**AP English III**

**Critical Essay Assignment– The Great Gatsby**

**Assignment: Choose one of the following topics and write a well-developed essay. You should use examples and quotes from the text to support your answer**

**Length: 3 pages typed, double spaced**

**Topics**

1. **Some critics maintain that the characters of Gatsby and Myrtle are similar. Support this claim by comparing the two characters.**
2. **Nick’s feelings toward Gatsby are ambivalent throughout the novel. Although he asserts that Gatsby “represented everything for which [he had] an unaffected scorn” (6), he also states in chapter one that Gatsby possessed “an extraordinary gift for hope, a romantic readiness such as I have never found in any other person and which it is not likely I shall ever find again” (6). Discuss the relationship of the two men, explaining why and how Nick’s feelings toward Gatsby change as the novel progresses. Why does Nick consider Gatsby “great”?**
3. **According to Nick, the characters in the novel “smashed up things and creatures and then retreated into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made” (187-188). Discuss the moral decay of society as a theme of the novel. Cite how the characters’ behavior illustrates this theme.**
4. **One prevalent theme of *The Great Gatsby* is the idea of repeating the past. When Nick informs his friend that he can’t repeat the part, Gatsby proclaims, incredulously, “Why of course you can!” (116). If Jay Gatsby is to be considered a tragic hero, this unfaltering belief in the past is, indeed, a major flaw. Explain how Gatsby’s desire to repeat, and even perhaps reinvent the past, leads to his downfall.**