

Summer Required Reading for 12th AP students:

Novel: You are to read *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie. You will take a multiple choice test including some discussion questions the second week of school.

Response Journal: While reading, you are to complete journal responses for the chapters. Please do these in order as you read. The responses should take 10-15 minutes each. If possible, write your responses in a composition book. The length will vary, but two per page is a good estimate. Write your name, chapter number, and prompt number on each journal entry. Please write neatly on the front of each page only. The journals will be graded and are due the first week of school and will count as a test grade.

Reading Journal Prompts:

1. After reading the seventh part of Chapter 1, it is clear that for some of the characters the only thing they have in common is their destination. Agatha Christie makes a deliberate effort to create characters who have opposing perspectives. Write a paragraph or two in which you identify those characters which seem to be natural adversaries and explain your reasoning.

2. Agatha Christie was a master of the murder mystery, carefully constructing a puzzle for the reader to solve. The first chapter contains many hints about future events.

In your journal, create a chart. Down the left side of your chart, make a list of what you think are hints of events that will occur later in the book. To the right of each hint, predict what you think the hint may be foreshadowing.

3. Chapter 1 provides a first impression of each character. Based only on what you have read so far, how would you characterize each of these people? List each of the characters in your journal; next to each one, write **one word** you think best describes him or her.

4. In Chapter III, the characters discuss how they each came to be invited to Soldier Island. Lombard blurts out, "Look here, I've just thought of something..." The judge silences him at that moment, but later gives him a chance to share his revelation. Lombard decides not to reveal his thoughts and instead makes something up. In your journal, write out what you think Lombard had discovered, and explain why he chose not to share the information.

5. In Chapter IV, the characters explain their crimes. While all of the crimes resulted in someone's death, they are all different. A patient dying on the operating table, as in Armstrong's case, is much different from Marston's reckless driving. In a few paragraphs, identify which crimes you believe to be the most and least serious crimes of the group. Explain your choices.

6. If you have ever lost a loved one suddenly, you probably know that a sudden death is vastly different from a gradual death. With the sudden death of a loved one, people often feel regret

for not having had the chance to say goodbye. A gradual death is followed by, in some instances, a sense of relief that the suffering for everyone involved is finally over.

In Chapter V, Marston's sudden death is shocking and frightening to the other guests. Amid the commotion immediately following the death, Emily Brent says, "In the midst of life we are in death." In a paragraph or two, explain this quotation as if you are explaining it to a classmate who cannot seem to understand what it means.

7. In Chapter IV, the characters find out that Mrs. Rogers has died in her sleep. The judge states, "... in my experience of ill-doing, Providence leaves the work of conviction and chastisement to us mortals – and the process is often fraught with difficulties. There are no short cuts." Respond to this statement in a letter to the judge. What does the judge mean, and do you agree or disagree? Explain your position.

8. At the end of Chapter VI, Rogers notices the little China figures are disappearing with each death. Using the nursery rhyme, predict the next four deaths: who will die, and how? Refer to the poem at the beginning of the novel.

9. Suspicions continue to deepen in Chapter VII. As the characters become increasingly paranoid about each other, they become more protective of themselves and less willing to openly share their thoughts and feelings. At the beginning of this chapter, Vera and Emily walk to the summit to watch for the boat they hope will rescue them. As they speak, Vera feels she is putting on a brave face. She is suppressing her true feelings, but why? Write in a diary entry in which Vera discusses her thoughts – or at least her thoughts according to your interpretation of the novel thus far.

10. Chapter VIII: Of all the male guests on Soldier Island, General Macarthur seems to be the least interested in actively solving the mystery or even in escaping the island. He does not accompany Blore, Lombard, and Armstrong as they explore the island; rather, he sits passively on the beach. General Macarthur behaves strangely in this chapter, saying things like, "There is so little time," and "We're all waiting for the end." Explain what he means by these remarks and why he is being so mysterious.

11. It seems that, other than waiting for the boat (which obviously will never come), the guests have done little to leave the island. Blore, Lombard, and Armstrong explore the island in hopes of finding the killer, while General Macarthur sits on the beach. Wargrave remains in the house most of the time, as do the ladies.

If you and seven others were marooned on an island in this manner, what efforts would you make to escape? Write your ideas in the form of a set of instructions for the characters in the novel. Use your imagination, but keep to the basic ideas of the book. In other words, there should be no UFO's sweeping down to save the people or other impossible ideas.

12. Toward the end of Chapter IX, Wargrave leads a discussion among the guests regarding the identity of U.N. Owen. Wargrave previously deciphered the enigmatic name as an alternate pronunciation/spelling of the word unknown, but no one has found anything resembling the killer's hiding place or, for that matter, any proof that someone other than the guests is on the island at all. All evidence, at this point, indicates that Owen is one of the guests. Who do you think it is? Discuss your idea about Owen's identity in a paragraph or two.

13. Up to this point in Chapter X, the men in the novel have given little attention to the women. Vera and Emily gravitate toward each other, perhaps because they feel more comfortable forging a friendship with a member of the same sex. In Chapter X, however, Vera and Lombard engage in a lengthy conversation during which Vera implies that Armstrong is the killer. Surprisingly, Lombard agrees. Until now, the male and female guests have not joined forces.

What, from your perspective, are the differences between the male characters and the female characters? Is one group stronger? More emotional? Back up your opinion in a paragraph or two.

14. As tension builds on the island, it is understandable that the guests would begin to bicker with and criticize each other. In part four of Chapter X, Lombard indicates he thinks that Blore is stupid by saying, "Your lack of imagination is going to make you absolutely a sitting target. A criminal of the imagination of U.N. Owen can make rings around you any time he – or she – wants to."

If stupidity really is Blore's flaw, what are the flaws of the other characters? Make a list of all the characters and explain what you think is each person's main flaw.

15. Chapter XII: It seems that every time a character is alone, he or she is murdered. Being alone was the safe thing to do earlier, but it has now become a guarantee of death. At the end of this chapter, Wargrave suggests that they must all stay together if they are to remain alive. What strategy would you use to survive this predicament? Write a paragraph or two about your plans for survival.

16. During Chapter XIV, the guests decide to go to bed. They all go at the same time, to assure themselves of everyone's whereabouts. We read Vera's and Blore's thoughts as they try to settle into sleep. The reader might expect to hear Lombard's and Armstrong's thoughts as well, but instead, Armstrong suddenly disappears.

Add a section between parts V and VI written from Armstrong's point of view. Where has he gone, and what is he up to?

17. *And Then There Were None* was written in 1939, long before the invention of the many modern conveniences we rely on today. The only technology the guests can access is a gramophone, an early version of the stereo, and whatever medical supplies Armstrong happens to have in his possession.

They have no phone, no computer, and no vehicle. What three modern conveniences would have made the biggest difference for the stranded guests? Make a list and explain how each of the three might have helped the guests.

18. Epilogue: While all the characters in the novel are responsible for someone's death, some are more likable than others. For instance, Vera's demeanor is polite and soft-spoken, but her spinelessness is irritating. Emily is judgmental and cold, but at least she seems to know who she is. Wargrave seems like a know-it-all, but he does possess a confidence that calms the others in times of crisis.

With whom do you most identify? Of all the characters, which is the one you'd least want to be stranded with? In a couple of paragraphs, explain who your favorite and least favorite characters are. Explain your choices.

19. Foreshadowing (clues about future events) is a key ingredient in any successful mystery novel. Agatha Christie was a master of foreshadowing. When we read a mystery we are often tricked until the very end, and then we realize there were clues along the way pointing to the outcome. Now that you have finished the novel, what clues were there to identify the killer? Make a list of the clues and their chapter numbers.