**Les Misérables Reading Guide**

**Title**: *Les Misérables*

**Author**: Victor Hugo

**Setting**: France, early 19th century, primarily in Paris

**Plot Summary**: *Les Misérables* follows the life of Jean Valjean, an ex-convict who is released from prison after serving nineteen years for stealing a loaf of bread and subsequent escape attempts. Valjean struggles to redeem himself and shed his criminal past. He is shown kindness by Bishop Myriel, which inspires him to break his parole and start a new life under the alias Monsieur Madeleine. He becomes a successful factory owner and mayor of Montreuil-sur-Mer.

Valjean's life intertwines with Fantine, a destitute woman who turns to prostitution to support her illegitimate daughter, Cosette. Upon Fantine's death, Valjean vows to care for Cosette and rescues her from the abusive Thénardier family.

Throughout the novel, Valjean is relentlessly pursued by Inspector Javert, who believes in the absolute enforcement of the law. Valjean and Cosette eventually settle in Paris, where Cosette falls in love with Marius Pontmercy, a revolutionary student.

The story culminates during the June Rebellion of 1832, where Marius is injured. Valjean saves him, and after a series of events, Javert, unable to reconcile his rigid principles with Valjean's mercy, takes his own life. Valjean reveals his past to Marius, who marries Cosette. Valjean dies peacefully, content in his redemption and surrounded by loved ones.

**Major Characters:**

1. **Jean Valjean:** The protagonist, an ex-convict who seeks redemption and transformation throughout the novel. He becomes a father figure to Cosette and demonstrates immense compassion and moral strength.
2. **Inspector Javert:** The antagonist, a police inspector obsessed with enforcing the law and capturing Valjean. His rigid adherence to the law leads to his moral dilemma and eventual suicide.
3. **Fantine:** A poor woman who turns to sex work to support her daughter, Cosette. Her tragic life and death highlight the social injustices of the time.
4. **Cosette:** Fantine's daughter, who is rescued and raised by Valjean. She represents innocence and hope, eventually marrying Marius.
5. **Marius Pontmercy:** A young revolutionary who falls in love with Cosette. He is involved in the June Rebellion and is saved by Valjean.
6. **Éponine:** The Thénardiers' daughter, who secretly loves Marius and sacrifices herself to save him during the rebellion.
7. **The Thénardiers:** A corrupt and abusive couple who initially care for Cosette and later become involved in criminal activities in Paris.
8. **Bishop Myriel (Bishop of Digne):** A kind and compassionate clergyman who influences Valjean's transformation by showing him mercy and forgiveness.

**Themes:**

* **Redemption and Transformation:** The novel explores the possibility of personal transformation and redemption, primarily through the character of Jean Valjean.
* **Justice and Injustice:** The story highlights the flaws in the justice system, exemplified by Javert's rigid application of the law and Valjean's unjust treatment.
* **Love and Compassion:** Acts of love and compassion are central to the narrative, influencing characters' actions and leading to their moral growth.
* **Social Injustice and Poverty:** Hugo critiques the social and economic inequalities of 19th-century France, depicting the struggles of the poor and marginalized.
* **The Power of Mercy and Forgiveness:** The novel emphasizes the importance of mercy and forgiveness, as shown by Bishop Myriel's influence on Valjean and Valjean's own actions towards others.
* **Revolution and Change:** The political backdrop of the June Rebellion reflects the desire for social and political change, highlighting the struggles for freedom and justice.

**Review Questions**: Answering the following questions will increase your comprehension of the extended essay. Respond to these questions by writing the answers in your notebook. *All the questions require you to express an opinion, evaluate the writing, synthesize what you have read with current reflections, or describe your reaction to events in the reading. In these instances, there is no right or wrong answer, and your responses will vary.*

**Volume l - Fantine**

**Book First – Just a Man**

1. Consider the conversation between the Bishop and the dying member of the Convention in Chapter X. How does this dialogue explore the themes of forgiveness, redemption, and the complexity of human nature? How does the Bishop’s response to the Conventionary’s past and his impending death illustrate his understanding of compassion and morality? Evaluate the effectiveness of Hugo’s choice of words and rhetoric in this dialogue. How does the historical context of the French Revolution enhance the significance of their conversation?
2. Reflect on the significance of M. Myriel’s actions when he decides to move into the hospital and give his episcopal palace to the patients. How do these actions reflect his character and values? What do they reveal about his approach to his role as a bishop? Analyze the rhetoric Hugo uses to describe these actions. How might this act of selflessness be viewed in today's context of leadership and public service? Do you think such actions are still possible or effective today? Why or why not?

**Book Second – The Fall**

1. The description of the man entering the town of D—— is detailed and vivid. What do you think Hugo is trying to convey about this character through his physical appearance and the reactions of the townspeople? Find specific descriptions and explain what they might symbolize about his past and current state.
2. Reflect on the significance of the Bishop’s reaction to Jean Valjean’s theft of the silverware. How does the Bishop’s response contrast with the previous reactions Valjean received from others? What themes does Hugo explore through the Bishop's behavior and Valjean's subsequent actions? How do you think Hugo's portrayal of the Bishop's forgiveness might influence readers' views on the potential for personal transformation and redemption? Make a prediction as to how this act of kindness might impact Valjean's character development.

**Book Third – In the Year 1817**

1. Victor Hugo provides a detailed snapshot of the year 1817, describing various cultural, political, and social elements of the time. How does Hugo use these details to set the scene for the reader? Evaluate the effectiveness of his descriptive writing in creating a vivid picture of Paris in 1817. Can you make a personal connection to a time or place that felt similarly detailed and alive to you? How did those details affect your perception of that time or place?
2. Tholomyes delivers a long and somewhat philosophical speech to his friends. What themes does he touch upon in his speech, and how do they reflect his character and the broader themes of the novel? Analyze the rhetoric he uses. How do the other characters react to his speech, and what does this reveal about their personalities and values? Evaluate the meaning of specific words chosen by Tholomyes. How do these word choices enhance the themes he is discussing? How might these themes be relevant in a current context, such as today's societal or personal challenges?

**Book Fourth – To Confide is Sometimes to Deliver into a Person’s Power**

1. In the opening description of the cook-shop in Montfermeil, Victor Hugo paints a vivid picture of the place and its surroundings. What details does Hugo use to create a sense of the setting? How do these details contribute to the atmosphere and mood of the scene? Evaluate the effectiveness of Hugo's descriptive language in setting the tone for the chapter. Can you think of a place in your own life that has a similarly vivid atmosphere? Describe it using detailed imagery.
2. Examine the interaction between Fantine and Madame Thenardier when Fantine first arrives at the inn. What are your impressions of Madame Thenardier based on her behavior and dialogue? How does this interaction reveal Fantine's situation and her feelings towards her daughter, Cosette? Analyze how Hugo develops the character of Fantine through her actions and decisions. How might Fantine's predicament be viewed in today's context regarding single motherhood and economic hardship?

**Book Fifth – The Descent**

1. Madeleine performs a heroic act by lifting a cart to save Father Fauchelevent. Discuss the symbolic significance of this act. How does this event further develop M. Madeleine's character and influence the perception of the townspeople and Javert? What does this reveal about the themes of strength and morality in the novel? Make a prediction about how this act might affect M. Madeleine's future interactions with Javert.
2. Chapter V introduces Inspector Javert, who harbors a deep suspicion towards M. Madeleine. Analyze Javert's character and his motivations. How do you think his background and personal philosophy shape his view of M. Madeleine? Use specific examples from the text to illustrate your points.

**Book Sixth – Javert**

1. Fantine perceives M. Madeleine as "clothed in light" and "transfigured" after seeing him pray beside her bed. How does this perception reflect Fantine's state of mind and her evolving view of M. Madeleine? Provide examples from the text to support your analysis. Additionally, think about a time when your perception of someone changed drastically. What caused this shift, and how did it affect your relationship with that person?
2. Find a quote from this book that encapsulates the theme of redemption and transformation. Include the quote along with your reasoning for selecting it.

**Book Seventh – The Champmathieu Affair**

1. Reflect on the internal conflict Jean Valjean experiences. How does Hugo use this internal struggle to explore themes of identity, morality, and redemption? Discuss the significance of Valjean's decision-making process and its impact on his character development. Do you think Hugo's writing is effective in conveying Valjean's turmoil? Why or why not?
2. Consider the courtroom scene. How does Hugo build tension and suspense throughout this chapter? Analyze the use of dialogue, setting, and character reactions to illustrate the gravity of the situation. Compare this scene to a modern courtroom drama you are familiar with. How do the techniques used by Hugo differ from or align with contemporary storytelling in similar contexts?

**Book Eighth – A Counter-Blow**

1. Javert experiences a profound sense of satisfaction upon finally apprehending Jean Valjean. How does Hugo portray Javert's sense of duty and justice, and what does this reveal about his character? Discuss the complexity of Javert's moral convictions and how they might be both admirable and problematic. Analyze the rhetoric Hugo uses to describe Javert's emotions and actions. How might Javert's sense of duty be viewed in today's context, especially in relation to law enforcement and justice?
2. The confrontation between Javert and Jean Valjean culminates in Fantine's death. How does this tragic event highlight the themes of power and authority in the novel? Analyze how Hugo uses the characters' interactions to comment on the impact of societal structures on individual lives. Evaluate the meaning of specific words Hugo chooses to describe this scene, such as "murdered" and "fury." How do these word choices influence your perception of the characters involved? Additionally, make a prediction about how this event might influence the future actions of Jean Valjean and Javert.

**Volume ll – Cosette**

**Book First – Waterloo**

1. Hugo describes Hougomont as both a chateau turned farm and a significant site in the Battle of Waterloo. How does this transformation symbolize the larger themes of change and decay in the novel? Discuss the historical and symbolic significance of Hougomont as depicted in the text. Analyze how Hugo’s portrayal of Hougomont reflects the broader historical context of post-revolutionary Europe. Can you think of a modern place that has similarly transformed and carries significant historical weight? Compare and contrast the two.
2. The narrator describes Napoleon's confidence and strategic planning on the morning of the battle. How does Hugo portray Napoleon's character through his actions and decisions? Do you think Hugo presents Napoleon in a sympathetic or critical light?

**Book Second – The Ship Orion**

1. Jean Valjean's recapture and subsequent punishment are described in two different articles from contemporary journals. Compare and contrast the portrayal of Jean Valjean in the articles. How do the differing tones and details in these articles reflect the societal attitudes towards Valjean's character and past? Evaluate the effectiveness of Hugo's writing in conveying these attitudes. How do these portrayals compare to how modern media might report on a similar situation today? Provide specific examples from the text to support your analysis.
2. The superstition about the devil's treasure in the forest of Montfermeil is a significant subplot in this section. How does Hugo use this local legend to enhance the narrative? Evaluate the meaning of specific words chosen by Hugo to describe the legend and its impact on the villagers. Make a prediction about how this subplot might influence future events in the story. Provide examples from the text to support your interpretation and connect this to any superstitions or legends you are familiar with in your own culture.

**Book Third – Accomplishment of the Promise Made to the Dead Woman**

1. Cosette is sent to fetch water from the spring at night. Reflect on the significance of this task and how it exemplifies her life with the Thenardiers. How does this scene highlight the themes of fear and oppression in Cosette's life? Analyze the rhetoric Hugo uses to evoke sympathy for Cosette. Make a prediction about how Cosette's experiences might shape her future character development.
2. Thenardier attempts to extort more money from the stranger by claiming he needs to be paid for "all those little things." How does the stranger’s response to Thenardier's demands reveal his character and intentions? What does this exchange tell us about the power dynamics between the two men? Evaluate the meaning of specific words chosen by Hugo in this exchange. How does the historical context of 19th-century France influence the characters' actions and societal roles?

**Book Fourth – The Gorbeau Hovel**

1. Consider the significance of the Gorbeau Hovel in the narrative. What might this dilapidated building symbolize in the context of Jean Valjean and Cosette's lives? How does it reflect their past and their hopes for the future? Use examples from the text to support your interpretation.
2. Examine the narrative style in these chapters. How does Hugo use descriptive language and detailed imagery to immerse the reader in the setting and the characters' experiences? Choose a passage that you find particularly effective and explain why it stands out to you.

**Book Fifth – For a Black Hunt, A Mute Pack**

1. the author reflects on the transformation of Paris and his nostalgic attachment to the Paris of his youth. He writes, "So long as you go and come in your native land, you imagine that those streets are a matter of indifference to you... Later on, when you are no longer there, you perceive that the streets are dear to you". How does this sentiment relate to the themes of memory and change in the novel? Do you think the author's feelings about Paris mirror any of the characters' experiences? Explain your thinking.
2. Jean Valjean and Cosette experience a moment of spiritual solace when they hear a hymn from the nearby building. Hugo describes it as "a dazzling burst of prayer and harmony in the obscure and alarming silence of the night". How does this moment of divine music contrast with the tension and fear they have been experiencing? What do you think Hugo might be suggesting about the role of faith and spirituality in times of distress?

**Book Sixth – Le Petit-Picpus**

1. Hugo depicts the contrasting atmosphere of the convent's garden during the recreation hour. How does this scene of youthful joy and playfulness contrast with the overall austere environment of the convent? What might Hugo be suggesting about the nature of childhood and innocence? Analyze the rhetoric Hugo uses to create this contrast.
2. Consider the character of the centenarian nun from the Abbey of Fontevrault. How does her presence and the stories she tells contribute to the overall understanding of the convent's history and its impact on the individuals living there? How does Hugo use her character to reflect on the passage of time and tradition? Evaluate the meaning of specific words Hugo uses to describe her and her tales. How do these word choices enhance your understanding of her character and the historical context she represents?

**Book Seventh – Parenthesis**

1. Reflect on Hugo's portrayal of the convent. He describes it as having both a "hideous side which we execrate, and a sublime side, which we adore." How does Hugo balance these two perspectives, and what is his ultimate stance on monastic life? Do you agree with his viewpoint? Why or why not? How does the rhetoric used by Hugo to describe the convent help or hinder his argument?
2. Hugo discusses the concept of prayer stating, "To place the infinity here below in contact, by the medium of thought, with the infinity on high, is called praying." How does Hugo's philosophical exploration of prayer and the infinite reflect the characters' struggles and aspirations? Choose a character from the book and analyze how their personal journey aligns with Hugo's ideas about prayer and the infinite.

**Book Eighth – Cemeteries Take That Which is Committed Them**

1. Fauchelevent plays a significant role helping Jean Valjean and Cosette find refuge in the convent. Describe Fauchelevent's character based on his actions and thoughts in this section. How does his past and personality contribute to his willingness to help Jean Valjean? Use specific quotes from the text to support your description. Evaluate the effectiveness of Hugo's writing in developing Fauchelevent's character. Do you find his character believable and compelling? Why or why not?
2. The convent represents a stark contrast to the outside world Jean Valjean has known. How does Hugo depict the convent's atmosphere and routines? What impact does this new environment have on Jean Valjean and Cosette? Reflect on how the convent serves as a place of both refuge and challenge for them. Compare the writing to a current context: Can you think of a modern-day equivalent to the convent as a place of refuge? How do contemporary places of refuge compare to the convent in Hugo's time?

**Volume lll – Marius**

**Book First – Paris Studied in its Atom**

1. Victor Hugo describes the gamin, or street child, of Paris, saying, "This little being is joyous. He has not food every day, and he goes to the play every evening, if he sees good... This is because he has in his heart a pearl, innocence; and pearls are not to be dissolved in mud." How does Hugo's portrayal of the gamin challenge or reinforce your perceptions of childhood and innocence? Do you think the gamin’s environment affects his innocence? Why or why not? Use examples from the text to support your answer.
2. Hugo introduces Little Gavroche, a child who finds more comfort in the streets than with his family. Hugo states, "This child never felt so well as when he was in the street. The pavements were less hard to him than his mother's heart." How does Gavroche’s relationship with his family and the streets shape his character? What does this reveal about the broader social and familial issues depicted in the novel? Use specific examples from the text to support your discussion.

**Book Second – The Great Bourgeois**

1. Gillenormand expresses a theory about marriage and financial control: "When a man is passionately fond of women, and when he has himself a wife for whom he cares but little... there is but one way of extricating himself from the quandary and of procuring peace, and that is to let his wife control the purse-strings." How does this theory reveal M. Gillenormand's views on gender roles and relationships? Do you think his theory is a reflection of the time period, or does it also reveal something unique about his character?
2. How would you describe M. Gillenormand to someone that has not read this book? Include your description and at least one quote to support your description.

**Book Third – The Grandfather and the Grandson**

1. Discuss the significance of Pontmercy's character and his relationship with Marius. How does Pontmercy's history and his actions during the wars shape Marius' view of him? Analyze the development of Marius' character through his evolving perception of his father. How do specific words chosen by Hugo enhance the portrayal of Pontmercy's legacy?
2. Reflect on the scene in where Marius visits his father's grave. How does this moment symbolize Marius' internal struggle and transformation? What do you think it reveals about his evolving sense of identity and his connection to his father's legacy? Include at least one quote to support your thinking. Make a prediction about how this visit to the grave might influence Marius' future actions and decisions.

**Book Fourth – The Friends of the A B C**

1. The Friends of the A B C is described as a society with the aim of "the elevation of man" and "the education of children." Considering the historical context and the group's activities, what do you think the author, Victor Hugo, is trying to convey about the role of youth and education in social change? How do the members' backgrounds and characteristics contribute to this message? Use evidence from the text to support your answer.
2. Grantaire is portrayed as a skeptic who "took good care not to believe in anything" and yet has a profound admiration for Enjolras. What does Grantaire's relationship with Enjolras reveal about the nature of belief and skepticism within the context of the revolutionary spirit? How do you think their dynamic contributes to the overall themes of the book? Provide specific quotes and examples from the text in your response.

**Book Fifth – The Excellence of Misfortune**

1. Reflect on the statement, "misery, almost always a step-mother, is sometimes a mother; destitution gives birth to might of soul and spirit; distress is the nurse of pride; unhappiness is a good milk for the magnanimous". What does this suggest about the potential positive outcomes of suffering and hardship? How does Marius's experience support or contradict this idea? How does this idea resonate with you?
2. Marius manages to live on a very modest income through perseverance and frugality. How does his lifestyle and attitude towards money and work reflect his character and values? Discuss how his choices and sacrifices shape his identity and sense of dignity. Make a prediction about how these traits might influence his future actions in the narrative. Additionally, compare Marius's frugality to contemporary attitudes towards minimalism and financial independence.

**Book Sixth – The Conjunction of Two Stars**

1. Courfeyrac often gives Marius advice. How does Courfeyrac's perspective on life contrast with Marius's, and what does this reveal about their characters and relationship? Use quotes from the text to support your response. Evaluate the effectiveness of Hugo's writing in conveying the differences between the two characters. How would you compare Courfeyrac's advice to modern-day advice given to young people about balancing work and social life?
2. Marius notices a significant change in the young girl he often sees at the Luxembourg. Describe the transformation he observes and discuss the significance of this change in the context of the story. How does this transformation affect Marius's feelings and behavior towards her? Analyze the rhetoric Hugo uses to depict this transformation. What do you think Hugo is trying to convey about the nature of beauty and change?

**Book Seventh – Patron Minette**

1. Hugo contrasts the pure and noble work of those in the upper mines with the brutal and selfish nature of those in the lowest depths. How does this distinction reflect Hugo's views on human nature and society? Do you agree with his assessment? Why or why not? Use evidence from the text to support your argument.
2. This book introduces the concept of Patron-Minette, a group of criminals operating as a single entity. How does Hugo's portrayal of this group contribute to the overall theme of darkness and light in the novel? Discuss the significance of the group's name and their activities in relation to the broader social commentary Hugo is making. Consider the historical context of the novel—how might the depiction of Patron-Minette reflect the societal fears and issues of Hugo's time? Make a prediction about how the presence of Patron-Minette will influence the unfolding events in the story.

**Book Eighth – The Wicked Poor Man**

1. The character of Jondrette, who is later revealed to be Thenardier, undergoes a significant transformation in his demeanor throughout the chapters of this book. How does Hugo use Jondrette's behavior and speech to reveal his true nature and intentions? Cite specific passages that illustrate this transformation. Evaluate the effectiveness of Hugo's writing in portraying Jondrette/Thenardier's character. Do you find his depiction realistic and compelling? Why or why not?
2. Quite a bit happens during this book. Pick out what you think are the most important moments and work to create a concise five to ten sentence summary of this book. Share your reasons for selecting specific pieces and reasons for omitting others along with your summary.

**Volume IV – Saint-Denis**

**Book First – A Few Pages of History**

1. Reflect on Hugo's statement: "Right overthrowing the fact. Hence the brilliancy of the Revolution of 1830, hence, also, its mildness. Right triumphant has no need of being violent." What does Hugo mean by "right" and "fact" in this context, and how does he differentiate between them? Do you agree with his assertion that a just cause does not require violence to triumph? Why or why not?
2. In the text, Hugo discusses the role of the bourgeoisie in halting the progress of the revolution. He states, "The bourgeoisie is simply the contented portion of the people." How does Hugo characterize the bourgeoisie, and what critique is he making about their influence on revolutionary movements? How does this perspective align with or challenge your understanding of social class dynamics in historical revolutions?

**Book Second – Eponine**

1. Reflect on Marius' relationship with Thenardier, especially considering Marius' decision to send five francs to Thenardier every Monday. What does this action reveal about Marius' character, his sense of justice, and his internal struggles? How does this relationship influence Marius' development throughout the story?
2. How would you describe Eponine to someone that has not read this book? Include your description and at least one quote to support your description.

**Book Third – The House in the Rue Plumet**

1. Jean Valjean decides to leave the convent despite the safety and happiness it provides for him and Cosette. Reflect on his reasons for leaving. Do you think his decision was justified? What does this reveal about his character and his understanding of Cosette's needs?
2. The chain-gang scene is a powerful and disturbing moment in the narrative. How does Hugo use this scene to comment on the justice system and the treatment of convicts? How does this encounter impact Jean Valjean and Cosette, both immediately and in the longer term? Discuss the emotional and thematic significance of this scene.

**Book Fourth – Succor From Below May Turn out to be Succor From on High**

1. Jean Valjean sustains a mysterious wound on his left arm which he refuses to have treated by a doctor. How does this wound and the subsequent care provided by Cosette contribute to the development of their relationship? Reflect on how this event impacts Jean Valjean's emotional state and his perception of happiness. Provide specific examples from the text to support your analysis.
2. Reflect on the significance of the changing seasons describe, particularly the transition from winter to spring. How does Victor Hugo use the imagery of the seasons to symbolize the emotional and psychological transformations of Cosette and Jean Valjean? Discuss how this symbolism enhances the your understanding of their characters and the overall narrative. Include specific descriptions from the text to support your analysis.

**Book Fifth – The End of Which Does not Resemble the Beginning**

1. In the first chapter, Cosette experiences a gradual shift in her emotions, moving from intense grief to a state of almost forgetfulness. What factors contribute to this change in her emotional state? How does Hugo use nature and the environment to reflect Cosette’s internal transformation? Do you find Hugo’s writing effective in conveying Cosette’s internal transformation? Explain your thinking.
2. Cosette reads a heartfelt manuscript that deeply moves her. How does this manuscript affect her perception of love and her feelings towards Marius? Discuss the role of written words and letters in the development of Cosette’s character and her relationship with Marius. How does this reflect the larger themes of communication and connection in the novel?

**Book Sixth – Little Gavroche**

1. Choose one quote from this book that exemplifies a theme of this overall novel. Include the quote, what theme it exemplifies, and your reasoning for selecting it.
2. The text describes Madame Thenardier's attitude towards her sons: "Her hatred of the human race began with her own sons. In the direction of her sons her evil disposition was uncompromising, and her heart had a lugubrious wall in that quarter." What does this passage reveal about Madame Thenardier's character and her relationship with her children? How does her treatment of her sons compare to her treatment of her daughters? Evaluate the effectiveness of Hugo's writing in conveying Madame Thenardier’s harshness and its impact on her sons.

**Book Seventh – Slang**

1. Consider Hugo's argument that studying slang is essential for understanding society's "social deformities and infirmities." Do you agree with his perspective? Why or why not? Provide examples from the text to support your argument.
2. Hugo provides a detailed analysis of the origins and evolution of slang, mentioning its roots in various languages and social contexts. Choose one example of slang discussed by Hugo and analyze its significance. How does this example illustrate the complex interplay between language, culture, and social identity?

**Book Eighth – Enchantments and Desolations**

1. Hugo describes a scene where the street resumes its tranquil, nocturnal aspect after the departure of the ruffians. Evaluate the meaning of specific words chosen by Hugo to create this atmosphere. How effective is his use of language in conveying the eerie calmness? Make a prediction about how this calm might be disrupted in the following books.
2. Marius learns from Cosette that she might be leaving with her father. Reflect on the historical context of the 1832 Paris cholera outbreak mentioned earlier in the text. How might this historical event influence the characters' decisions and actions? Compare their situation to a current global event. How do crises impact personal relationships and decisions in both contexts?

**Book Ninth – Whither are They Going?**

1. This book introduces M. Mabeuf, whose life has been marked by a gradual descent into poverty. Discuss how Hugo portrays M. Mabeuf's dignity and resilience despite his dire circumstances. How does M. Mabeuf's situation comment on society's treatment of the elderly and the impoverished? Provide examples from the text to support your analysis.
2. Throughout this book, there is a recurring theme of isolation and loneliness experienced by several characters. Compare and contrast how each character deals with their isolation. What coping mechanisms do they employ, and how do their responses reflect their individual personalities and circumstances? Use specific passages to illustrate your points.

**Book Tenth – The 5th of June, 1832**

1. Reflect on the distinction Hugo makes between "revolt" and "insurrection". According to Hugo, what differentiates the two, and why is this distinction significant in understanding the events of June 1832? How does this distinction relate to modern protests or uprisings you have observed or read about? Evaluate the effectiveness of Hugo's rhetoric in conveying the moral and social implications of these terms.
2. The death of General Lamarque is described as the spark that ignites the uprising. What qualities did Lamarque possess that made his death a catalyst for revolt? How does Hugo use Lamarque’s character to symbolize broader social and political tensions of the time? Reflect on a historical or contemporary figure whose death has similarly sparked significant social or political movements. How does this comparison enhance your understanding of Lamarque's role in the narrative?

**Book Eleventh – The Atom Fraternizes with the Hurricane**

1. Reflect on Gavroche's interaction with the bourgeoisie and the comfortable-looking individuals he encounters. How does Gavroche's perspective on wealth and social class contribute to the themes of social inequality and revolution in the novel? Use quotes from the text to support your response.
2. Consider the title of this book. Why do you think Hugo chose this specific title? What title would you give this book? Explain your thinking.

**Book Twelfth – Corinthe**

1. The character of Father Hucheloup is described in detail, including his appearance, personality, and the atmosphere of his wine-shop. How does Hugo use Father Hucheloup and his establishment to reflect the broader social and political climate of Paris at the time? Include at least one quote from the text to support your analysis. How would you describe Fatehr Hucheloup to someone who has not read this book?
2. The character of Enjolras is portrayed as a determined and austere leader. He confronts Javert and later addresses the insurgents after executing Le Cabuc. How does Hugo use Enjolras' actions and speeches to convey the moral and ethical dilemmas faced by the revolutionaries? Evaluate the meaning of specific words chosen by Hugo in Enjolras' speeches and analyze their impact. What do these choices reveal about Enjolras' character and his vision for the future? Additionally, make a prediction about how Enjolras' leadership will influence the outcome of the barricade.

**Book Thirteenth – Marius Enters the Shadow**

1. Hugo describes the insurrection in Paris from a bird's-eye view, using vivid imagery and metaphors. How does this perspective enhance the reader's understanding of the conflict? What effect does the description of Paris as a "dark and enormous cavity" have on the atmosphere of the narrative? Analyze the rhetoric Hugo uses to convey the tension and anticipation of the impending conflict. How might this description compare to modern-day depictions of civil unrest or protests in the media?
2. Marius's internal conflict is a central focus in these chapters. How does Hugo portray Marius's struggle between his desire for death and his sense of duty? Discuss how Marius's thoughts evolve from despair to a sense of purpose. What does this evolution reveal about his character and the novel's exploration of personal and political conflicts?

**Book Fourteenth – The Grandeurs of Despair**

1. Gavroche's arrival and the singing of a playful song signal an important moment for the barricade. How does Gavroche's behavior and the reaction of Enjolras and Combeferre to his arrival reflect the mood and morale of the insurgents? Use specific examples from the text to support your analysis.
2. There are a few big moments in this book. Pick the one that made the biggest impact on you and share why you selected it and the impact it had.

**Book Fifteenth – The Rue De L’Homme Arme**

1. Reflect on the relationship between Jean Valjean and Cosette as depicted in this section. How does Valjean's perception of Cosette's letter to Marius affect his emotions and actions? What does this reveal about his character and his feelings towards Cosette? Do you think Valjean's reaction is justified given the historical context of the story?
2. The setting of the Rue de l'Homme Arme plays a significant role in the narrative. How does Hugo use the description of this street to reflect Jean Valjean's state of mind and the atmosphere of the events unfolding? Discuss the symbolic significance of this location in the context of the story. Make a prediction about how this setting might influence future events in the narrative. How might the historical context of Paris during the June Rebellion add layers of meaning to this setting?

**Volume V – Jean Valjean**

**Book First – The War Between Four Walls**

1. Reflect on the character of Enjolras as depicted in these chapters. How does Hugo portray his leadership and his dedication to the revolutionary cause? How would you describe Enjolras to someone who has not read this book. Provide specific examples from the text to support your analysis and description.
2. The character of Gavroche plays a significant role in this section of the book. How does his behavior during the battle at the barricade reflect his personality and his view of the revolution? What do you think Hugo seems to be saying about the role of youth in revolutionary movements through Gavroche's actions?

**Book Second – The Intestine of the Leviathan**

1. Hugo describes Paris as casting "twenty-five millions yearly into the water" through its sewer system. How does Hugo use this metaphor to critique the wastefulness of Paris? What broader social or economic issues is he addressing through this imagery? Evaluate the effectiveness of Hugo's writing in conveying his critique. Think of a current situation or city that faces similar issues of waste and resource mismanagement and share that here as well.
2. Hugo states, "The sewer is the conscience of the city." What does he mean by this statement? How does the sewer system reveal the true nature of Parisian society? Consider the historical and symbolic significance of the sewer in your response. Evaluate the text within the specific historical context in which it is set. How does understanding the historical context of 19th-century Paris enhance your interpretation of this metaphor? Make a prediction about how future societies might deal with their own "sewers" or hidden social problems.

**Book Third – Mud but the Soul**

1. Reflect on the relationship between Jean Valjean and Marius as depicted in the sewer scenes. How does Valjean's determination to save Marius despite the perilous conditions highlight his character development? Provide specific examples from the text to support your analysis. Evaluate the effectiveness of Hugo's writing in conveying the tension and urgency of Valjean's actions. How might this relationship be viewed in a contemporary context, such as during a crisis or emergency?
2. Pick out the most powerful moment to you from this book. Include it here along with your reasoning for selecting it. Include what purpose you think Hugo had when including that moment in this book. Share why you did not select other moments over your chosen one.

**Book Fourth – Javert Derailed**

1. Javert experiences a profound internal conflict after encountering Jean Valjean. He describes seeing "two paths, both equally straight" but "contrary to each other." What are these two paths, and why do they terrify him? How does this moment challenge Javert's previously rigid understanding of duty and morality?
2. Reflect on the significance of Javert's decision to release Jean Valjean, despite it being "contrary to all the regulations of the police." How does this act represent a shift in Javert's character? What does it reveal about the complexities of justice and mercy in the context of the novel? How might this decision be perceived in today's society, particularly in the context of law enforcement and justice? Make a prediction about how this decision might impact Javert's future actions and sense of self.

**Book Fifth – Grandson and Grandfather**

1. Marius confronts his grandfather with his desire to marry Cosette. Analyze the interaction between Marius and M. Gillenormand during this conversation. How does M. Gillenormand's reaction to Marius' declaration differ from Marius' expectations? What do you think this reveals about their relationship and M. Gillenormand's character?
2. The mysterious man who saved Marius remains unidentified despite Marius' efforts to find him. Consider the significance of this unknown savior in the context of the novel. How does this character's anonymity contribute to the themes of sacrifice and redemption? Reflect on why Hugo might have chosen to keep the savior's identity a secret and what this choice adds to the narrative.

**Book Sixth – The Sleepless Night**

1. Consider the dialogue between the two maskers observing the wedding procession. How does their conversation and the setting of Shrove Tuesday contribute to the themes of disguise and identity in the novel? Analyze the rhetoric used by Hugo in this scene. What might Hugo be suggesting about societal roles and appearances through this scene? Can you think of a current event or situation where appearances and societal roles play a significant part?
2. How does Hugo depict Valjean's battle between his sense of duty and his personal desires? What does this struggle reveal about Valjean's character and the broader themes of redemption and sacrifice in the novel? Make a prediction about how Valjean's decisions might impact his future and the future of Cosette and Marius. How do you think the historical context of post-revolutionary France influences Valjean's choices and actions?

**Book Seventh – The Last Draught from the Cup**

1. How does Hugo use Jean Valjean's internal conflict to explore themes of redemption and identity? Discuss the significance of Jean Valjean's decision to confess and the impact it has on his relationship with Marius. Analyze the rhetoric Hugo employs to elicit sympathy for Jean Valjean. How might the themes of redemption and identity resonate with contemporary discussions on personal transformation and second chances?
2. Reflect on the symbolism of light and darkness in the interactions between Marius and Jean Valjean. How does Hugo use these symbols to enhance the narrative and develop the characters' emotional states? Provide examples from the text to support your analysis. Compare this use of symbolism to a current context, such as how media today uses visual or rhetorical symbols to convey complex emotions or themes.

**Book Eighth – Fading Away of the Twilight**

1. In the conversation between Jean Valjean and Cosette, Cosette is perplexed and hurt by Jean Valjean's insistence on being called "Monsieur Jean" instead of "father." Why do you think Jean Valjean wants Cosette to address him this way? How does this change in address affect their relationship? Provide examples from the text to support your analysis.
2. Jean Valjean's routine of walking towards the Rue des Filles-du-Calvaire and then turning back is described in detail. What does this repetitive behavior signify about Jean Valjean's emotional state and his connection to Cosette? How does this routine reflect the themes of longing and loss in the novel? Use specific passages from the text to support your interpretation.

**Book Ninth – Supreme Shadow, Supreme Dawn**

1. Hugo writes about the nature of happiness and duty, suggesting that happiness can make one forget their true responsibilities. How does Marius' behavior towards Jean Valjean illustrate this concept? Do you agree with Hugo's assertion that happiness can lead to neglect of duty? Provide examples from the text to support your response.
2. Jean Valjean expresses a profound sense of peace and fulfillment as he nears death, especially in the presence of Cosette and Marius. How does this moment serve as a culmination of his character arc? Discuss the significance of his final words and actions, and how they reflect the novel's broader themes of love, forgiveness, and transformation.

**Answers to Review Questions:**

\*Answers will vary for each question