

1. Mrs. Dalloway is narrated from many different points of view in a stream of consciousness manner. Woolf's mode of narration alternates between the omniscient description of events, the indirect interior monologue and the soliloquy. Note how the transitions in narrative correspond to the sights, sounds, smells around the characters that generate both opinions and memories. What are some of the external prompts for Clarissa, Septimus, Peter, Rezia, others?
2. Woolf shifts scenes between past and present, primarily through Clarissa's, Septimus's, and others' memories. Does this device successfully establish the importance of the past as a shaping influence on and an informing component of the present? Which characters promote this idea? Does Woolf believe this holds true for individuals as it does for society as a whole?
3. Woolf's original plan for her novel called for Clarissa to kill herself during her party. In this original version, Septimus (whom Woolf called Mrs. Dalloway's "double") did not appear at all.  
As revised, what comparisons and contrasts can be drawn between the two? What primary images are associated, respectively, with Clarissa and with Septimus? What is the significance of Septimus making his first appearance as Clarissa, from her florist's window, watches the mysterious motor car in Bond Street?
4. There are several themes apparent in the novel. Woolf has her characters dealing with personal (existential) crisis, social anxieties, mental health issues, economic stress. Who portrays one or more of the traits, and what is Woolf's commentary on the topic?
5. Clarissa reads lines from Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* (IV, ii) from an open book in a shop window: "Fear no more the heat o' the sun / Nor the furious winter's rages. / Thou thy worldly task hast done, / Home art gone and ta'en thy wages: / Golden lads and girls all must, / As chimney-sweepers, come to dust." These lines are alluded to many times. What importance do they have for Clarissa, Septimus? What fears do Clarissa and other characters share?
6. Her old friend Sally Seton, whom Clarissa admires, is remembered as a great independent woman – she smoked cigars, once ran down a corridor naked to fetch her sponge-bag, and made bold, unladylike statements to get a reaction from people. When Clarissa meets her in the present day, Sally turns out to be a perfect housewife, married, and with five sons. Is this repression or fulfillment? What do you think Woolf is stating about women's role?
7. When Virginia Woolf wrote this novel, she initially called it *The Hours*. As the day and the novel proceed, the hours and half hours are sounded by a variety of clocks (for instance, Big Ben strikes noon at the novel's exact midpoint). What is the effect of the time being constantly announced on the novel's structure and on our sense of the pace of the characters' lives? Is there significance in Big Ben being the chief announcer of time?
8. Why does Clarissa criticize Doris Kilman's religious tenets? What are Kilman's religious beliefs?
9. Reflecting on 2020, a year of world-wide COVID in our own lifetime, do you see similarities in Woolf's characters as they respond to the aftermath of the 1918 epidemic that killed more than five percent of the world's population and a World War that took even more lives, including those that returned with injuries? What's different?

