HONORS AMERICAN LITERATURE SUMMER READING 2020-2021

THE GREAT GATSBY
F. Scott Fitzgerald **ISBN-13:** 978-0743273565

The significance of *The Great Gatsby* far outweighs its unimpressive physical size. Occupying a central place in the American canon, this novel explores the nature of the American spirit and challenges the notion of the American dream, the national ideal that anyone, regardless of origin or status, has equal opportunity to climb the ladder of success, that social mobility is limited only by the size of the dream and the willingness to work hard to attain it.

A novel about a specific cultural moment, the Roaring Twenties, and a particular population, the Lost Generation, *The Great Gatsby* simultaneously occupies a literal and a figurative landscape. The setting is both local, Long Island and New York City, and symbolic, East versus West. As we begin a year of study focused on regional American literature, examine the attributes and values associated with each place.

While reading, you should highlight and annotate language related to the following motifs:

- East versus West in any form or reference
- Money, the getting and the spending of it, its purpose beyond literal acquisition
- Colors: green, gold, and white
- Truth versus lies
- Artificial versus genuine
- Symbols of the American dream of the time: house, property, and car
- Social class and social mobility
- Role of women, traditional versus modern

After you have read the novel, watch the 2013 film version directed by Baz Luhrmann, starring Leonardo DiCaprio in the title role. Note the differences between the novel and the movie and write down comments on any ways in which these changes affect meaning.

NOTE: Reading any online or print summaries or study guides in place of or as a supplement to reading the novel is a violation of the Honor Code.

Bring a highlighted and annotated print copy of the novel to class on the first day of school.