The Life of F. Scott Fitzgerald
A Brief Bio.

Directions: Read the biography and highlight five things that you believe may have had an influence of Fitzgerald’s writing. Which influences do you think will surface in *The Great Gatsby*?

Francis Scott Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1896. His parents lost two daughters prior to his birth, which instilled a sense of responsible legacy in Fitzgerald at a young age. His mother and father (of Irish/English descent) moved from the East coast to New York and eventually the ‘Middle West’ after the Civil War. In his schooling years, Fitzgerald received a Catholic education and developed an interest in literature. He was encouraged from a young age in his literary pursuits. His first short story was published in the newspaper when he was just thirteen years old. After an upper middle-class upbringing and a “comfortable” lifestyle, Fitzgerald attended Princeton University. He met Ginevra King and wrote love letters to her until she lost interest. She was his inspiration for Daisy in *The Great Gatsby*. It is said that his writing often overshadowed his coursework. In 1917, he dropped out and joined the Army. He was stationed at Ft. Leavenworth, where he was a student for Eisenhower (Fitzgerald did not like him). In his early mid-college, post-college years, he faced lots of rejection from publishers.

The war ended before Fitzgerald was deployed. However, while stationed in Alabama, he fell in love with Zelda Sayre (the daughter of Supreme Court Justice Sayre). Zelda was the beloved “golden girl” of Montgomery society. So, after the war, Fitzgerald moved to New York in hopes of securing an advertising job and convincing Zelda to marry him. He lived on Manhattan’s west side. Though Zelda initially accepted the marriage proposal, she broke it off when he failed to prove that he could provide the kind of lifestyle she was accustomed to living. Fitzgerald moved back home with his parents and wrote a novel and worked part-time repairing car roofs. The novel was a success. So, in 1920, Zelda took him back. They married and had a child by 1921. They moved to Paris, where he joined the American writers of Paris- Hemingway and Stein. Hemingway disliked Zelda, which caused a wedge in the bromance between Hemingway and Fitzgerald. Fitzgerald wrote short stories to make ends meet. In 1925, he wrote *The Great Gatsby*. However, he was in serious financial trouble by 1930 when Zelda was diagnosed with schizophrenia. They moved back to the States- to Baltimore. He developed a growing dependency on alcohol. Zelda attempted to write as well, spilling details about their relationship in Paris. However, this greatly upset Fitzgerald. In 1926, Fitzgerald had an affair with Lois Moran in Hollywood, which also contributed to Zelda’s mental instability. In 1944, he died from a heart attack at the age of 44. Despite his tumultuous marriage and unstable career/lifestyle, F. Scott Fitzgerald remains one of the most recognized American writers across Western classrooms today.