

The Tragedy of Gatsby Answer Key

Answers will vary, but here are model responses to guide evaluation.

Thesis (Yes):

"I argue that Gatsby is a tragic hero because his noble dream of love and success is destroyed by his own flaws and by the corruption of society."

Evidence Examples (Yes):

- Gatsby's relentless pursuit of Daisy shows noble devotion but blinds him to reality.
- His rise from poverty to wealth demonstrates greatness, yet it relies on corruption.
- His death is undeserved, showing the waste of a life devoted to an impossible dream.

Mini-Essay Sample (Yes):

Gatsby fits the definition of a tragic hero because he is admirable yet deeply flawed. He rises from poverty with extraordinary ambition, motivated by his love for Daisy. However, his obsession with the past prevents him from seeing reality. In the end, Gatsby dies alone, abandoned by those he hoped to impress, which makes his story not only tragic but also a critique of the American Dream.

Thesis (No):

"I argue that Gatsby is not a tragic hero because his downfall comes from illusion and crime, not noble sacrifice."

Evidence Examples (No):

- Gatsby's dream of Daisy is shallow, based more on wealth and image than true love.
- He builds his fortune through illegal bootlegging, not honorable means.
- His end is not heroic but the consequence of living a lie.

Mini-Essay Sample (No):

While Gatsby is fascinating, he is not truly a tragic hero. His dream is built on illusions rather than noble ideals, and his wealth comes from bootlegging, not greatness. His downfall feels inevitable because his dream was never authentic to begin with. Fitzgerald uses Gatsby not as a hero, but as a symbol of the corruption of the American Dream.