

POCONO MOUNTAIN SCHOOL DISTRICT
HONORS 12
ENGLISH/LANGUAGE ARTS
SUMMER READING

The Stranger

by Albert Camus

Study and Comprehension Questions

Include the following:

1. Character descriptions *you have created*.
 2. Book summary *you have created*. This need not be in sentence/paragraph format but should include the rundown of the novel.
 3. Explanations and page numbers of FIVE quotes you find important.
Who said the quote? To whom? Why?
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1. To go deeper in this book than the story, you have to know about Camus' philosophy of Absurdism: That life has no rational or redeeming purpose. Was the characterization of Mersault a good example of that?
 2. Many in France and Europe as a whole after World War I--like Camus, like Mersault--did not believe in God or a higher power. Did you see that come through the book? Social Scientists feel that a wave of atheism came due to the events of World War I and especially WWII and the Holocaust. Explain why this might be the case.
 3. Who is *The Stranger* and why is he called that? In earlier translations, the novel is called *The Outsider*. Which title makes more sense to you?
 4. While Camus was an atheist, he was a humanist--a person who could see good in man and saw reasons to behave morally. Was that a trait of Mersault? Explain.
 5. Why do you think Mersault slept so much?
 6. Did it seem as though Mersault adjusted very quickly to prison life? Why do you think that was?
 7. Were you surprised that after being sentenced to death, Mersault dreamt of an appeal or an escape? What made him finally accept his fate?
 8. Why was Marie attracted to Mersault? Did the author make that attraction credible? Is Mersault capable of love?

9. What were some of Mersault's good attributes? His bad ones?
10. What did you think of Mersault's reaction to his mother's death? That first sentence of the book is the topic of many a research paper. What did it tell you about the man? The book? Camus?
11. Why didn't Mersault want to see his mother in her coffin?
12. Was Mersault tried for the murder of the Arab or for his treatment of his mother?
13. Nature played a big role in Mersault's life. Why was he drawn to the sea as he was? And why was he tortured /affected by the sun so much on the walk to bury his mother, on the day he killed the Arab, and as he lay in his cell?
14. As we look at him with our 21st century eyes, would you say Mersault could have had some sort of mental illness? Would he be medicated today?
15. In critiques of this book, many feel that Mersault is a man who makes no choices. Did you see that through the novel? Did he ever make a choice? Explain.
16. Did Mersault ever feel any guilt--about the treatment of his mother, his arrangement with Raymond, his treatment of Marie, his murder of the Arab, his treatment of the priest in the jail?
17. Were the two parts of the book different to you? Why do you feel that way?