

# 6

## Lesson Six

### FOCUS: Symbols

F. Scott Fitzgerald uses images and characters to stand for something above and beyond what they represent at first sight. These symbols have special importance, like interpretive keys to the text.

As a form of figurative language, symbols can maintain our fascination by hinting beyond the literal, drawing us into the story, and asking us to explore the author's intentions. Frequently, study of the specific characteristics of the symbol will shed light on the entire story.

#### **Discussion Activities**

What are the most potent symbols in the story? How are these “interpretive keys” to the story? Have students break into groups, referencing the novel in their presentations.

How might the “two young women...buoyed up as though upon an anchored balloon” (p.8) symbolize the women of this generation?

Gatsby looks for Daisy in the green light at the end of her dock. Does anyone in the story truly know Daisy? Does the light become a symbol for something else?

#### **Writing Exercise**

Nick describes that Gatsby had created an illusion of “colossal vitality.” Taking Nick's point of view, what has Daisy come to represent? Why has Gatsby created such a “colossal” illusion?

How might the novel symbolize the American Dream? How might the novel fail to capture the American Dream? Support your conclusion by referring to the text.

#### **Homework**

Read Chapter 6 (pp. 97-111). At the end of Chapter 5, Nick says, “It was the hour of a profound human change, and excitement was generating on the air...” (p.95). What happens in Chapter 6 to fulfill Nick's prediction?