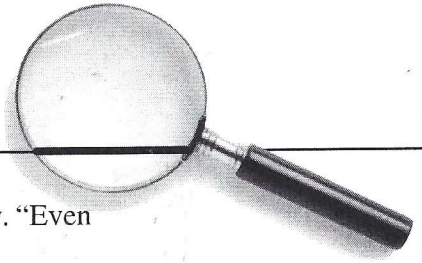# The Great Gatsby, Ch. 1, Close Reading

Directions: Read the following two passages from chapter 1
and annotate your thoughts, ideas, and/or questions as you read.

"We don't know each other very well, Nick," she said suddenly. "Even
if we are cousins. You didn't come to my wedding."

"I wasn't back from the war."

"That's true." She hesitated. "Well, I've had a very bad time, Nick, and I'm pretty
cynical about everything."

Evidently, she had reason to be. I waited but she didn't say any more, and after a
moment I returned rather feebly to the subject of her daughter.

"I suppose she talks, and—eats, and everything."

"Oh, yes." She looked at me absently. "Listen, Nick, let me tell you what I said
when she was born. Would you like to hear?"

"Very much."

"It'll show you how I've gotten to feel about—things. Well, she was less than an
hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up out of the ether with an utterly
abandoned feeling, and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told
me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. 'All right,' I said, 'I'm
glad it's a girl. And I hope she'll be a fool—that's the best thing a girl can be in
this world, a beautiful little fool.'"

"You see I think everything's terrible anyhow," she went on in a convinced
way. "Everybody thinks so—the most advanced people. And I *know*. I've been
everywhere and seen everything and done everything." Her eyes flashed around
her in a defiant way, rather like Tom's, and she laughed with thrilling scorn.
"Sophisticated—God, I'm sophisticated!"

I decided to call to [Gatsby]. Miss Baker had mentioned him at dinner, and
that would do for an introduction. 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.
When I looked once more for Gatsby, he had vanished, and I was alone again in
the unquiet darkness.