

## Questions to Consider

Having trouble coming up with a topic for your research? Below are some questions you may consider for each of our selected titles. Keep in mind, this list is not exhaustive. You are welcome to use one of our questions or come up with one of your own!

*1984:*

1. What is the nature of love and friendship in Oceania? Describe and evaluate the relationships evident within the text. What do these relationships say about the Party's influence on society in Oceania? Furthermore, what is your final conclusion about love in Oceania?
2. Why do modern governments choose to convey information through propaganda? How and why does the Party use propaganda? How does this compare to some of the modern propaganda techniques used across the world during not only World War II but during current times as well?
3. At the end of the novel, why does Winston love Big Brother? Analyze his final reactions and compare this to his opinions on Big Brother as they occur throughout the text.

*Great Expectations:*

1. Which of the two endings do you find more aesthetically and/or emotionally satisfying? Decide which one you think is superior, and then develop an argument in defense of your choice.
2. How is the motif of redemption presented and developed in the novel? You can make reference to various elements such as character, style, and plot in developing your argument.
3. How does the novel define "gentleman"—what are the characteristics of a gentleman? What conception does the young Pip initially have in the novel, and what conception does he end the novel with?

*In Cold Blood:*

1. How does the small town setting of *In Cold Blood* affect the tragedy?
2. Can the lines between fiction and nonfiction be blurred and still effective?
3. Is nature or nurture more important to the development of human character?

*Memoirs of a Geisha:*

1. What effect did WWII have on traditional Japanese customs and mannerisms?
2. Do the characters in *Memoirs of a Geisha* fulfill the expected roles of men and women in society?
3. Why are geishas able to transcend the traditional social hierarchies of twentieth-century Japan?

*The Name of the Wind:*

1. How does tragedy shape the path of the orphaned hero?
2. Can there be a true dichotomy between "good" and "evil" people?
3. In what ways can fantasy be used to inform reality?

*Night Circus:*

1. Discuss the non-linear timeline of the novel. How did time in the novel mirror the nature of the circus? How do the narrative chapters and the descriptive chapters work together to weave a more engaging story? Is time manipulated or fated at the circus?
2. The novel opens with a quote from Oscar Wilde: *A dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.* How is this sentiment explored in *The Night Circus*? Who in the novel is a dreamer? And what is their punishment?
3. How does the archetype of Good versus Evil relate to *Night Circus*? Consider the main characters of the novel—does the competition usurp the free will of the performers? Who or what is the true antagonist of *The Night Circus*?

*Persepolis 1&2:*

1. Satrapi says that "fear has always been the driving force behind all dictators' repression." In what ways are young people in Iran repressed, and how do they rebel against this repression?
2. What kinds of captivity and freedom does the author explore in *Persepolis*? What stifles or prevents people from being completely free? How do they circumvent and defy the rules imposed on them and attempt to live ordinary lives despite revolution and war?
3. What is the role of women in the story? Compare and contrast the various women.

*Pride and Prejudice:*

1. What are the reasons for and rules of entailment and primogeniture, and how did these affect the lives of women in Georgian England?
2. How does Elizabeth Bennett eschew the traditional role of the woman in early nineteenth-century England?
3. In what ways is *Pride and Prejudice* semi-autobiographical?

*Somewhere Inside:*

1. Can North Korea be described as a traditional dystopian society?
2. How does the idea of "mob mentality" relate to the people of North Korea?
3. Can a country ever truly be isolated from the rest of the world?

*To Kill a Mockingbird:*

1. How is courage defined in this novel? What character(s) best exemplify courage? Why? What point does Harper Lee want to make about courage through her use of these characters?
2. With age and experience come knowledge, the realization of harsh realities, and finally wisdom and understanding. Trace the narrator's journey from innocence to understanding.
3. *To Kill a Mockingbird* is set during the Great Depression of the 1930's. How does this economic catastrophe affect the actions of some characters? Are any characters unaffected by the Great Depression? Why are they exempt?