

American Literature for Christian Homeschoolers

Volume 1: Essays, Poems, Letters, and Speeches

Answer Key to Review Questions

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Week 1, Day 1: Letter to the Town of Providence

1. In the first sentence, what does Roger Williams say should be the goals of the “Town-Meetings”?

To increase the liberty, peace, and the welfare of the inhabitants of Rhode Island.

2. What does Roger Williams say is incorrect about what his brother wrote were his (Roger Williams’s) beliefs?

Roger Williams says that he does not, as his brother says he does, claim that the law cannot punish evildoers of any kind—that the law does not provide for an “infinite liberty of conscience.”

3. What are the “two hinges” of liberty of conscience that Williams supports?

No one is forced to come to any worship service led by another group, and no one is forced to stop worshipping the way he sees fit.

4. What is the duty of the ship’s captain in Williams’s analogy? To what does the captain compare to?

The captain’s duty is to maintain justice and peace among the passengers. The captain refers to the civil government of a state.

Week 1, Day 1: “To My Dear and Loving Husband”

1. Sum up the main ideas of the Bible passages referenced in “To My Dear and Loving Husband.”

Man and wife are designed by God to become one; fearing God is more to be desired than gold.

2. List the ways Anne Bradstreet loves her husband and what she compares her love to.

She prizes his love more than gold and all the “riches of the East”; her love is a fire that can’t be quenched; she can’t ever repay his love to her.

3. What do the last two lines of the poem mean?

That Anne Bradstreet and her husband should so love each other that it proves that they are followers of Christ and will live with Him forever in heaven.

Week 1, Day 2: Letter to Richard Turner, Letter to the Indians, and Letter to the (Philadelphia) Free Society of Traders

1. Why does William Penn ask the king (Charles II) to change the name of the land grant from “Pennsylvania” to something else?

Penn believes it looks vain to name it after himself.

2. What plans does Penn have for Pennsylvania?

He prays God will make it a “great nation,” and plans to lay it out well for its settlers.

3. Sum up Penn’s opening in his “Letter to the Indians.”

There is a “Great God” who has commanded us to love one another, we will all give an account of our deeds.

4. How does Penn attempt to win friendship and trust with the Indians?

He says that he knows many other colonists have treated them wrongly, but he will not do so, and if any of the inhabitants of Pennsylvania wrong Indians, then there will be a righteous judgment made and matters settled the right way.

5. In his letter to the Free Society of Traders, what does Penn note about the local tribes' beliefs and practices that are similar to a Christian's? How are they different?

They believe in a God, and that when they die they shall live again, and they have "worship services." They still, however, make sacrifices to their "god," which is no longer needed, since Jesus became the only sacrifice for sins that God will accept (Ephesians 5:1-2, Hebrews 10:1-12, Jude 1:3).

6. List several ways that Penn admonishes his people to treat the Indians. For what purpose?

Penn says to have an equal number of arbitrators (six) on each side in case of a dispute, not to abuse them, and to be fair to them. He prays that the Christian settlers will be obedient to God's will regardless of what happens, so that the Indians might become Christians.

Week 2, Day 1: "Epistle of Caution and Advice, Concerning the Buying and Keeping of Slaves"

1. Who are the two main groups of persons Benezet addresses in this epistle?

Christians considering buying slaves, and Christians who own slaves.

2. List some reasons that Benezet cautions against Christians owning slaves in the second paragraph.

It violates the command of Jesus in Luke 6:31, it is not consistent with Christianity to own other humans whom violence and kidnapping has brought, it hardens the heart, and it reduces love, meekness, and charity.

3. What other considerations for not owning slaves does Benezet make his audience aware of?

How horrible it is for them to be kidnapped, taken away from their families, how it leads to further importation of slaves, and how the Bible refers to "menstealers."

4. What does Benezet say to those Christians who presently own slaves?

To treat them as human beings with souls, not just as free workers, to watch for their souls, and to set them up so if and when they are freed, they are able to make "proper use of their liberty." But most importantly, to free them if there is any reason not to keep them (of which he lists several).

Week 2, Day 2: "The Way to Wealth"

1. Why is Benjamin Franklin not bothered at all by the lack of peer recognition?

He realized that the people loved him, since (a) they bought his books by the thousands, and (b) he was quoted by others.

2. Sum up the meaning of several of the first adages quoted by "Father Abraham."

Our wealth can be taxed by idleness; don't sleep too much; get up early; work hard, since it is profitable and honorable; steady work produces good results; if you want leisure time, use your work time well.

3. What does the poem about the oft-removed tree mean?

That people should stay settled, and they will thrive; that the idea that success is “somewhere else” is false.

4. Explain the adages on frugality.

Not to waste money on vices; to forego the most expensive clothing and foods; not to buy things you don't need, so you go without things you do need, etc.

5. Explain the adages “A ploughman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees” and “Little boats should keep near shore.”

A hard worker who is thought of as “lower” than a “gentleman” is actually often above him, since sometimes “gentlemen” are too proud to work, and are reduced to begging. The “little boats” adage admonishes the poor not to try to imitate the rich and be “lost at sea,” so to speak.

6. What does Franklin say about debt and charity?

It enslaves a person, making him dread the repayment, making him ashamed to be seen, turning him into someone who is not free. He also says that a person should stay humble in the midst of success, and give to those in need.

7. Explain the humor in the last paragraph. How does Franklin “take his own advice”?

The people agree heartily, then turn around and totally ignore his advice. Franklin decides then not to buy a new coat, and instead use the one he has for another season.

8. How does what the Bible says about work in the book of Proverbs compare to Franklin's admonitions? (See for example Proverbs 6:6-11, 10:4-5, 13:4, 15:19, 20:4, 23:4-5, 24:30-34.)

Proverbs 6:6-11 – *Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man.*

Proverbs 10:4-5 – *He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame.*

Proverbs 13:4 – *The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat.*

Proverbs 15:19 – *The way of the slothful man is as an hedge of thorns: but the way of the righteous is made plain.*

Proverbs 20:4 – *The sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; therefore shall he beg in harvest, and have nothing.*

Proverbs 20:13 – *Love not sleep, lest thou come to poverty; open thine eyes, and thou shalt be satisfied with bread.*

Proverbs 23:4-5 – *Labour not to be rich: cease from thine own wisdom. Wilt thou set thine eyes upon that which is not? for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle toward heaven.*

Proverbs 24:30-34 – *I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well: I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little*

sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: so shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an armed man.

Week 3, Day 1: “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” “On Virtue”

1. In “On Being Brought from Africa to America,” what is unusual about Phyllis Wheatley’s view of being sold into slavery?

She says it is a blessing, not a curse, because through it she learned about God and Jesus Christ.

2. Who is speaking in the line that is in quotes?

Ignorant, prejudiced persons who do not like black people.

3. What is sad about Wheatley’s reminder to Christians over the last two lines? See for example Acts 17:26-28.

Christians should already know that all people were created by God in His image (and of “one blood”), and that people of all nations may find God if they seek after Him.

4. Write brief definitions for the poetic terms *apostrophe*, *iambic pentameter*, and *blank verse*. Which term applies to both poems? Which two terms apply only to “On Virtue”?

An apostrophe is a work in which the author “speaks” to a person or object or other thing that cannot respond; iambic pentameter is a term for a line of poetry with five beats, with the stress coming on the second syllable of each of the five beats; blank verse is unrhymed iambic pentameter. Iambic pentameter applies to both poems (there are a few lines in “On Virtue” that are not in iambic pentameter); the other two terms apply only to “On Virtue.”

5. What does the poet say that virtue is like in “On Virtue”? Where does she say that virtue originates?

Virtue is a “bright jewel,” high and deep, heavenly, and originates from heaven.

6. What does Wheatley compare virtue to in “On Virtue”? Where does she say that virtue originates?

She speaks to her soul, telling it not to despair, because virtue is close at hand.

7. List several things that the poet asks of virtue.

To spread its wings, to come close to her, to help her resist temptation throughout her “youthful years,” to leave her not “to the false joys of time,” to “guide [her] steps,” to “teach [her] a better strain,” and so on.

Week 3, Day 2: “Give Me Liberty or Give Me Death!” Speech

1. In the first paragraph, Patrick Henry says that the question before the House is a choice between what two things for (a) the country, and (b) for himself?

He claims that for America it is a choice between freedom and slavery; for himself, he says it is a choice between betraying his country and God, or remaining faithful to them.

2. What does Henry say is the “one lamp by which my feet are guided”? What does he mean by this? How does this statement compare to Psalm 119:105?

The “one lamp” is his experience; he means that experience is his most trusted resource in telling him what he should do, and that he believes that America’s last 10 years of experience with the British tells them that they cannot count on them. David, on the other hand, says that God’s Word is a “lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.”

3. To what does Henry charge the British in light of their putting soldiers into the American colonies? What does he say is the only resort for Americans?

Henry says it is for Britain to “force us to submission.” He says the only choice they have is to go to war with the British.

4. Find and write down the references to God that Henry uses. What is your take on how he inserts God into his speech?

- “fulfill the great responsibility we hold to God and our country”
- an appeal to “the God of hosts”
- the “God of nature” has placed means to fight in their power
- “There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us.”
- “Forbid it [chains and slavery], Almighty God!”

Student reactions to Henry’s references to God will vary.

5. Give some examples of emotional appeal to the audience and hyperbole that Patrick Henry uses to make the speech more effective.

- “lying supinely on our backs”
- “hugging the delusive phantom of hope”
- enemies that “[bind] us hand and foot”
- “There is no retreat but in submission and slavery.”
- “Our chains are forged!”

6. Sum up the main points of the last paragraph.

There is no way to avoid the matter; we must fight, because there is no peace; the war has already begun. If we have to choose “slavery” over death, I choose death!

7. How might a Christian respond to these two statements from Patrick Henry: (a) We must fight! I repeat it, sir, we must fight! An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us!” and (b) “There is a just God who presides over the destinies of nations; and who will raise up friends to fight our battles for us.”

On one hand, Henry says that we have no choice but to fight. But if God presides over the destinies of nations, why would we need to fight?

Week 4, Days 1-4: A Narrative of the Captivity and Restoration of Mrs. Mary Rowlandson

Day 1:

1. Describe the Indian attack. What happens to Mary Rowlandson and her children and neighbors?

Settlers are killed by being shot and tomahawked, houses are burned to the ground, and captives taken. Mary Rowlandson is shot through the side, and the same bullet goes through the hand and bowels of the child she is holding. Out of 37 settlers, 24 are taken captive, and the rest killed.

2. In what two ways does Robert Peppers help comfort Mary Rowlandson? What does she thank God for after her daughter dies?

Rowlandson is comforted simply to talk to another captive, and he shows her how to use oak leaves to press against her wound for some relief. She thanks God that He kept her mind sane, so that even in her great distress, she did not kill herself.

3. How does God answer Rowlandson's prayer after her distress at not being allowed to see her daughter Mary?

She sees her son Joseph, who encourages her, and an Indian gives her a Bible to read.

Day 2:

1. Describe how Rowlandson is "toughened up" on the journey with the Indians.

She is able to ride farther and endure pain; she is able to eat what she first could not (calling it "trash"), even to the point of eating half-cooked horse's liver!

2. Describe how Rowlandson earns money and provisions while camped.

The other Indians ask her to sew for them, and they pay her in money or food.

3. Explain the two main ways that the Bible is a comfort to Mary Rowlandson.

First, her opportunity to read a Bible during her captivity, and second, the Bible verses she remembers and that come to her mind during appropriate situations.

4. What is baffling about the overall behavior of the Indians toward Mary Rowlandson, given the situation? What do you make of this?

They seem gentle and concerned for Mary Rowlandson's health and safety, trading and talking to her and giving her food—as if she hasn't been kidnapped and her family members killed! Probably some or many of the Indians (at least the squaws) did not favor the war, or at least could not do anything about it.

Day 3:

1. How does Rowlandson find out that her husband is not dead or captured? What good news does she receive when she crosses the Banquang River?

Thomas Read, a new captive, tells her that he is alive and well, although sad. She receives news that she must get ready, because she might be ransomed.

2. Explain Mary Rowlandson's dilemma on how much ransom money to tell the Indians to ask for her. Soon after, what makes her fear that the ransom will not be forthcoming?

She doesn't want to tell the Indians too high an amount of money, for fear of her husband's not being able to procure it, but she doesn't want to tell one that's too low, thinking they might kill her for not being worth much. When a battle occurs at Sudbury, with many Englishmen killed, the Indians say the English will now be too angry to ransom any captives.

Day 4:

1. What points does Mary Rowlandson make in thinking back upon her captivity?

That God watched over her, that He provided for her, and that she was forced to rely on His providence and care.

2. What emotions does Mary Rowlandson experience after being ransomed? How has the experience changed her?

Thankfulness, tempered with sadness for the loss of Sarah and wondering where her son Joseph and daughter Mary were, love and a desire for God to bless those who took her in and paid her ransom. She now is more aware of God's presence in her life, and believes more strongly that the Lord gives strength to those who endure hardships in life.

Notes:

- There have apparently been Indian troubles before, since the dogs know to attack Indians if they show up.
- The Indians speak English, since Mary refuses to go with them until they promise not to hurt her.
- Rowlandson's comments on smoking are humorous: even though she smoked a pipe several times herself, she refuses to take one from King Philip, saying, "Surely there are many who may be better employed than to lie sucking a stinking tobacco-pipe."
- The narrative's last lines are significant: "I have learned to look beyond present and smaller troubles, and to be quieted under them. As Moses said, 'Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord'" (Exodus 14:13).

Week 7, Day 1: "Resolution of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Society of Friends"

1. Sum up the meaning of the first paragraph of "Resolution."

The Society of Friends are grieved by the conflict between the colonies and Britain. Since they believe that the resolutions that keep being passed by the Americans in response to the British are doing nothing more than making the hostilities worse, they have recommended that none of the Quakers sign such resolutions.

2. What does the second paragraph say about (a) a Christian's duty to his government, and (b) the view of the Society of Friends regarding the "political writings and addresses" being published by revolutionaries?

That Christians should submit themselves to earthly governments, and that the political writings (a) are "destructive of the peace and harmony of civil society," (b) "contrary to the nature and precepts of the gospel," and (c) keep the two sides from finding true, peaceful solutions to their differences.

3. List the reasons why the Quakers oppose the "contrary modes of proceeding" that many revolutionaries have followed.

They have confused the colonies, will likely result in violence and bloodshed, threaten constitutional government, and threaten "liberty of conscience."

4. What declaration is made in the final paragraph of the resolution?

The Quakers, because of their duty to God, oppose any law-breaking by the colonists or incitements to revolt against what they believe is the legitimate authority God has placed into power. They also earnestly desire the resolution of conflicts between the two sides in a peaceful manner.

Week 7, Day 2: "Declaration of the Mennonites and Brethren to the Pennsylvania Assembly"

1. In "Declaration," why does Benjamin Hershey thank the Pennsylvania Assembly? What does he ask upon the assembly?

Pennsylvania was founded upon “liberty of conscience,” and Hershey thanks the assembly for working to protect this right and for advising peace to the state’s inhabitants. Hershey asks for the assembly the same blessing of wisdom and righteousness that God granted William Penn.

2. What does Hershey state that the Mennonites and Brethren will do and will not do for “men’s lives”? What do they pledge to do unto “Caesar”?

They will help preserve men’s lives, but will not participate in killing or injuring men. They pledge to pay tribute (taxes) unto the government.

3. Tell what Hershey twice “begs” for in this address. Why does he do so?

He begs for patience; he understands that there are some Christians who believe that is permissible to take up arms against others.

4. What tone do you notice in the Mennonite declaration? Give evidence of this.

The tone is one of great humility, with its requests for patience, speaking of others as greater, submitting to the rulers of Britain, and repeated statements that they are not trying to offend anyone.

Week 7, Day 3: The American Crisis, Volume 1

1. List Paine’s main points on the first several pages.

It’s time to act now; God’s on our side; King George can’t pray for God’s help, since he’s on the wrong side.

2. Why does Paine give a short account of some of the army maneuvers he was involved in?

It seems as if he is trying to gain credibility with supporters as not just someone who urges others to fight, but as someone who has been involved himself.

3. Give examples of some of the inflammatory language Paine uses to describe Tories and what he wants to do to them. Sum up his assessment of the man with the child who says he wants peace. Do you think his assessments of the “Tories” and this man are fair? Why or why not?

Paine says Tories are scoundrels and cowards and only want British rule for their own personal gain. (“Every Tory is a coward; for servile, slavish, self-interested fear is the foundation of Toryism.”) He wants to expel them from America and take their property and use it to pay for the costs of the revolution. Paine also says that the father who wanted peace should have said he wanted war if it would give his child peace when the child was older.

4. What words and phrases does Thomas Paine use to appeal to Christians? What is ironic about his quoting Voltaire right before saying God blessed Washington with “uninterrupted health”?

- *comparing conquering tyranny to conquering hell*
- *“heaven knows how to put a proper price upon its goods”*
- *saying “unlimited power” like the ability to “bind us in all cases whatsoever” should only belong to God*
- *“God Almighty will not give up a people to military destruction” who have tried to avoid war*
- *“God hath blessed him [Washington] with uninterrupted health”*
- *“Let us reason the matter together” (reference to Isaiah 1:18)*
- *“God governs the world”*
- *“Should he [Howe] now be expelled, I wish with all the devotion of a Christian, that the names of Whig and Tory may never more be mentioned....”*

- “show your faith by your works, that God may bless you”

Quoting Voltaire before thanking God for blessing Washington with good health is ironic, since Voltaire was a famous atheist.

5. How does Paine use an example of a “house-breaker” to justify revolution? What does he claim will happen if Britain is not defeated?

Paine claims that this war is similar to repelling a house-breaker, to argue that the war is defensive, and therefore morally sound. He says that if the British win they will be vengeful and ravage the colonists. Paine says we have two choices: (1) to press on fighting the revolution, or (2) to face “habitations without safety” and “slavery without hope.”

6. What provocative phrases and words does Paine use in *American Crisis*? What particular word that describes what he is advocating does he not use?

- ravaging
- traitors
- summer soldier and sunshine patriot
- freedom
- murderer
- highwayman
- infested with Tories
- dominion,

Paine never uses the word “revolution,” however.

7. Is Paine correct? Does God always keep Christians from suffering under tyrants? Why or why not?

Answers will vary, but it should be, essentially, “No.” God does not promise perfect, just, or non-burdensome governments to the nations of the world, even when there are many Christians. Christians are to submit to earthly governments unless they are ordered to commit acts that violate their Christian faith (paying more taxes does not qualify!).

Week 7, Day 4: “Petition Concerning the Wives and Children of Loyalists”

1. In the beginning of the petition, what do Anne Hooper et al. express as one reason why they have written the petition to Governor Alexander Martin? What act of the governor and council distresses them greatly? What do they ask the governor and council to do?

So those on the side of the revolutionaries won’t come across as cruel, as some of the behaviors of the British army have been. They are upset that the governor and council have ordered the wives and children of loyalists who fled North Carolina to leave the state and most of their property within 48 hours. Anne Hooper and the petition’s other signers ask the governor and council to rescind this order.

2. In what way do the petitioners defend the wives of the loyalists and chide the actions of the state’s government?

They say that they were not responsible for the British order against the petitioners, and that they (the wives of the loyalists) even worked to ease the sufferings of the petitioners. The petitioners also say that when they were ordered out, their friends received and welcomed them, but that if the North Carolina government does the same to the wives and children of the loyalists, they won’t have friends to welcome and receive them in the same way. Also, they chide the North Carolina government for fearing “the feeble efforts of women and children,” and by saying it’s “beneath the character of the independent State of North Carolina to war with women and children.”

3. Look at a list of the terms of the Treaty of Paris (1783) between Britain and the United States. Which of the terms of the Treaty of Paris are connected to events like the occurrences addressed in this petition?

The terms of the Treaty of Paris included America's promise to return all property seized from Loyalists, and not to confiscate any more property of Loyalists.

Week 9, Day 1: Letter to President Thomas Jefferson from the Danbury (Connecticut) Baptist Association, and Jefferson's Reply

1. What point about religious liberty does the Danbury Baptist Association make?

That it should be promoted by law in free nations. That no one should suffer for his beliefs at the hand of government.

2. What does the Association say is the proper function of government? How do they say their religious rights are being violated?

The proper function of law is to punish evil-doing from one man to another. The Danbury Baptists say that the Connecticut government claims that their (the Baptists') freedom of religion comes only by the Connecticut government's permission, not as an "inalienable" right as stated in the Declaration of Independence.

3. What do the Danbury Baptists hope for from President Jefferson? What do they explicitly *not* expect to happen?

They hope President Jefferson can have an influence through his Presidency, with the goal of convincing states everywhere to remove their state churches and persecution of those of different beliefs. The Danbury Baptists do not, however, look to President Jefferson as a dictator who will order Connecticut to stop persecuting the Danbury Baptists, or to the U. S. government to begin dictating practices to state governments like Connecticut's.

4. What specific prayer do the Danbury Baptists pray for President Jefferson in the closing paragraph?

That "the Lord preserve you safe from every evil and bring you at last to His heavenly kingdom through Jesus Christ our Glorious Mediator."

5. In his reply, what major points does President Thomas Jefferson make in the second paragraph? What does he mean by saying, "I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights"? What help does he offer as President and enforcer of the Constitution for the situation in Connecticut?

Religion is between God and man, no one has any business telling anyone else how to worship, the government has no business punishing people for their beliefs, and that there should be a "wall of separation" between church and state. The statement about "progress of those sentiments" means Jefferson looks forward to the day when citizens are not persecuted for their beliefs. He offers no help from the United States government to the Danbury Baptists, undoubtedly believing that he has no authority to do so.

6. What does Jefferson mean by the "wall of separation between Church and State"? How does the Bible separate the functions of church and state? (Compare, for example: Romans 12:9-10 vs. Romans 13:3; Romans 12:19 vs. Romans 13:4; Romans 12:21 vs. Romans 13:4; Ephesians 6:17 vs. Romans 13:4.)

He means that the United States government should not—and has no constitutional authority—to interfere in the affairs of the church. If any government had any business interfering in religion, it would have to be state government (and clearly Jefferson did not believe that state governments should propagate a certain religion, based on his reply). Jefferson believed that no government should force citizens into certain beliefs, or punish them for not having other beliefs. The Bible separates the church's functions from the state's in these ways:

- *The church loves (Romans 12:9-10); the state terrorizes evil (Romans 13:3).*
- *The church forgives (Romans 12:19); the state is a revenger (Romans 13:4).*
- *The church overcomes evil with good (Romans 12:21); the state executes wrath upon evildoers (Romans 13:4).*
- *The church uses the sword of the spirit (Ephesians 6:17); the state uses a sword of steel (Romans 13:4).*

7. How does the wording of Jefferson’s closing paragraph compare to the Danbury Baptist Association’s closing paragraph? What do you think this might indicate?

Instead of referencing Jesus Christ, Jefferson refers to God as “the common father and creator of man”—the view of a Deist, which Jefferson was.

Week 9, Day 3: “Thanatopsis”

1. What is the name for the poetic form that “Thanatopsis” is written in? (Remember Phyllis Wheatley’s “On Virtue”?)

Blank verse.

2. What is unusual about the word “nature” in this poem? What do you think that indicates about Bryant’s worldview?

It is capitalized each time. It could indicate Bryant’s non-Christian worldview of nature as God, the view of pantheists and transcendentalists.

3. Explain what Bryant means by “the last bitter hour” (line 9) and the “narrow house” (12). What does he recommend the reader do at this hour?

“The last bitter hour” is the hour of death, and the “narrow house” is the coffin. Bryant recommends that the reader “listen to nature’s teachings.”

4. Sum up Bryant’s view on what happens when a person dies, according to this poem. What two main ideas does he say should comfort those near death?

When a person dies, he just becomes part of nature, to “mix forever with the elements” (26), and have his skeleton pierced underground by some tree whose roots grow through him (30). The two main things that are supposed to comfort the dead are (1) the fact that all others in history have died or will die, including the great men of history, and (2) the fact that the “tomb” of earth is beautiful, with rivers and valleys, greenery, and so on. Hurrah.

5. What is the message of the last stanza of “Thanatopsis”?

To live with zeal and gusto, so that when you die, you can “sleep well.”

6. How does a Christian’s view of death contrast with the one presented in “Thanatopsis”? See for example Mark 12:18-27, Luke 23:39-43, John 11:17-27, 1 Corinthians 15:35-58, 2 Corinthians 5:1-10, and Titus 2:11-13.

“Thanatopsis” presents a view that man just dies and becomes part of nature, without feeling or sense, just decaying and intertwining with the elements. God’s Word, on the other hand, says that

- *there is a resurrection of the dead (Mark 12:18-27),*
- *that those who trust in Jesus will join Him “in paradise” (Luke 23:39-43),*

- *that those who believe in Jesus Christ will be resurrected and “never die” (John 11:17-27),*
- *that God will raise those who believe in Him with an “incorruptible” body, since Jesus has triumphed over death and the grave (1 Corinthians 15:35-58),*
- *that to be “absent from the body” is to be “present with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:1-10), and*
- *Christians look for a “blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:11-13).*

Week 10, Day 1: Poems Commemorating American History

“Old Ironsides”

1. List the strong verbs and nouns that Oliver Wendell Holmes uses in “Old Ironsides.”

Verbs: danced, rung, burst, sweep, knelt, hurrying, pluck, sink, shook, and so on.

Nouns: ensign, eye, banner, shout, roar, meteor, clouds, deck, blood, foe, flood, waves, knee, harpies, eagle, hulk, wave, grave, flag, sail, lightning, gale, and so on.

2. What does Holmes suggest be done to “Old Ironsides”? Why? What effect does this have upon the reader?

He suggests they tear down her flag, nail it to the mast, and sink the ship, rather than dismantle it piece by piece, because it would be more fitting for the ship to “die” in a watery “grave” to honor its gloried past. This makes the reader think, “No! They should keep this historic ship around!”

3. To what two items does Holmes compare “Old Ironsides”?

A meteor and an eagle.

4. How does Holmes make the ship seem almost lifelike, or even human? What effect does this have?

He uses active words that make the ship seem alive, with energy and activity and motion. Again, it makes the reader almost feel sorry for this ship that is going to be torn apart by “harpies” who don’t honor its record in battle.

“Concord Hymn”

5. What has happened to the bridge that originally stood at the battle site?

It has been swept away by “Time” to the sea.

6. What does Emerson say the purpose of the “votive stone” is?

To help keep the memory of those who fought at the Battle of Concord.

7. To whom does Emerson “pray” in the last stanza? What does he ask for?

He “prays” to Time, asking it to spare the weathering effects on the monument they built at the site, so the stone won’t wear away as easily as many things do under the ravages of time.

8. What is the most famous line of “Concord Hymn”?

“Fired the shot heard round the world.”

Week 10, Day 2: Poems Commemorating American History

“Paul Revere’s Ride”

1. What is the rhyme scheme of “Paul Revere’s Ride”?

It varies, but each stanza has its own interlocking rhyme scheme.

2. How does the ending of the poem reflect the beginning?

The beginning tells what Paul Revere will do; the ending shows him doing it. Both mention the town of Middlesex and its villages and farms.

3. What call for a more modern issue (for 1860) could Longfellow be making in the last stanza? What words in the last stanza support this idea?

For modern (in 1860) Americans to either unite, or to end slavery. The words “Through all our history, to the last, In the hour of darkness and peril and need, The people will waken and listen to hear The hurrying hoof-beats of that steed, And the midnight message of Paul Revere” can be read to mean that throughout America’s history, people have risen up to answer the call when they were needed in a crisis.

“The New Colossus”

4. Define the term “sonnet.” How does “The New Colossus” fit the description?

A fourteen-line poem written in iambic pentameter. “The New Colossus” fits this description!

5. How is the Colossus of Rhodes different from the Statue of Liberty? Explain the line “Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!”

It is a statue that welcomes, instead of conquers. The line tells older, more established nations with celebrated histories that America is different and welcomes people of all types to help build her traditions.

6. Explain how the way that Lazarus describes the people trying to get into America contrasts with the “door” to America.

They are described as poor, wretched, refuse, and homeless, which contrasts with the “golden” door to America.

Week 10, Day 3: “Self-Reliance”

1. Sum up the following statements Emerson writes in “Self-Reliance,” and compare them to what God’s Word says.

- “A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the luster of the firmament of bards and sages.”

Emerson: A person should be in tune with his own ideas, rather than with those ideas from persons who are considered wise by most.

- “Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string.”

Emerson: Follow whatever your heart says when you make a decision.

God's Word: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies...." (Matthew 15:18-19).

- "Society everywhere is in conspiracy against the manhood of every one of its members....The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not realities and creators, but names and customs....Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist."

Emerson: Society encourages conformity; it persecutes those who are individuals. If you are strong enough to stand up to the pressures of others to conform, you are a man.

God's Word: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

- "Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind....No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature....[T]he only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it."

Emerson: No religious text or teaching or doctrine is sacred; only my own mind. The only right is what I believe feels right; the only wrong is what I feel is not right.

God's Word: "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12).

"And that from a child thou [Timothy] hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15).

"For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens..." (Hebrews 7:26).

"And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, LORD God Almighty...." (Revelation 4:8).

"There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 16:25).

- "If you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible-society, vote with a great party either for the government or against it, spread your table like base housekeepers—under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are....But do your work, and I shall know you."

Emerson: Your identity as a Christian or church-goer, a Democrat or Republican, hides what kind of person you are. I'll know you by the kind of works you do.

God's Word: "For a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit....A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil...." (Luke 6:43, 45).

- "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines....To be great is to be misunderstood."

Emerson: Consistency is not a real virtue or character strength. Sometimes you will be wrong because you feel a certain way that contradicts what you said or did before. Whatever you feel right at the time is right. Great men and women are always misunderstood because they do "great" things instead of worrying about being consistent.

- “If, therefore, a man claims to know and speak of God, and carries you backward to the phraseology of some old mouldered nation in another country, in another world, believe him not.... [S]ee what strong intellects dare not yet hear God himself, unless he speak the phraseology of I know not what David, or Jeremiah, or Paul. We shall not always set so great a price on a few texts, on a few lives.”

Emerson: Whatever a man does, there is a “god” (the Over-Soul) at work behind him. Since men are all part of this “god,” then what they do is right, since the divine power is working through them. There is a Supreme Cause that makes everything in the universe holy because it “enters into all lower forms. Don’t believe anyone who refers to the God of the Bible; I don’t care what prophets like David, Jeremiah, or Paul said.

God’s Word: “Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God” (Isaiah 44:6).

“Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works. All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name. For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone” (Psalm 86:8-10).

“Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him” (Proverbs 30:5).

[Jesus:] “Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they [the Pharisees] to him...we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me....Ye are of your father the devil” (John 8:41-42, 44).

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works” (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place....For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost (2 Peter 1:19, 21).

- “O father, O mother, O wife, O brother, O friend, I have lived with you after appearances hitherto. Henceforward I am the truth’s. Be it known unto you that henceforward I obey no law less than the eternal law....I must be myself.”

Emerson: Friends, relatives, wife: In the past I’ve been generous and not done what I wanted because I thought you wouldn’t like it, or you might be hurt or offended. No more! From now on I’m going to do whatever I feel like! I gotta be me!

God’s Word: “Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the LORD pondereth the hearts” (Proverbs 21:2).

“Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:3-8).

- “As men’s prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect.”

Emerson: There is no need to pray to a God; instead, since all men are part of God, they need to exercise their wills, instead of asking permission from God. For someone to believe in creeds (like the Bible) is a sign that he is crazy or fooled by silly fairy tales.

God’s Word: “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty” (2 Peter 1:16).

[Jesus:] “Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done” (Luke 22:42).

- “Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.”

Emerson: Nothing can bring you peace but peace yourself.

God’s Word: “Peace I [Jesus] leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid” (John 14:27).

“These things I [Jesus] have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33).

“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ....” (Romans 5:1).

“Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

“And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven” (Colossians 1:20).

2. If you had to sum up Emerson’s message in “Self-Reliance” in a few sentences, what would they be?

Answers will vary, but basically, do your own thing, follow your own ideas, ignore anything that contradicts your idea of what is good or right, and don’t conform to anyone else’s expectations.

3. What ideas presented by Ralph Waldo Emerson in “Self-Reliance” can Christians agree with?

Answers will vary, but not conforming to the world, being an individual although others mock you, working where God has placed you, being content with what you have, and so on.

Week 11, Day 1: “The Arrow and the Song”

1. How are the first two stanzas similar? How are they different?

Both are things the speaker “releases” into the air, and both are unable to be found by the speaker; one is a weapon, and one is pleasant.

2. Since hunters and archers don’t normally shoot arrows into the air, what do you think the arrow in the poem represents? What do you think about its sticking in the oak?

The arrow might represent some hurtful words the speaker used rashly. Hitting the oak and staying there might represent the words' "sticking" in someone's mind, unable to be forgotten.

3. How is the song in the third stanza similar to the arrow? What do you think the song might represent? How does the friend play into the poem?

The song in the third stanza is "unbroken," like the arrow stuck in the oak tree. It might represent healing words, or an apology, to the friend the speaker has offended. The friend might have accepted the speaker's apology or attempt at restoring the friendship wounded through the "arrow."

Week 11, Day 1: "The Raven"

1. Briefly sum up in a paragraph or two the chain of events that make up "The Raven." How does Poe's poem—which tells the same story as your paragraph—just *sound* better? (We'll assume your rewrite of "The Raven" isn't better than Poe's original.)

The tired, weak speaker is reading books from his library at midnight and hears a rapping at his door. The speaker had been trying in vain to read books to forget about his lost love Lenore. The speaker is terrified at the rapping at his door, but repeats to himself, "It's just a visitor." The speaker apologizes to the person rapping at the door for making him wait, and opens the door to let him in, but no one is there. The speaker stares long into the darkness, dreaming (possibly) that it is Lenore, whispers her name, and hears the echo of her name repeated. His heart burns within, he hears tapping again, but says it is just the wind. A raven flies in the open door, acting like he owns the place, and perches on a bust of Pallas above the speaker's chamber door. The raven's serious face turns the speaker's sadness into a smile, the speaker asks the raven what its name is in the underworld, and the raven says, "Nevermore." The speaker is amazed to hear the raven answer, and though the word "Nevermore" as a name means nothing, the speaker says no person has ever heard of an animal or bird with such a name. The raven sits motionless, and the speaker says that the bird will leave him like his other friends have, and the raven again says, "Nevermore." The speaker reasons that the raven says "Nevermore" because it heard its old master say the word over and over because of disaster that befell him. The speaker sets up a seat in front of the raven, and tries to figure out what the bird means by saying "Nevermore." The speaker watches the raven, whose eyes stare at him, and rests his head on a velvet cushion, reminding him of his lost love, whose memory presses into him. The speaker thinks the air grows denser and perfumed, believing the angels have sent him rest and relief from his sorrow of Lenore's death. He tells himself to inhale the drug to forget Lenore, and the raven again says "Nevermore." The speaker asks the raven if there is healing for his sorrow and Lenore's suffering, but the raven again says, "Nevermore." The speaker asks the raven if heaven holds his love Lenore, and the raven again says, "Nevermore." The speaker orders the raven out for lying about Lenore, and the raven again says, "Nevermore." The raven just sits on the bust of Pallas, his shadow on the floor, and the speaker says his soul is under the dark shadow on the floor, "nevermore" to be lifted out. (I guess that wasn't too brief.)

2. List some examples of alliteration in "The Raven," and explain the rhyme scheme that Poe uses.

Weak and weary; nodded, nearly napping; rare and radiant; entreating entrance; doubting, dreaming dreams; stepped a stately; bird or beast upon the sculptured bust; feather then he fluttered; followed fast and followed faster; grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt; velvet violet; faint foot-falls; home by horror haunted....

Poe's rhyme scheme includes internal rhymes in the first and second lines of each stanza, and in the third line of each stanza; the second line ends in an "or" sound and rhymes with the fourth, fifth, and sixth lines of each stanza.

3. Why do you think Poe chose a raven, rather than some other bird (or even a different animal) to appear at the speaker's door?

It is black and ominous, which reminds the reader of death and sorrow.

4. Do you think the raven is, as the speaker believes, simply repeating a phrase he heard, or do you think he is an agent sent from heaven? Why?

Answers will vary.

5. What does the raven appear to symbolize to the speaker, as mentioned in line 101?

“Take thy beak from out my heart” indicates that the raven represents the poet’s grief at the loss of his love Lenore.

Week 11, Day 2: Poems on Science vs. Nature

“Sonnet—To Science” and “When I Heard the Learn’d Astronomer”

1. What does Poe accuse “Science” of doing in “Sonnet—To Science”?

He accuses Science of ruining the beauty of nature for poets and others.

2. Explain Whitman’s feelings toward the “learn’d astronomer.”

Whitman hates the technical aspects of nature, saying he prefers the beauty of nature instead.

3. How are these two poems similar in theme? How can the viewpoint of both the authors be taken to an unfruitful extreme?

Both prefer enjoying nature to learning about it methodically and systematically, believing that doing that strips nature of its beauty. This view can be taken to an unfruitful extreme by insisting that knowledge about God’s creation is a waste of time, when, in fact, scientific pursuits, or “thinking God’s thoughts after Him,” as scientist Johannes Kepler put it, can be a great benefit to mankind and honoring to God.

Week 12, Day 1: Walden, Chapter II: Where I Lived, and What I Lived For

1. Describe the house Thoreau lives in in the woods. How is it better than his previous “homes”?

It is rustic, not weatherproof, fresh and open, clean-smelling. It is better than the boat and the tent he lived in previously.

2. Why does Thoreau say he went to live in the woods?

Thoreau says he went to live in the woods to “live deliberately,” to see if nature could teach him about life, to make sure he had “lived,” to “live deep.”

3. In the second-to-last paragraph, how does Thoreau compare a person’s standing “face to face with a fact” to a scimitar?

He says that looking straight at a fact is like looking on the blade of a scimitar and seeing both sides that shine from the sunlight. The fact you face cuts into you, and prepares you to change how you approach life.

4. Explain the meanings of these sayings found in *Walden*:

- “To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts.”

The greatest accomplishment a person can make is to make an impact upon the day that he lives.

- “Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity!”

People should simplify their lives, and reduce things that clutter up their thoughts and time.

- “Men think that it is essential that the Nation have commerce, and export ice, and talk through a telegraph, and ride thirty miles an hour, without a doubt, whether they do or not; but whether we should live like baboons or like men, is a little uncertain.”

Again, Thoreau is saying that technology does not necessarily improve our lives.

- “The preacher, instead of vexing the ears of drowsy farmers on their day of rest at the end of the week...should shout with thundering voice, “Pause! Avast! Why so seeming fast, but deadly slow?”

Preachers should tell congregations to slow down, instead of preaching sermons.

- “Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature, and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito’s wing that falls on the rails.”

Don’t let the worries of the day keep you from doing what you need to do.

- “I have always been regretting that I was not as wise as the day I was born.”

Thoreau believes that the early part of his life has been somewhat wasted with learning things he doesn’t think are important, and instilling into him ideas that keep him from living his life freely.

5. Do you agree with Thoreau that things like railroads, post offices, telegraphs, and newspapers (of course, in our day, this might compare to cars, email, cell phones, and the Internet) are unnecessary? Why or why not?

Answers will vary.

6. How does a Christian respond to Thoreau’s (a) apparent desire to isolate himself from the world, (b) philosophy that getting back to nature gives life meaning, and (c) call for simplicity in living?

First, Christians are commanded not to love “the things that are in the world” (1 John 2:15). But we are commanded to go “into all the world” (Mark 16:15), and that we will be around sinners, or else we would have to “go out of the world” (1 Corinthians 5:10).

Second, Thoreau teaches that Thoreau makes the case that a simple life in nature gives life meaning for mankind; he gives no effort to credit God’s provision for man through Christ’s death as making life meaningful. In this way Thoreau appears to line up with those who “worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator” (Romans 1:25).

Last, Christians can appreciate Thoreau’s call for more simple living. Thoreau was partly denouncing the lifestyles of many who live too much for the cares of this world. God’s Word says:

- “I [Paul] have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11).
- “But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (1 Timothy 6:6-8).
- “Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5).

Week 17, Day 2: “The Chambered Nautilus”

1. What poetic language does the author use to describe the chambered nautilus in the first stanza?

He compares it to a great ship sailing the sea, with “purpled wings,” with Sirens singing, and mermaids lying on coral reefs.

2. What is the chambered nautilus doing in the second and third stanzas?

Building up its shell, which it outgrows each year.

3. What lesson does Holmes take from the chambered nautilus, as presented in the fourth and fifth stanzas? How does this lesson compare to the Biblical worldview?

By telling his soul to “build thee more stately mansions,” Holmes seems to be telling himself to build up his own soul under his own power and effort. He leaves God out of the equation, and even hints with his words “shut thee from heaven” (which at first seems to indicate the chambered nautilus’s protection from the elements) that he wants to achieve independence from God. This is an evolutionist/pantheist/transcendentalist mindset that rejects God as ultimate ruler of the universe.

Week 17, Day 3: Poems of Emily Dickinson

1. Give some examples of “slant-rhymes” in the Emily Dickinson poems we read.

“Soul/all,” “you/know,” “today/victory,” “eye/majority,” “away/poetry.”

Hope

2. What does Dickinson mean by the second stanza? (Rearranging the words in line five might clarify it.)

That hope is heard “sweetest” when the storm blows, or when times are hardest, and it would have to be a really bad “storm” to squash hope altogether.

3. What is a Christian’s hope? (See Titus 2:11-14 and 1 Peter 1:3-5.)

A Christian’s hope:

*“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; looking for **that blessed hope**, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (Titus 2:11-14).*

*“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto **a lively hope** by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” (1 Peter 1:3-5).*

[Emphasis added in bold.]

I’m Nobody! Who Are You?

4. What is a “nobody,” according to this poem? Who are the “they” who would banish “nobodies”?

Apparently a “nobody” is a person who doesn’t conform to accepted normal behavior. The “they” are those who want conformity.

5. Who is a “somebody,” according to this poem? What is dreary about being a “somebody”? Why does Dickinson compare admirers of “somebodies” to a “bog”?

A “somebody” is a famous or popular person, which Dickinson says is dreary because all a “somebody” does is preen around with admirers. Dickinson compares the admirers to a “bog,” because they are apparently as unpleasant and mucky as a swamp.

Success

6. Why does Dickinson say success is counted “sweetest” by those who never succeed? What can’t even the victors do as well as the “defeated” and “dying,” according to the second and third stanzas?

Dickinson says that success is counted sweetest because it is longed for more by those who fail. She says that victors can’t even define “success” as well as those who don’t experience it.

7. What personal message might Dickinson be putting forth in this poem?

That she doesn’t think herself a success.

Much Madness Is Divinest Sense

8. What point does Dickinson make about much of what is called “sense” and “madness”? What can happen to those who object to the majority?

That often “sense” and “madness” are mixed up by most people. Those who object to the majority’s opinion can be shunned, castigated, and punished.

9. Give an example of how a Christian can find himself called “straightway dangerous” for not assenting to popular opinion.

Answers will vary.

A Book

10. How are books like “coursers” and “frigates”? How are books good for the “frugal”?

They enable readers to “take trips.” Books are available for even the poorest, “frugal” person to use, with the imagination, to go on a “journey.”

Week 18, Day 3: “The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro” (Speech)

1. In the speech’s opening, why does Douglass say he finds it difficult to celebrate July Fourth? What does he say the Fourth of July reminds him and slaves in America of?

Because of the plight of slaves in America. The Fourth of July only reminds him of the lack of freedom for slaves in America.

2. What does Douglass say to those who tell him he should be more persuasive and less confrontational?

He says that the truth is plain enough that (a) slaves are men, and (b) it is right to give them liberty, and no persuasion is needed; Americans simply need to act upon these clear truths.

3. How does Douglass prove slaves are men who deserve rights?

There were death penalties for crimes they commit; there were laws forbidding the teaching of reading and writing to them; slaves do intelligent work; they worship God in Christian churches.

4. Explain what Douglass means by this: “For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.”

Our country needs not gentle persuasion, but decisive action, to end slavery.

5. What gives Douglass hope for the United States?

The fact that slavery will fall, if for nothing else, because of the disapproval of other nations that trade with the United States.

6. Explain the meaning of the William Lloyd Garrison poem quoted by Douglass. Is it correct, or reasonable, to believe that on earth “that day will come all feuds to end” and “none on earth shall exercise a lordly power”?

It asks for the soon coming of the end of slavery and the end of tyranny all over the world. Garrison pledges to do all he can to end slavery. Garrison’s goals, as state in the poem, of ending all “feuds” and eradicating all tyranny—slave owner or government—are far-fetched and implausible, given man’s fallen world.

7. Explain the following New Testament passages concerning slavery: 1 Peter 2:18-19, 1 Timothy 1:9-10, Matthew 8:5-7 (Think about it!), 1 Timothy 6:1-2, and Philemon 8-14. How should a Christian therefore act regarding the practice of slavery?

1 Peter 2:18-19 – “Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.”

Christian slaves should obey their masters, even unfair, mean ones. For Christians, it is honorable to endure wrongful suffering (like Christ did).

1 Timothy 1:9-10 – “...[T]he law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine....”

Those who work in the slave trade (“menstealers”) are unrighteous and lumped together with those who commit all kinds of other awful sins.

Matthew 8:5-7 – “And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.”

Jesus said nothing to the centurion about his need to free his slave, but instead agreed to heal the slave. This does not mean that Jesus approved of slavery, but that He was come to change the world at a much higher level than to simply remedy social evils.

1 Timothy 6:1-2 – “Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit.”

Christian slaves should honor their masters, so they won’t blaspheme God. Even Christians slaves who have Christian masters should not “despise” their masters.

Philemon 1:8-14 – “Wherefore, though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient, yet for love’s sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Jesus Christ. I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: whom I have sent again: thou therefore receive him, that is, mine own bowels: whom I would have retained with me, that in thy stead he might have ministered unto me in the bonds of the gospel: but without thy mind would I do nothing; that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly.”

Paul says he has a right as an apostle of Jesus Christ to order Philemon to free his slave Onesimus, but he instead he appeals to Philemon to do it willingly

In short, Christians certainly should be among the first to see the unfairness of slavery, but our first mission in changing the world is through the power of Christ.

Week 19, Day 1: “Original Policy of the Administration” (Lincoln’s First Inaugural Address)

1. In the third paragraph, what does Lincoln assure southerners? What resolution does he say that those who nominated him for President support?

That he has no plans to get rid of slavery, since (a) the Constitution expressly allows it, and (b) he has no personal desire to end it. Those who put him in office (the Republican Party) supported a resolution that the government has no intention of ever interfering with the institution of slavery in slave states.

2. What does Lincoln mean by saying, “I hold that...the Union of these States is perpetual”? What does he say must happen first if the “contract” among the states can be dissolved?

That no state can leave the union. Lincoln says that the “contract” that binds the states together cannot be dissolved unless all states agree to dissolve it.

3. After declaring that the states had not actually seceded (“I therefore consider that...the Union is unbroken”), what war-like words does Lincoln use to say what will occur if the Southern states do not allow the collection of “duties and imposts”?

“Bloodshed,” “violence,” “invasion,” and “using of force.”

4. What does Lincoln say to those “who love the Union”? Sum up his argument that “minorities” cannot refuse to submit to a majority in a government. How would a statesman from a seceded state answer this argument?

That they should gravely consider their leaving the union, since their troubles might be worse if they do. Lincoln says that a minority cannot refuse to submit to a government where a majority rules, or else that government “must cease.” The new government formed might have another split, and so on. To answer this argument, a secessionist might say the government would not “cease”; it would simply not rule over that section of people.

5. What arguments against secession having to do with the physical proximity of the North and South does Lincoln present?

They are right next to each other, it will worsen relations, war will not resolve anything.

6. What is the “proposed amendment to the Constitution” Lincoln mentions? What is his position on it?

It’s an amendment that prohibits the U. S. government ever from interfering with the institution of slavery. Lincoln says he supports it, and has “no objections to its being made express and irrevocable” (permanent).

7. How does Lincoln end the address? How is this tone different from the rest of the speech?

It sounds more friendly (even using religious language), and is less threatening.

Week 20, Day 1: “Lucky People”

1. What does Mrs. Jewett mean by saying, “[T]here is nothing we have to work so hard for as this very good luck”? What examples does she give of this?

That “luck” isn’t that important; it’s really evidence of hard work. She gives examples of someone who is kind and is done a favor in return, someone who is wise and sensible, someone who carefully studies, someone who did not yield to the temptation to be lazy.

2. What does Mrs. Jewett say about how most people approach work? How does she react to a young person who says he has great ambitions?

That they avoid it, wanting good things just to happen to them. Jewett asks the person with great ambitions if he is willing to work.

3. What does Mrs. Jewett say is the worst thing to envy a person for?

His goodness.

4. What is the only kind of “bad luck” that Mrs. Jewett believes in? How does she view the hardships of life?

The kind we make for ourselves. She views the hardships of life as God working with us and not against us.

5. How does Mrs. Jewett credit God in each of our lives? How does this relate to the essay’s main point?

She says that God gives all of us talents and opportunities, and that it is up to us to work hard to take advantage of them.

Week 21, Day 3: “Taming the Bicycle”

1. What does Twain mean at first by saying he had no problems learning how to dismount? What happens to the Expert when the bicycle lands on him after a few tries?

He fell off a lot at first, and he is hospitalized for several days.

2. What is difficult for Twain about learning to ride the bicycle? What does he compare getting off a bicycle to?

Having to turn the handlebar the opposite way he wants to not fall, figuring out how to mount it, how to steer, how to dismount. He compares dismounting a bicycle to not dismounting a horse, but dismounting a house on fire.

3. Describe Twain’s first real “adventure” on the bicycle.

He gives himself plenty of space (30 yards) so he doesn’t run into anything; he gets insulted by a young boy; he comes to a stop on a steep uphill incline; he hits stones; he has a hard time turning around; he crashes into a farmer’s wagon full of cabbages; he hits dogs accidentally.

Week 22, Day 1: Poems That Teach a Lesson

“The Lesson”

1. How does the speaker contrast with the mockingbird he hears outside his window? What idea does he have?

He is too sad and tired to sing, unlike the mockingbird, but he gets the idea to try to cheer up some other lonely person with a song.

2. What point does the speaker make in the fourth stanza? What happens with his song?
That through sorrow often comes a great song, like a mockingbird which sings in the dark swamp at night. He sings to cheer up a brother/friend; his friend is cheered—but so is the speaker.
3. What is “the lesson”? Compare this to Romans 15:1-3 and Philippians 2:3-4.

To focus not on your own sorrows, but on the sorrows of others, and yours will be lessened, or you will be happier by making others happy.

Romans 15:1-3: “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbor for *his* good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.”

Philippians 2:3-4: “*Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

“Richard Cory”

1. List several adjectives and phrases that describe Richard Cory.

Gentleman, clean-favored, imperially slim, quietly arrayed, glittered when he walked, rich, admirably schooled in every grace.

2. What do you think the phrase “waited for the light” (line 13) means? How does it contrast with Richard Cory?

Possibly the common people were waiting on their fortunes to turn, seeing as they were so poor that they “went without the meat.” Richard Cory, in contrast, “glitters.”

3. What line especially makes the last line of “Richard Cory” surprising? How are lines 11-12 ironic? What does God’s Word say about trusting in riches? (See Psalm 49:16-17, Mark 10:23-25, and James 5:1-3.)

The previous line that includes “one calm summer night” makes it surprising that Richard Cory commits suicide, because of the violent contrast of the two. The irony in the poem is that the common people wish they could be in Richard Cory’s place.

What God’s Word says about trusting in riches:

“Be not thou afraid when one is made rich, when the glory of his house is increased; For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away: his glory shall not descend after him” (Psalm 49:16-17).

“And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God” (Mark 10:23-25).

“Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days” (James 5:1-3).

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening”

1. Remember the term *iambic pentameter*? Good! Now look up the term *iambic tetrameter* and write the definition in your own words. How does “Stopping by Woods” fit that definition?

Iambic tetrameter contains four “beats” per line, with accents on the second, fourth, sixth, and eighth syllables. “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” contains exactly that.

2. Explain the poem’s rhyme scheme.

The rhyme scheme is AABA, BBCB, CCDC, DDDD.

3. Make a quick list of images that form in your head after reading the poem, or feelings the poem creates.

Answers will vary.

4. Some readers and literary critics believe “Stopping by Woods” is a simple poem; some believe it is deep and complex. What do you think? What deeper meaning(s) could the poem have besides just an account of a man riding by some woods at night?

Answers will vary, but the poet could be contemplating all the things he wants to accomplish in his life, with the word “sleep” meaning his death.

Week 22, Day 2: Poems That Teach a Lesson

“War Is Kind”

1. How do the stanzas of “War Is Kind” alternate, and what effect is created? List the “fates” of the soldiers in the first and third stanzas.

They alternate between little speeches to those affected by the deaths of their men—sweethearts, wives, children, and mothers—and stiff, indoctrinating speeches given by commanders to soldiers or about soldiers. The effect created is to make the stiff little military speeches—about “the virtue of the slaughter” and “the excellence of killing”—sound ridiculous. The soldiers in the first and third stanzas die by (a) being shot off a horse, throwing his hands into the air, and (b) being shot or bombed in trenches, gasping for air until he dies.

2. What does Crane mean when he mentions “the unexplained glory flies above them”?

The “unexplained glory” is the flag. Crane means that it is not exactly clear why fighting for, essentially, a piece of cloth, is supposed to be glorious.

3. Why do you think he titled this poem “War Is Kind”?

Because he believes that war...is not kind, for the reasons he gives in the poem.

“Mending Wall”

4. Since “Mending Wall” is written in unrhymed iambic pentameter, how can it be poetically classified?

As blank verse!

5. What happens to the speaker’s fence? What does he do with his neighbor in spring?

It constantly gets broken down, by frozen groundswell, hunters, or unseen "hands." The speaker works together with his neighbor to rebuild the wall in springtime.

6. What does the speaker's neighbor say twice about fences? What does he mean by this? What doesn't the speaker understand about his neighbor's saying this?

The neighbor twice says, "Good fences make good neighbors," meaning that neighbors respect each other's property. The speaker doesn't understand his neighbor's saying this in their case, because there is nothing on either's land that could disrupt the other's property, such as cows.

7. What do you make of the poem's lines about the neighbor's being like a "savage armed" and moving "in darkness...not of woods only and the shade of trees"?

The neighbor seems to be acting a little in a primitive, uncivilized way, by just putting up the fence when there is no real reason to do so; this is emphasized by the phrases about his being "in darkness" (or working from a backwards state of mind).

8. How are the ways that the two neighbors approach the mending of the wall opposites?

The speaker has fun with it, and feels playful about it, partly because it is springtime, and he thinks about why he is doing it. The neighbor works on the wall unthinkingly, simply as a ritual that he has always done.

"The Road Not Taken"

9. What is the rhyme scheme of "The Road Not Taken"?

ABAAB

10. What does the speaker do before he takes one of the roads? Is there any particular reason he takes the road he does?

He looks as far down the road as he can, until it bends and he can no longer see down it. He says that it is a little less traveled, although he admits that the roads are really about equally traveled upon.

11. The speaker says that by taking the road "less traveled by," it "has made all the difference." What two major questions arise from his saying this?

First, how has it made all the difference, since both roads are basically equally worn, as he says earlier in the poem? And second, how does he know that it has made all the difference, since he doesn't know what he missed by not taking the first road?

12. What "lesson" do you think many readers of "The Road Not Taken" pull from the poem?

That people should follow their own dreams or way of doing things, and not just to follow the same path that others take simply because many have taken that path.

Week 29, Day 1: "The Cure for a Troubled Heart"

1. What chapter does Truett say many Christians would choose as the most comforting chapter in the Bible? Why?

John 14. In this chapter Jesus tells His disciples not to be troubled, even though he is leaving them soon.

2. What effect(s) are created by Truett's repeating certain phrases and questions several times in succession during this sermon? List some of these repeated phrases.

- “How may a troubled heart be cured?”
- “The doctrine of the stoic.”
- “Can you gainsay...?”
- “Go with a brother’s....”

They drive home the words to the listener; to achieve rhythm in speech.

3. List some reasons that Truett says people despair. What does he say is the worst reason? What are some “cures” for a troubled heart Truett says that the world offers?

People despair, for example, over business failure, betrayal of a friend, and ill health—but the worst and most common reason is sin. Suicide, stoicism, epicureanism, vacations, denial of sin and death and sorrow are “cures” the world offers.

4. What does God’s Word offer as the cure for a troubled heart? Why does Truett say that we should “stake our all on Christ”?

The words of Jesus: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me.” We should stake our all on Christ because (a) He is worthy, (b) we would be lost without His counsel as the light of the world, (c) He answers the three most vexing questions humanity has (sin, sorrow, death).

5. What does Truett say is the “chiefest mystery of all”? How is Jesus the answer to it? Explain how the six-year-old girl’s funeral shows the different approaches people have to the mystery.

The mystery of what happens after death. Jesus has gone into death, arisen from it, and conquered it. The little girl’s funeral shows how those who believe in Jesus can be secure that death is not the end, as opposed to those who do not trust in Him.

Week 29, Day 2: “America’s Present Emergency”

1. What three things does Wheeler say are at stake for America? Explain the “two schools of thought” about America’s entrance into World War II.

The three items at stake for Americans are their independence, our government, and our businesses. The two schools of thought are (a) we have to come to England’s aid, or America will be taken over by some European nation, or (b) there is no way that any European dictator will be able to conquer 130,000,000 people who have adequate defense.

2. What does Wheeler mean by saying, “[I]f we lend or lease war materials today, we will lend or lease American boys tomorrow”?

Putting ourselves through weapon sales and loan will lead to putting our entire nation at war.

3. Give reasons why Wheeler says that German takeover of the mainland United States is impossible.

The huge number of planes, tanks, ships, and men makes it impossible, especially in the light of the resistance they would face from American weapons. Also, Germany has not even been able to cross the English Channel, which is only 20 miles wide.

4. How do the items in Wheeler’s “cost of this war” paragraph represent ideas Americans oppose?

Higher taxes, fewer rights of speech and business are results more compatible with tyrannical governments than with American ideals.

5. What does Wheeler say will *not* result in a more sure defeat of Nazism? What does he say *will*?

Removing Hitler will not result in the defeat of Nazism; only the offer of a just peace to the German people will.

6. What does Wheeler say that the United States can do to stay at peace? What does he say that the pro-war propaganda put out by the government appeals to? Explain what he says is happening to those Americans who oppose its entrance into World War II.

If the people spread the idea of jumping into the European war. The propaganda, Wheeler says, appeals to Americans' Christianity, idealism, humanity, and loyalty. Many Americans opposed to war are being labeled "appeasers" and "unwitting tools of dictators."

7. With what appeals to the people does Wheeler end his radio address?

To remember the disaster of America's entrance into World War I, to stand up against mass hysteria, to make themselves heard, and to contact their Congressmen and tell them they want no part in the war.

Week 30, Day 1: "Brandenburg Gate Speech"

1. What kind of speaking style does President Reagan display in this speech?

Crisp, direct, complimentary of Germany. He actually spoke at a slower speed than normal, since there were many in the audience whose first language was not English.

2. What specific words does Reagan use to describe the Berlin Wall's oppressiveness?

Concrete, barbed wire, dog runs, guard towers, and so on.

3. Explain the meanings of these phrases from the "Brandenburg Gate" speech:

- "Standing before the Brandenburg Gate, every man is a German, separated from his fellow men. Every man is a Berliner, forced to look upon a scar."

Anyone who sees the wall can feel the communist oppression it imparts; everyone who loves freedom hates the sight of it.

- "[O]ur differences are not about weapons, but about liberty."

The source of disagreement and tension between communist governments and free governments is not the fact that both are armed, but the fact that communist governments do not allow basic rights for their peoples, and threaten to take over other nations.

4. To what does Reagan attribute the rapid success of West Berlin's economy? What examples does he list of this? How does he compare this to the record of communism?

To economic freedom. He lists businesses, homes, parks, streets, lawns, universities, culture, food, clothing, automobiles, hotels, and so on. The communist record is that of failure, poverty, and backwardness in every living standard measurable.

5. What signs does President Reagan see that Russian communism is weakening? What does he say would be the best way for Russia to show it is truly reforming?

He mentions the glasnost and perestroika policies of Gorbachev, but says that tearing down the Berlin Wall would be a real sign of reform.

6. What does President Reagan offer those nations' governments who want to change their policies to allow for freedoms for their citizens? How does this relate to why he chose Berlin as the place to make this speech? List some ways that Reagan says a free Berlin could be useful.

The cooperation and backing of freer nations like the United States. Berlin is a perfect example of a city divided by freedom and oppression. A free Berlin, Reagan says, could be an important airport hub, a meeting center, a place for cultural exchange, sports events like the Olympics, and so on.

7. Why does Reagan say that communism “produces backwardness”?

It refuses to allow humans to create, to produce, to innovate, to worship God.

8. What do you think the most famous line is in this speech? Why?

Answers will vary, but the most famous line is “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!”