

Study Guide Answer Key for Assignment 21

G. K. CHESTERTON

A PIECE OF CHALK

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. e
2. d
3. b
4. d
5. c
6. b
7. d
8. c
9. d
- 10.a

THE FOOL

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. d
2. b
3. d
4. e
5. e
6. b
7. e
8. c
9. e
- 10.e

ON LYING IN BED

VOCABULARY EXERCISE

1. premises
2. conceded
3. riot
4. sweetmeat
5. bristly
6. hygienic
7. hypochondriac

8. vain
9. candor
10. arbitrary

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. c
2. a
3. d
4. b
5. e
6. e
7. a
8. b
9. d
10. c

SHORT ANSWER QUESTIONS

1. For what does Chesterton use the title “Lying in Bed” as a figure of speech? Explain the metaphor.
The phrase “Lying in Bed” is a metaphor for being concerned with true virtue.
2. Why does Chesterton not like wallpaper? Relate your answer to “Lying in bed” and the issue of morality.
Wall paper is mass manufactured, “repetitious,” and does not involve true human creativity. Like wallpaper, morality should not be repetitious. It must involve making urgent decisions between right and wrong at the moment, not out of habit, but out of an active struggle of the conscience.
3. Why does Chesterton give the example of the playwright?
Chesterton believed that the playwrights of his time, such as Henrik Ibsen, attacked and misrepresented institutions that formed the fabric of a moral society, such as the institution of marriage, yet they condoned such things as committing suicide.
4. According to Chesterton, an example of bad taste would be ____ and an example of bad ethics or morals would be ____.
a minor moral issue such getting up later in the day . . . a major moral, such as being unfaithful in marriage

CHRISTOPHER MORLEY

SITTING IN THE BARBER’S CHAIR

VOCABULARY QUESTIONS: ANALOGIES

1. e
2. d
3. c
4. c
5. c

6. a
7. d
8. c
9. c
- 10.e

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. c
2. e
3. b
4. d
5. a
6. c
7. d
8. e
9. d
- 10.a

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. The author achieves humor through overstatement or hyperbole, unusual word use and wordplay, and self-effacement. Find examples of each in the essay and discuss them. (Look up the words in the dictionary if you do not know their meaning.)
Morley uses hyperbole "slice of eternity" to express the time it takes him to get his haircut because it is something he hates so much.
2. The tone of Morley's essay is humorous, and much of the humor is achieved by his choice of words, such as *pithecanthropoid* shape. *Pithecanthropoid* is not an ordinary literary word. Why do you think that Morley uses it? Do you find any other words or phrases used in a humorous or interesting way?
Morley use of more academic vocabulary for such an ordinary process as getting a haircut to create humor. The phrases "Bourgeois bullet shape," "tonsorial ecstasies," "lobes of our ears and other vulnerability," and "human leviathans" are other expressions that add humor, color and interest to the essay.
3. An allusion is an indirect reference to another literary work. Morley makes several allusions to works that you might not be familiar with, such as William Wordsworth's Ode "Imitations of Immortality" and the clergyman Robert Burton's 17th-century work *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Wordsworth's "Intimations" Ode is a very serious poem about the immortality of the soul, while *Anatomy of Melancholy* is a serious treatise on depression, or melancholy. What effect do these allusions on serious works of literature have on the essay?
The contrast of the mundane (getting a haircut) with the serious and even sublime (Burton's work and Wordsworth's poem) has a humorous effect.
4. Most everyone in America has experienced the barber's chair. What is it that makes the author feel uneasy in the barber's chair? Do you share any of the author's sentiments about getting a haircut?

The author expressly does not like wasting time to get a haircut. He does not like feeling vulnerable in the barber's chair or having nothing to do while he is having his hair cut.

ON UNANSWERING LETTERS

VOCABULARY EXERCISE

1. silt (answer given in study guide)
2. lees
3. involution
4. delta
5. dido
6. crass
7. con
8. felicitous
9. pall
10. congruent

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. a
2. c
3. a
4. b
5. a
6. d
7. b
8. c
9. e
10. e

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Are people who answer letters (or send emails or "text") right away, as Christopher Morley says, strange? Do most people answer letters right away or wait?
Correspondence between people has changed immensely since Christopher Morley wrote this humorous piece. However, people have not changed: some people answer emails and texts immediately, some within a day or more, and some not at all. Whether or not we respond promptly or at all depends on the type of correspondence and the age and personality of those who are writing. For example, younger people perhaps do not feel compelled to respond to many of their friends' emails right away or at all, while a businessman is required to respond immediately.
2. Be able to describe what Morley does once he receives his letter. Do you share Morley's feelings as he goes through his process of "unanswering letters"?
He procrastinates, but then starts rationalizing for his procrastination. Students who procrastinate may identify with Morley's behavior.

3. Find passages in the essay that you think are especially humorous, and attempt to explain why they are so.

Christopher Morley uses hyperbole and other figures of speech not only to create humor but also to support his portrait of the procrastinator. Writing right away in response to receiving a letter, for example, is called “crass and breathless promptness.” While promptness is usually viewed as a positive thing, in the mind of a procrastinator who is rationalizing, the word “crass” and “breathless” make more sense. The extreme language for something so appropriate and normal as responding to a letter right away is humorous.

THE URCHIN AT THE ZOO

VOCABULARY EXERCISE: SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS

1. d
2. c
3. a
4. c
5. b
6. b
7. b
8. e
9. a
10. d

QUESTIONS FOR CLASS DISCUSSION

1. Who is the “urchin” in Morley’s essay? What is the connotation or “feeling” of the word? Is Morley using the word in its strict sense? Why do you suppose Morley uses it in describing his own son?
The urchin is the author’s son. The word “urchin” is used humorously, as it is usually used to mean “imp.” As people often do, he is using a connotatively negative word to show affection, as a mother might in talking about her son as being a “little monkey.”
2. Curators are men or women employed to oversee a museum or some other institution. Who are the “curators” in Morley’s essay? Explain the possible reason for Morley’s curious use of this word.
Again, Morley’s word choice is used to create humor. Morley is suggesting that he and his wife are overseeing their child in much the same way as a museum curator would—with care, fascination and keen observation.
3. How does the urchin respond to the boulder and robin? How does his response compare to his response to other animals at the zoo?
The urchin responds very enthusiastically to the boulder and robin because they are familiar objects. Morley explains: “I suppose the reason for that is plain. These two objects had some understandable relation with his daily life. His small mind—we call a child’s mind “small” simply by habit; perhaps it is larger than ours, for it can take in almost anything without effort—possessed well-known classifications into which the big stone and the robin fitted comfortably and naturally. But what can a child say to an ostrich or an elephant? It simply smiles and passes on.”

4. How do Bolshevism and the League of Nations relate to the urchin and his reaction to the ostrich and elephant?

Bolshevism and the League of Nations were new to the people of the early twentieth century—and frightening. Morley is humorously commenting that a child takes a more serene (and thus “superior”) approach toward those things that are new to him, such as confronting the never-seen-before ostrich and elephant.

5. What is the main theme or purpose of this essay? How does the author achieve his purpose?

The purpose of Morley’s essay is to reflect on the psychological differences between the child and adult. Morley observes, for example, that the adult is astounded or frightened when encountering new things, while the child looks on the unfamiliar with calm indifference. Unlike adults, the child is more fascinated by familiar things than unfamiliar, as it “had some understandable relation with his daily life.” Also, while adults tend to be abstract thinkers, the child is very literal in what he hears and what he says. When referring to a grizzly drying itself, he says “He’s dying” (He’s drying). His “curators” think that he is talking about death, an abstract concept. Morley expresses his theme through a humorous narrative involving a walk through the Philadelphia Zoo.

ON DOORS

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. c
2. b
3. e
4. e
5. c
6. d
7. b
8. a
9. c
10. c

A LETTER TO FATHER TIME

READING COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. c
2. b
3. a
4. d
5. d
6. b
7. a
8. d
9. a
10. c