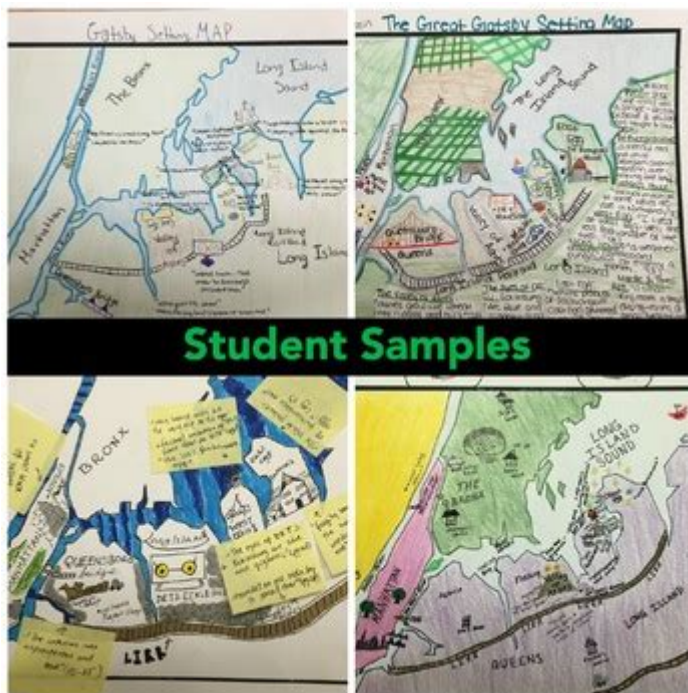


The Great Gatsby Setting Map Assignment Answer Key



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The setting of F. Scott Fitzgerald's "The Great Gatsby" plays a crucial role in establishing the novel's themes, character dynamics, and ultimately, its tragic narrative. Understanding the geographical and social contexts in which the characters operate enriches the reading experience and provides deeper insights into the American Dream and the societal issues of the 1920s. This article serves as a guide to the assignment on mapping the settings in "The Great Gatsby," detailing the locations, their significance, and the dynamics that define them.

Overview of the Setting

The novel is primarily set in two fictional areas situated on Long Island, New York: West Egg and East Egg. Additionally, New York City serves as a crucial backdrop for various events throughout the story. Each location is instrumental in shaping the characters and their interactions, representing different societal classes and values.

Key Locations in the Novel

1. West Egg
 - Description: West Egg is home to the newly wealthy, who have acquired their fortunes

recently, often through dubious means. Jay Gatsby, the protagonist, resides here in a lavish mansion.

- Significance: The neighborhood symbolizes the rise of the nouveau riche and their social struggles to be accepted by the established elite. Gatsby's extravagant parties are a testament to his attempt to gain acceptance and recognition.

2. East Egg

- Description: East Egg is the residence of the old money elite, representing established wealth and social status. Tom and Daisy Buchanan live in a grand mansion here.

- Significance: This area embodies the traditional social hierarchy, where wealth is inherited and maintained. The residents of East Egg often look down on those from West Egg, highlighting the class distinctions that permeate the novel.

3. New York City

- Description: The city serves as a vibrant backdrop for many key events in the story, including Gatsby's parties, Daisy's and Tom's social activities, and the climactic confrontations.

- Significance: New York represents the hub of ambition and excess during the Roaring Twenties, illustrating the allure of wealth and the moral decay that accompanies it. It is in the city where dreams are both made and shattered.

4. The Valley of Ashes

- Description: A desolate industrial wasteland situated between West Egg and New York City, the Valley of Ashes is characterized by grey ashes and the presence of the eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg, a billboard advertising an oculist.

- Significance: This area symbolizes the moral and social decay resulting from the uninhibited pursuit of wealth. It serves as a stark contrast to the opulence of West and East Egg, representing the forgotten lower class and the consequences of the American Dream's corruption.

5. The Plaza Hotel

- Description: The Plaza Hotel is a luxury hotel in New York City and the site of the pivotal confrontation between Gatsby and Tom Buchanan.

- Significance: This setting emphasizes the theme of social class and the tensions between the characters. The hotel serves as a stage where secrets are revealed, and the façade of wealth and sophistication crumbles.

Mapping the Settings

When creating a map for the settings in "The Great Gatsby," it is essential to include key locations and their relationships to one another. Below is a suggested outline for your map:

1. Map Title: "The Great Gatsby: A Journey Through the Jazz Age"

2. Key Locations:

- Mark West Egg and East Egg on the map, using different colors to represent old money and new money.

- Highlight New York City and indicate major landmarks like the Plaza Hotel.

- Illustrate the Valley of Ashes between West Egg and New York City.

3. Connections:

- Draw arrows to indicate travel routes between locations, such as:
- West Egg to New York City (traveling for parties, social events)
- West Egg to East Egg (Gatsby's visits to the Buchanans)
- New York City to the Valley of Ashes (the moral journey of the characters)

4. Legend:

- Use symbols to represent different themes, such as:
- A dollar sign for wealth
- A broken heart for love and loss
- An eye for the moral decay symbolized by Dr. T.J. Eckleburg's billboard

Symbolism of the Settings

Understanding the symbolism behind each location enhances the thematic depth of the novel. Here are some key symbols associated with the settings:

- West Egg: Represents aspiration and the flawed pursuit of the American Dream. Gatsby's mansion stands as a monument to his dreams and failures.
- East Egg: Symbolizes the entrenched social order and the corruption that comes with inherited wealth. Tom and Daisy's carelessness reflects the moral decay of their social class.
- New York City: Represents the duality of dreams and disillusionment. It is a place of both opportunity and despair, where characters chase their ambitions yet face the consequences of their actions.
- The Valley of Ashes: A powerful symbol of the loss of the American Dream, it represents the consequences of wealth and the shattered dreams of the working class.
- The Eyes of Dr. T.J. Eckleburg: Often interpreted as the eyes of God, they observe the moral decay of society and serve as a reminder of the consequences of the characters' actions.

Conclusion

In "The Great Gatsby," the settings are not merely backdrops; they are integral to the narrative and thematic structure of the novel. By mapping these locations, students can grasp the social dynamics and the contrasts between different classes, enriching their understanding of Fitzgerald's critique of the American Dream. The assignment encourages readers to engage with the text on a deeper level, exploring how the settings influence the characters' motivations and the overarching messages of the story.

As you complete your setting map assignment, consider how each location contributes to the overall narrative and what it reveals about the society Fitzgerald depicts. The settings of "The Great Gatsby" offer a lens through which readers can examine the complexities of ambition, love, and the pursuit of happiness in the context of 1920s America.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the key locations depicted in 'The Great Gatsby' setting map?

Key locations include East Egg, West Egg, New York City, the Valley of Ashes, and Gatsby's mansion.

How does the setting of East Egg differ from West Egg in 'The Great Gatsby'?

East Egg represents old money and social elite, while West Egg symbolizes new money and the emerging class of the 1920s.

Why is the Valley of Ashes significant in the setting of 'The Great Gatsby'?

The Valley of Ashes symbolizes the moral and social decay resulting from the uninhibited pursuit of wealth, standing in stark contrast to the opulence of East and West Egg.

What role does New York City play in the narrative of 'The Great Gatsby'?

New York City serves as a backdrop for the characters' extravagant lifestyles and the parties, highlighting the allure and chaos of the Jazz Age.

How does Fitzgerald use the setting to enhance the themes of the novel?

Fitzgerald uses the contrasting settings of East Egg and West Egg to explore themes of class, wealth, and the American Dream, illustrating the divide between aspiration and reality.

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