THE GREAT GATSBY
Pre-Reading
FITZGERALD BIOGRAPHY
VIEWING GUIDE

2-page viewing guide for A&E’s “The Great American Dreamer” biography video with questions designed to prepare students for reading

ANSWER KEY INCLUDED!

HOOK YOUR STUDENTS BEFORE THE GREAT GATSBY
The Great American Dreamer: F. Scott Fitzgerald

VIEWING GUIDE

“Give me a hero and I’ll write you a tragedy.”

-- F. Scott Fitzgerald--

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVB0qWLCnEo&list=PLF3yDi6JWjT9sTKcPgQX3q1dB3udmH0fk

Part 1

What experience left a deep impression on Scott? Why?

What helped Scott fit in?

What did Ginevra’s father tell Scott? Why is Ginevra important in Fitzgerald’s writing?

Who was Zelda Sayre?

Part 2

What did Scott consider to be one of the greatest regrets of his life?

What did Zelda do that devastated Scott? Why?

When did Zelda change her mind about her marriage with Scott?

Describe some of the emerging conflicts in the Fitzgeralnds’ marriage. What was their solution to these issues?
Part 3
What did Zelda do that “terribly upset” Scott?

With whom did Scott have a rivalry?

What happened to Zelda shortly after the Great Depression?

How much would Scott regularly drink a day?

When did the “final blow” to Scott’s reputation happen?

Part 4
Who was Sheila Graham?

What caused Scott to change significantly and fight with Sheila?

How did Scott die? How old was he?

How many people came to Scott’s funeral?

Part 5
How did Zelda die?

When did readers and critics begin to appreciate Scott’s books?
Part 1
What experience left a deep impression on Scott? Why?
His father was fired from a sales job and became a failure, which made Scott vow to never be a failure like his father.

What helped Scott fit in?
His gift to write.

What did Ginevra’s father tell Scott? Why is Ginevra important in Fitzgerald’s writing?
Poor boys don’t marry rich girls. She becomes an inspiration for female characters. She is the “golden girl” who everyone wants, but can’t have.

Who was Zelda Sayre?
A wild Southern belle that caught the attention of Scott. Scott falls in love with her.

Part 2
What did Scott consider to be one of the greatest regrets of his life?
Not being able to serve in the war and earn his “chance at glory.”

What did Zelda do that devastated Scott? Why?
She broke off their engagement. She was concerned about his financial situation.

When did Zelda change her mind about her marriage with Scott?
When Scott’s book This Side of Paradise was published.

Describe some of the emerging conflicts in the Fitzgeralds’ marriage. What was their solution to these issues?
Money issues, alcoholism, etc. They moved to France.

Part 3
STOP 2:15-2:37 FOR SPOILER (GATSBY’S DEATH)

What did Zelda do that “terribly upset” Scott?
She had an affair.

With whom did Scott have a rivalry?
What happened to Zelda shortly after the Great Depression?  
She became mentally unstable. She was hospitalized and her behavior became erratic. She even almost tried to kill both of them.

How much would Scott regularly drink a day?  
30 bottles of beer or a quart of gin a day

When did the “final blow” to Scott’s reputation happen?  
When the New York Times published an article about his despair and wasted talent

Part 4

Who was Sheila Graham?  
a woman Scott met at a party and asked on a date; the two had an affair

What caused Scott to change significantly and fight with Sheila?  
He started drinking again.

How did Scott die? How old was he?  
Heart attack at age 44

How many people came to Scott’s funeral?  
Very few; not even Zelda

Part 5

How did Zelda die?  
In a fire at the mental hospital in which she was staying

When did readers and critics begin to appreciate Scott’s books?  
1950s