

The Stranger

by Albert Camus

Part I

Directions: Use complete sentences to respond to the items listed below.

1. How do we know the world of *The Stranger* is irrational?

2. How do different characters react to this irrationality?

3. How do Meursault's and Marie's views of their relationship differ?

4. Compare Meursault to Raymond Sintes. How are the two neighbors different? How are they similar?

5. Trace the development of Meursault's philosophy. How does he come to open himself to "the gentle indifference of the world"? What spurs his revelation? How do earlier events in the novel prepare us to expect it?

6. We see characters in the book solely through Meursault's eyes, but Meursault typically tells us very little. Using the information that Meursault provides, analyze a character such as Marie and Raymond. What level of insight does Meursault provide into these characters' personalities?

7. Compare and contrast the relationship between Salamano and his dog with the relationship between Meursault and his mother. What are the similarities? Which is more loving?

8. Discuss the style of *The Stranger*. How does Meursault's language correspond to the subjects he describes? Does it evolve or change as the novel goes on? Does the stripped-down prose of the novel's first half limit its expressive power?

9. Is Meursault really a threat to his society? Does he deserve the death penalty? Is he more or less dangerous than a criminal who commits a crime with clear motive?

10. In his jail cell, Meursault finds an old newspaper article about a Czechoslovakian man who is murdered by his mother and sister. How does this article relate to Meursault's own trial for murder? How does this article expand the themes in *The Stranger*? How does it support Camus's philosophy of the absurd?

11. Analyze the passages describing Meursault's walk down the beach before he kills the Arab. How does Camus build tension in the passage? How is it different from the passages preceding it? Meursault says at his trial that he killed the Arab because of the sun. Is this explanation at all valid?
