

Anthem Discussion Questions

Ayn Rand

Chapter One

- Describe the society in which Anthem is set. Consider the political structure, degree of technology, social relationships, quality of life, and education.
- Speculate on why it is very unusual for the men to reach the age of 45 in this society.
- Compare and contrast Equality 7-2521's physical qualities and character traits from those of his fellow men.
- When does the novel take place – in the past, the present, or the future? How do you know?
- Why does the Council of Vocation assign Equality the job of street sweeper? Explain.

Chapter Two

- Read again more closely the account of Liberty 5-3000 on pg 38. What character traits are revealed in this brief description?
- Of the whole range of feelings possible to man (joy, excitement, anger, etc.) what is the most prevalent emotion in this society and why?
- What word is Equality struggling to recapture on pg 49? Why is mentioning this word the only crime punishable by death in this society?

Chapter Three

- What does Equality discover in this chapter?
- How important is this discovery? Describe 4 or 5 ways in which it would help society, and make life easier or more enjoyable.

Chapter Four and Five

- Discuss the appropriateness of Equality's new name "Unconquered."
- Equality understands that his invention will benefit mankind greatly; however, this was not his main motivation, and it is not the primary source of the great joy he experiences. Discuss.
- In your opinion, why is Equality so interested in seeing his own image at this point in the novel? What emotion is he feeling?

Chapter Six and Seven

- The old locks and lack of guards in the Palace of Corrective Detention indicate that prisoners never try to escape. Why not?
- Outline four of the Council's reasons for rejecting Equality's invention.
- What does Equality mean when he says at the start of this chapter, "We are old now, but we were young this morning: pg 68

Chapter Eight

- What is Equality experiencing for the first time in this chapter, and what does he feel as a result?
- Explain why Equality laughs when he remembers that he is “the Damned.”
- What does the Unchartered Forest symbolize in Anthem?

Chapter Nine and Ten

- On pages 82-83, Liberty contrasts Equality to his fellow men. Paraphrase this passage.
- In this chapter, Equality questions the morality of his former society. Contrast what he was previously taught about solitude, good, evil, and joy to what he now believes.
- Describe the house and contents in your own words, and explain why Liberty and Equality find it so strange and unique.

Group Work for Anthem

- Get back in your groups and discuss the following questions. You will be expected to turn in a written response to the questions (as a group) by the next class.

Chapter Eleven and Twelve

- What great discovery does Equality make in this chapter?
- Explain the following quotes in your own words, and discuss how they can be applied to your life:
 - “Whatever road I take, the guiding star is within me.”
 - “For the word ‘We’ must never be spoken, save by one’s choice and as a second thought.”
- What does Equality now realize is the proper goal and purpose of his life?
- Why do the main characters take the names Prometheus and Gaea?
- Prometheus reaches the important realization that “To be free, a man must be free of his brothers.” Discuss the meaning of this statement.

