a 2-page dbl-spaced (indented pghs) paper in which you comment on YOUR part in the research and what YOU contributed to the silent movie or the radio show. How was your understanding of the topic deepened by this project? (due date TBA)

R*E*S*E*A*R*C*H

CONTENT

- A. GENERALRESOURCES** (everyone should consult these two sources for a general overview of the decade)
American Dream: Reality or Myth? http://www.pbs.org/wnet/americannovel/ideas/american_article.html
The Roaring Twenties <http://www.history.com/topics/roaring-twenties>
- B. JSTOR** (for your specific topics)
Type in keywords for your topic and select the best resources (you will have a review of how to use JSTOR and other research techniques with Ms. Kinoy on April 10 in the library's computer lab.

GENRE

A. RADIO DRAMA

The 1920s Radio Hour http://www.whro.org/home/html/liveradio/1920s_wma.html
Old Time Radio Programs <http://www.oldtimeradiopage.com/>
Radio in the 1920s <http://xroads.virginia.edu/~ug00/3on1/radioshow/1920radio.htm>
A Prairie Home Companion <http://prairiehome.publicradio.org/>

B. SILENT MOVIE GREATS

Douglas Fairbanks
The Mark of Zorro (1920)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5w3eVAVzQw>

The Three Musketeers (1922)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tYeXr9Rakbo>

Charlie Chaplin
Video Gallery <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000122/videogallery>
The Gold Rush (1925)<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tlRCGpEdAwE>

Rudolf Valentino
Idol of the Jazz Age
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCaiFJZ4YoY>

Tango Scene from *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (Valentino)
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Zl7reslK4Q>

Buster Keaton
The Great Buster Keaton
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWEo4M8nZQQ>

Follow-up (after reading and studying *The Great Gatsby*)

- A. EVERYONE: Your research and/or notes on the presentations will be reflected in EITHER: a Written Task 1 OR an FOA on *The Great Gatsby*.
- B. HL STUDENTS ONLY: will write a Written Task 2 on *The Great Gatsby* in response to ONE (1) of the following questions from ONE subtopic area (there are 2 choices under each subtopic).

Reader, Culture and Text

1. How could the text be read and interpreted differently by two different readers?
2. If the text had been written in a different time or place or language or for a different audience, how and why might it differ?

Power and Privilege

1. How and why is a social group represented in a particular way?
2. Which social groups are marginalized, excluded or silenced within the text?

Text and Genre

1. How does the text conform to, or deviate from, the conventions of a particular genre, and for what purpose?
2. How has the text borrowed from other texts, and with what effects?