

Setting Prewrite

Prompt: What is the impact of one of the settings--East Egg, West Egg, or Valley of the Ashes--on The Great Gatsby?

Prewriting

1. What setting will you be writing about?

West Egg

2. Answer the following questions. Provide textual evidence to support your answer.

| Question | Answer | Textual Evidence |
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| How does this setting affect the characters? | The setting of West Egg mirrors the characters who live there. The people of West Egg are not the “old money,” established wealthy of East Egg. They have not always been rich and are trying to prove how wealthy they are to others through their material possessions. Nick’s house, however, is not nearly as fashionable as the rest. Like Nick, his house does not seem to fit in or belong to its surroundings. | “I lived at West Egg, the—well, the less fashionable of the two, though this is a most superficial tag to express the bizarre and not a little sinister contrast between them.” “My house was at the very tip of the egg, only fifty yards from the Sound, and squeezed between two huge places that rented for twelve or fifteen thousand a season.” |
| What tone is created in this setting? | The tone that is created with this setting is one of mocking. The way in which Gatsby’s house is described is so over exaggerated that it almost seems comical. It also seems as though the author is pointing out how fake Gatsby’s house is because it is purporting to be like something else. It is unoriginal. | “The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard—it was a factual imitation of some Hôtel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was Gatsby’s mansion.” |
| What specific word choices does Fitzgerald make when discussing this setting? What is the impact of these specific word choices on meaning? | The phrase “factual imitation” suggests almost a paradox with the homes of West Egg. They are “real” but they are also an “imitation.” Also the juxtaposition | “The one on my right was a colossal affair by any standard—it was a factual imitation of some Hôtel de Ville in Normandy, with a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble |

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| | <p>of “spanking new” with the “raw, thin beard of ivy” makes it seem like the owner of this house is attempting to look more established than he really is. Nick’s own description of his house as “overlooked” reflects his role in this book as the observer, the outsider.</p> | <p>swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden. It was Gatsby’s mansion.”</p> <p>“ My own house was an eyesore, but it was a small eyesore, and it had been overlooked”</p> |
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3. Create a thesis statement for this prompt:

The impact of the setting of West Egg in The Great Gatsby is to create a setting where the people and their surroundings are exaggerated to the point of unreality. This unreality supports the mysterious nature of Gatsby, an inhabitant of this fanciful land of West Egg.

4. Write your answer to the prompt on a separate sheet of paper.

**Sample answer below:

In The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald, there are three distinct settings: West Egg, East Egg, and the Valley of the Ashes. Each setting is presented in a way that supports the development of the characters who live there, as well as the tone and themes of the text. West Egg, in particular, is a setting where the people and their surroundings are exaggerated to the point of unreality.

West Egg is “the less fashionable” of the two “Eggs.” Nick and Gatsby live in this setting which is filled with huge houses that “rent for twelve or fifteen thousand a season.” Gatsby’s house has “a tower on one side, spanking new under a thin beard of raw ivy, and a marble swimming pool and more than forty acres of lawn and garden.” Right away, the notion is planted that this setting is attempting to be something grander than it is surfaces. The description of Gatsby’s house contains a mocking tone, pointing out the attempts at creating the look of an established home when it is actually quite new. The “thin beard of raw ivy” and the “tower” both seem to imply that the owner wants his house to appear to be of another, more respectable time period. The use of a hyperbole in the description of the “forty acres of lawn and garden” also adds to this mocking exaggeration of grandeur. This theme of subterfuge, or pretending to be something that you are not is one that is reflected not only in the characters who inhabit West Egg, but in characters like Myrtle who dwell in other settings. Fitzgerald even uses the word “factual imitation” to reflect the paradox of this house and this setting. Nick’s own house, “a small eye-sore” that “rented for eighty dollars a month” does not fit in with the landscape, much like Nick himself who is often as “overlooked” as his house is. Nick’s house offers a humble contrast to the colossal houses of West Egg. This makes the whole setting seem even more fake..

Each of the three main settings establish an important back story to the people who live in them. The setting of West Egg is important to the early development of the character of Gatsby and the tone surrounding him. This first introduction of his surroundings foreshadows a confusing and mysterious character who struggles with who he is and where he belongs.