



The Great Gatsby: The Independent Educator's Guide: for homeschoolers, unschoolers and others who teach outside the conventional classroom

Kathleen Schwab

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The Independent Educator is a series of eBooks designed to help homeschooling parents teach Language Arts using classic novels. It was born from the author's love of reading and teaching literature, her experience as a classroom teacher, her work with homeschool families, and her desire to make her work available to a wider audience at a reasonable cost. The Great Gatsby: The Independent Educator's Guide is a complete resource for teaching the novel in a homeschool environment. This eBook includes teacher resources such as chapter plot summaries, a character list, a movie guide, and historical notes. Also included are outlines for Lecture/Discussion sessions, essay questions, creative writing assignments, vocabulary lists, and a final Book Test. The eBook provides a day by day schedule to complete the material in three weeks plus one day. The Great Gatsby: The Independent Educator's Guide is designed to be used together with the general guide to the Series, Teaching Literature: The Independent Educator's Guide. Teaching Literature will give the whys and the hows of Independent Educator's system. Give Teaching Literature a quick read before starting on the specific novel eBooks. Every novel selected for the Independent Educator Series is not only a classic, but a book the author of the Series views as valuable to teach in a homeschool setting. Here are the reasons for choosing The Great Gatsby: History - Gatsby gives us a vivid portrait of the American 1920s: the wild parties, the wealth, the struggling underclass, Wall Street, Prohibition and the rise of organized crime. Stories teach history better than any textbook. Author - Fitzgerald coined the term "The Jazz Age": more than any other writer he is credited with giving a voice to this era. He did not just write about American opulence and excess, he lived it. He published his first bestseller at age twenty four, and went on to be one of the highest paid writers of the time. Characterization - Fitzgerald describes his characters vividly and briefly. He tells us who these people are in very effective but surprisingly short passages. This characteristic of the novel offers excellent opportunities for both discussion and writing. "The Great American Novel" - Academics argue which book deserves the title "Great American Novel," the novel which most perfectly expresses the American character and experience. The Great Gatsby always stands at or near the top of any list of contenders, and should be studied by every American high school student. Place in Literature - Gatsby lends itself well to being taught alongside other novels, especially other American novels. For example, teaching The Grapes of Wrath directly after Gatsby gives students a look at how American concerns changed while also remaining the same within a short amount of time. Both novels deal with the importance of The American Dream, with fitting into society while remaining an individual, and with how money or lack of it defines us. Values - Gatsby is all about the big questions: Whose values are the best? What does love mean? What is the American Dream? How can a person live his or her dreams? The novel provides great opportunities to explore these important questions with your students, and the conversation does not need to end when the school day is over.

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Judy Newberry:

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