

Instructors Manual

Readings for Writers

FOURTEENTH EDITION

Prepared by

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ISBN-13: 978-1-133-35212-9
ISBN-10: 1-133-35212-X

Wadsworth / Cengage Learning
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Chapter 1

Hidden Within Technology's Empire, a Republic of Letters

Saul Bellow

Answers to Questions about the Facts

1. Bellow discusses the popularity of “art forms as technologies,” or film production, over books. Although evidence supports that movies are more popular and have a great impact on today’s society, Bellow emphasizes that literature still has a place in the modern world. He has so much faith in the existence of a literate minority that he has helped create a place for this minority to convene: in the pages of *The Republic of Letters*.
2. Allow for open discussion. Students may discuss the importance of watching movies and television versus the importance of reading books.
3. Bellow quotes Terry Teachout: “‘For Americans under the age of 30, film has replaced the novel as the dominant mode of artistic expression.’ To this Teachout adds that popular novelists like Tom Clancy and Stephen King ‘top out at around a million copies per book,’ and notes, ‘The final episode of NBC’s *Cheers*, by contrast, was seen by 42 million people.’” Allow students to discuss their opinions.
4. An empire is huge and consists of nations, territories, and peoples ruled by a single authority. A republic is a smaller unit within an empire. The title suggests that although technology’s popularity is as vast as a political empire, a smaller faction of literati exist within the empire. He describes the smaller faction as a

- republic, which implies that this group is a democratic one, whereas in the empire, the majority blindly follows their leader, technology.
5. Bellow discovered Proust, Joyce, T. E. Lawrence, Pasternak, and Kafka as a young man. These European or Russian writers represent a high literary cultural minority. Allow students to discuss their experiences with these writers.
 6. Bellow says, “On majoritarian grounds, the movies win.” Allow students to discuss their answers.

Answers to Questions about the Strategies

1. Bellow begins his essay by describing his childhood discovery of literature and his desire to share it with others. The opening paragraph effectively grabs the audiences’ attention.
2. Allow for individual responses. Readers may cite paragraph 3 as evidence that Bellow is a literary person. Students may also cite the author’s vocabulary, his references to scholars and writers, and his use of allusion as evidence that he is a literate man.
3. Bellow offers Teachout’s evidence in support of “art as technology” in paragraphs 8 and 9. Allow students to discuss Bellow’s argument.
4. Allow for open discussion. Students may interpret the brief paragraph as a concession to the power of movies. Other students may see it as a transition to demonstrate that viewing can inspire reading.
5. The final sentence functions as Bellow’s thesis. The essay ends by stating that technology has failed readers of literature. Allow students to discuss the effectiveness of this ending.

Answers to Questions about the Issues

1. Bellow states that people tend to follow the majority; however, large groups of minorities do exist, and their needs and interests must be met. Students' opinion of Bellow's view will vary.
2. Bellow cites his early visits to Midwestern libraries as proof that a literate minority had long existed, even in unlikely places.
3. Allow for individual responses. Students may discuss the book's use of stereotypes and its melodramatic style as reasons why books of this type are no longer influential. Television and the Internet now provide insight and commentary on our society's social conscious.
4. Allow for individual responses.
5. Allow for individual responses. Students may discuss the irony of "minorities of millions" and the need for the members of a minority to group to have a connection with each other and an outlet for their interests.

Chapter 2

Letter to Horace Greeley

Abraham Lincoln

Answers to Questions about the Facts

1. Lincoln's letter addresses Greeley and other doubters. The letter reiterates his desire to save the Union and explains that any actions regarding slavery are only taken in order to help save the Union.
2. Lincoln's attitude and tone are polite and respectful. He clearly states his positions and does not waver in his convictions, nor will he tolerate implications that his presidency is without direction.
3. Lincoln addresses Greeley's impatient and dictatorial tone in paragraph 1, yet he immediately deflects Greeley's attitude by referring to their long standing friendship and complimenting Greeley's character.
4. Lincoln's points were very clear, so it is doubtful that readers were unsure of Lincoln's policies. Students may comment on Lincoln's strong and repetitive word choice and his use of italics to emphasize key points. Responses may also include observations about Lincoln's numerous and varied examples of what lengths he would go to save the Union.
5. The date contextualizes the letter. Readers will know this was written during the Civil War. Students may also know that on August 22, 1862, Lincoln already had a draft of the Emancipation Proclamation in his desk.

Answers to Questions about the Strategies

1. This statement deflected any harsh feelings that Greeley (or *New York Tribune* readers) may have held against Lincoln and helped Lincoln gain the respect and admiration of his audience. It is obvious that Lincoln wanted readers to focus on the issues, not the men's personalities.
2. Lincoln's thesis was: "My most important goal in this struggle between the North and the South is to save the Union." Students' responses should address Lincoln's desire to preserve the Union through whatever means necessary.
3. Allow for open discussion. Students will likely comment on Lincoln's sophisticated rhetoric and frank tone. He also uses parallelisms such as "I would save," "If there be," "whenever I shall believe," and the phrase "If there be in it" is used three times.
4. Greeley used his position as editor of the *New York Tribune* to attack Lincoln's policies. Students may find this tactic unfair today, but in Lincoln's time this was a common way for editors to gain the attention of readers and public officials alike.
5. Lincoln's final paragraph distinguishes between his official duties and his personal beliefs. Allow students to discuss their opinions concerning this paragraph.

Answers to Questions about the Issues

1. Allow for open discussion.
2. Lincoln's official duty was to uphold the U.S. Constitution. Allow for open discussion.
3. Allow for open discussion.

4. Lincoln's attitude toward errors and new views is simple and efficient. He will try to correct errors when they are shown, and he will adopt new views when they have been proven true. Allow students to discuss Lincoln's attitude.
5. Lincoln proves that he is a forgiving friend. He also realizes that engaging in petty dialogue with Greeley would only detract from the real issue at hand—preserving the Union. Allow for open discussion.

Chapter 4

The Waltz

Dorothy Parker

Answers to Questions about the Facts

1. The speaker omits appropriate excuses such as claiming to be tired or complaining of achy feet. Her lack of refusal drives the story and creates a scathing commentary of both the dance partner and his dancing.
2. The speaker is outwardly polite, but her politeness is insincere. Allow students to discuss their impressions of her. Readers may see her as a “drama queen” or find her rude.
3. The title reflects the dance that the speaker and her partner are performing. A waltz is rapidly paced, so it is easy to imagine the speaker’s partner clumsily stepping on her foot.
4. This paragraph mockingly reveals the dance partner’s earnestness and clumsiness. The paragraph also suggests that the dance partner is perhaps naïve or overly-confident because he appears to be unaware of his partner’s misery.
5. At the end of the story the speaker agrees to dance another waltz with her partner. Readers may be entertained by the speaker’s acquiescence to social mores; other readers may be frustrated by the speaker’s false sincerity.

Answers to Questions about the Strategies

1. The speaker is witty and obviously well read, yet duplicitous. Parker conveys this through the narrator’s speech: when speaking to her dance partner, the narrator is flirtatious and solicitous, but her internal voice is sardonic and malicious.

2. St. Walpurgis (paragraph 2) was an English missionary to Germany (c. 779 A.D.). St. Walpurgis night was originally a pagan holiday that later evolved into a celebration of spring. Jukes (paragraph 3) was a pseudonym for someone of low intelligence. Beri-beri (paragraph 5) is an ailment of the nervous system caused by poor nutrition. “The Fall of the House of Usher” (paragraph 16) is a gothic short story by Edgar Allan Poe. George Jean Nathan (paragraph 19) was a renowned drama critic in the early 1900s. Mrs. O’Leary’s cow (paragraph 19) was reputed to have started the Great Chicago Fire in 1871. *Danse macabre* (paragraph 21) is a medieval allegory that explains how the dance of death unites all humankind. These historical and literary allusions indicate that the speaker is intelligent and well educated. It may surprise the reader that an educated woman would be unable to refuse an invitation to dance.
3. Students may interpret the image as the societal trappings in which the speaker allows herself to be caught. When read aloud, the phrase “trapped like a trap in a trap” sounds like the sound of a trap clapping shut, intensifying the speaker’s sense of imprisonment.
4. The author uses italics to identify the speaker’s outward voice and plain font to indicate her interior voice. This strategy allows readers to easily distinguish between the two voices.
5. Each time she is drawn to him, he clumsily kicks her shin, steps on her foot, or drags her around the dance floor as if she were a rag doll.

Answers to Questions about the Issues

1. The story focuses on conformity to societal expectations and implies that if one conforms to society's rules, one may be unhappy or untrue to one's real self.

Dorothy Parker was known for her attacks on insincere manners, and the lesson in this story is one has only oneself to blame if one does not have the courage to speak up.
2. The bitterly sarcastic tone emphasizes the idea that false politeness can lead to uncomfortable situations. Perhaps honesty is the best policy.
3. Allow for open discussion. Student responses will vary based on their personal experiences.
4. If the speaker refused a second dance, she would have to stop complaining, an act she seems to enjoy. Allow for individual responses.
5. Allow for open discussion. Student responses will vary based on their personal experiences.

A Grunt's Prayer

Ken Noyle

Answers to Questions about the Facts

1. The speaker is a soldier fighting at the front. He appeals to God for strength to endure the war.
2. The soldier fears a life-altering injury more than he fears death. Allow for individual responses.
3. The “darkness” and “pain” suggest that Colin has been blinded or suffered brain damage due to enemy fire. Colin may suffer from flashbacks or from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Allow for individual responses. Students may connect the poem to the war in Iraq.
4. The speaker thanks God for giving him the will to follow orders and fulfill his duty, and he thanks God for helping him block the sounds of anguished cries from his enemies, his comrades, and his own internal cries. Allow for individual responses.
5. He prays that time will go by quickly for the people at home so they are unable to dwell on the soldier's absence. He also prays that his mother's greatest concern will be his hygiene rather than fears over his safety. These requests suggest that the speaker is kind and unselfish. He knows that his absence affects his loved ones, and he wants to alleviate their concerns.

Answers to Questions about the Strategies

1. The poem explores the irony of the Judeo-Christian commandment “Thou shalt not kill” and the conflicting orders from military leaders. The soldier addresses this irony in the last two stanzas of the poem: in the fifth stanza, he asks God for forgiveness for breaking the commandment “Thou shalt not kill.” In the last stanza he asks for “faith to believe/That any sin approved/By Act of Congress/Finds absolution/And I, /A state of grace/Before my Lord.” These lines show that the speaker recognizes this irony but feels unable to resolve it. This is an effective ending that will leave the reader contemplating the irony of war.
2. Answers will vary. In stanza 2, Noyes demonstrates sensitivity towards Colin’s injury, but in the same stanza, the phrase “(If it is living)” suggests a less sensitive and perhaps more realistic assessment of Colin’s injury. Noyes also demonstrates sensitivity in stanza 5 when he asks God to protect his mother.
3. Allow for individual responses. The short lines indicate that this is a modern poem and does not conform to a traditional style. The short lines also convey the soldier’s swift thought process.
4. The poem is a monologue because the speaker is saying a prayer. Allow students to discuss the appropriateness of the speaker’s decision to pray. The speaker’s voice in the poem is humble and respectful. The speaker seems to genuinely want and need God’s guidance and protection while he is at war, so his tone is sincere.
5. He tells God that he must kill or be killed, implying that he will kill when necessary. He then asks God for his forgiveness and absolution of his sins since he is following his country’s orders.