

Summer Reading Assignment

Tuesday's With Morrie

Your summer reading assignment includes two separate assignments and a test.

Assignment #1: Study guide questions DUE September 4th

Assignment #2: Three journal entries DUE September 4th

Test: Taken September 5th

Summer Reading Tips

Put the assignment in a safe place.

Don't start too early and don't begin too late.

Carry the book with you everywhere you go. If there is free time at some point, pick up your book and read.

Write down additional notes as you read. Therefore, when you pick the book up to read again, you know where you left off in the story. Use this note sheet as your bookmark.

If you're having trouble with the reading or have specific questions about the assignment, contact one of the teachers to help you.

Be sure to do your own work.

Read the directions carefully, and feel free to contact us if you have further questions.

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Assignment #1: Study Guide Questions

Directions: Answer all of the 29 questions in complete sentences. Write your answers on separate sheet of paper. After you have written your answers, type them and print. Please make sure they are numbered the same as the questions (you do not need to retype the questions, only the ANSWERS). You will turn in the handwritten copy and the typed copy.

Study Guide Questions

1. “The Curriculum”; What was the subject of “The Curriculum”?
2. “The Syllabus”; What is wrong with Morrie and what is unusual about his funeral?
3. “The Student”; How did Mitch react after his uncle passed away?
4. “The Audiovisual”; How does Mitch become reintroduced to Morrie?
5. “The Orientation”; How does Morrie greet Mitch after sixteen years have passed?
6. “The Classroom”; What is Mitch’s nickname for Morrie?
7. “Taking Attendance”; Why does Mitch’s schedule suddenly become free?
8. “Taking Attendance”; What are the citizens of the United States obsessed with?
9. “The First Tuesday”; What is the ultimate sign of dependency?
10. “The Second Tuesday”; Why does Morrie feel lucky?
11. “The Third Tuesday”; What is on Mitch’s list for Morrie?
12. “The Audiovisual, Part Two”; What brought tears to Morrie’s eyes?
13. “The Professor”; Who gave Morrie a love for education?
14. “The Fourth Tuesday”; Describe Morrie’s religious beliefs?
15. “The Fifth Tuesday”; What struck Mitch’s brother but missed Mitch?
16. “The Sixth Tuesday”; According to Charlotte, what does Mitch provide to Morrie?
17. “The Professor, Part two”; Before going into education, what field did Morrie work in?
18. “The Seventh Tuesday”; How does Morrie feel about his dependency at this point of the illness?
19. “The Eighth Tuesday”; According to Mitch, what really gives Morrie satisfaction?
20. “The Ninth Tuesday”; What does Morrie want on his tombstone?
21. “The Tenth Tuesday”; Who did Mitch bring with him on the tenth Tuesday?
22. “The Eleventh Tuesday”; Why is Mitch hitting Morrie?
23. “The Eleventh Tuesday”; What is everyone in the world watching?

24. "The Audiovisual, Part Three"; Describe how Morrie has changed since his first "Nightline" interview?
25. "The Twelfth Tuesday"; What is Morrie's advice about forgiveness?
26. "The Thirteenth Tuesday"; Describe Morrie's perfect day?
27. "The Fourteenth Tuesday"; What finally makes Mitch cry?
28. "Graduation"; Why does the conversation Mitch has with Morrie at his funeral feel natural?
29. "The Conclusion"; Who does Mitch find his way back to in "The Conclusion"?

Assignment #2: Three Journal Responses

Directions:

1. We have broken the reading assignment into three sections. After you read each section, there will be four passages to re-read. Choose ONE passage that is meaningful, interesting, or thought-provoking to you, and respond to the question that follows it.

2. Write a one-paragraph response to the question following your chosen passage. This paragraph should be at LEAST 5-7 sentences in length.

3. Your paragraph should follow this format.
 - a. Begin with a topic sentence This ONE sentence should give a brief answer to the question.
 - b. Next, develop at LEAST three explanatory sentences. These sentences should support your topic sentence with examples and further explanation.
 - c. Finally, have ONE concluding sentence that effectively closes your paragraph.

4. As this is your first writing assignment, we expect that you will work to clearly respond to the question. These paragraphs may require some further revising or editing when you return to school in August.

SECTION ONE

Tuesdays with Morrie Pages 1-68**PASSAGE ONE:**

“**The Curriculum**” describes Mitch’s last class with Morrie.

The last class of my old professor’s life took place once a week in his house, by a window in the study where he could watch a small hibiscus plant shed its pink leaves. The class met on Tuesdays. It began after breakfast. The subject was The Meaning of Life. It was taught from experience.

No grades were given, but there were oral exams each week. You were expected to respond to questions, and you were expected to pose questions of your own. You were also required to perform physical tasks now and then, such as lifting the professor’s head to a comfortable spot on the pillow or placing his glasses on the bridge of his nose. Kissing him good-bye earned you extra credit. No books were required, yet many topics were covered, including love, work, community, family, aging, forgiveness, and, finally, death. The last lecture was brief, only a few words. A funeral was held in lieu of graduation. **QUESTION:**

1. If you had the chance to take this class, would you? Why or why not?

PASSAGE TWO:

“**The Student**” describes Mitch’s last encounter with Morrie in college. At this point, I should explain what had happened to me since that summer day when I last hugged my dear and wise professor, and promised to keep in touch. I did not keep in touch. In fact, I lost contact with most of the people I knew in college, including my beer-drinking friends and the first woman I ever woke up with in the morning. The years after graduation hardened me into someone quite different from the strutting graduate who left campus that day headed for New York City, ready to offer the world his talent.

QUESTION:

1. Why do you think Mitch included this passage in the book? 5

PASSAGE THREE:

“**The Classroom**” gives us a good idea of what Morrie is going through mentally as he is dying. “I may be dying, but I am surrounded by loving, caring souls. How many people can say that?” I was astonished by his complete lack of self-pity. Morrie, who could no longer dance, swim, bathe, or walk; Morrie, who could no longer answer his own door, dry himself after a shower, or even roll over in bed. How could he be so accepting? I watched him struggle with his fork, picking at a piece of tomato, missing it the first two times—a pathetic scene, and yet I could not deny that sitting in his presence was almost magically serene, the same calm breeze that soothed me back in college.

QUESTION:

1. Morrie’s progression to death can be seen during each visit. Why do you think Mitch considers being in the presence of Morrie “magically serene?”

PASSAGE FOUR:

On the “**Third Tuesday**”, Morrie tells Mitch he needs a little guidance in his life. Fine, I figured. If I was to be the student, then I would be as good a student as I could be. On the plane ride home that day, I made a small list on a yellow legal pad, issues and questions that we all grapple with, from happiness to aging to having children to death. Of course, there were a million self-help books on these subjects, and plenty of cable TV shows, and \$90-per-hour consultation sessions. America had become a Persian bazaar of self-help.

QUESTION:

1. Explain which type of learning is better for you – learning from a person with experience, or learning from a textbook. 6

SECTION TWO

Tuesdays with Morrie Pages 69-129**PASSAGE ONE:**

On the **fifth Tuesday**, Morrie and Mitch discuss family “The fact is, there is no foundation, no secure ground, upon which people may stand today if it isn’t family. It’s become quite clear to me as I’ve been sick. If you don’t have the support and love and caring and concern that you get from a family, you don’t have much at all. Love is so supremely important. As our great poet Auden said, ‘Love each other or perish.’”

“Love each other or perish.” I wrote it down. Auden said that?

“Love each other or perish,” Morrie said. “It’s good, no? And it’s so true. Without love, we are birds with broken wings.”

QUESTION:

1. Do you agree with Morrie that there is no stronger support or love for a person than family? Why/why not?

PASSAGE TWO:

After the **sixth Tuesday**, Mitch and Morrie discuss reincarnation. *Do you believe in reincarnation? I ask. “Perhaps.” What would you come back as? “If I had my choice, a gazelle.” A gazelle? “Yes. So graceful. So fast.” Morrie smiles at me. “You think that’s strange?” I study his shrunken frame, the loose clothes, the socks-wrapped feet that rest stiffly on foam rubber cushions, unable to move, like a prisoner in leg irons. I picture a gazelle racing across the desert. No, I say. I don’t think that’s strange at all.*

QUESTION:

1. If you could be reincarnated as any creature on the earth, what would you choose to come back as? Why? 7

PASSAGE THREE:

On the **seventh Tuesday**, Mitch and Morrie discuss the fear of aging. Weren't you ever afraid to grow old, I asked? "Mitch, I embrace aging." Embrace it? "It's very simple. As you grow, you learn more. If you stayed at twenty-two, you'd always be as ignorant as you were at twenty-two. Aging is not just decay, you know. It's growth. It's more than the negative that you're going to die, it's also the positive that you *understand* you're going to die, and that you live a better life because of it." Yes, I said, but if aging were so valuable, why do people always say, "Oh, if I were young again." You never hear people say, "I wish I were sixty-five."

QUESTION:

1. Have you ever wished you were older OR younger? Write about a time when you were unhappy with your age. What was the situation? Why did you feel this way?

PASSAGE FOUR:

On the **eighth Tuesday**, Morrie and Mitch discuss money. "There's a big confusion in this country over what we want versus what we need," Morrie said. "You need food, you *want* a chocolate sundae. You have to be honest with yourself. You don't *need* the latest sports car, you don't *need* the biggest house. "The truth is, you don't really get satisfaction from those things. You know what really gives you satisfaction?" What? "Offering others what you have to give."

QUESTION:

1. Write about a time when you had a conflict or disagreement over something you WANTED. What was it? Did you need it? Did you get it? How did you feel about how the situation worked out? 8

SECTION THREE

Tuesdays with Morrie Pages 130-192

PASSAGE ONE:

“The Ninth Tuesday”: Describes Morrie’s relationship with his father.

The last time Morrie saw his own father was in a city morgue. Charlie Schwartz was a quiet man who liked to read his newspaper, alone, under a streetlamp on Tremont Avenue in the Bronx. Every night, when Morrie was little, Charlie would go for a walk after dinner. He was a small Russian man, with a ruddy complexion and a full head of grayish hair. Morrie and his brother, David, would look out the window and see him leaning against the lamppost, and Morrie wished he would come inside and talk to them, but he rarely did. Nor did he tuck them in, nor kiss them good-night.

Morrie always swore he would do these things for his own children if he ever had any. And years later, when he had them he did.

QUESTION:

1. Describe the relationship between Morrie and his father. What type of relationship did Morrie wish for?

PASSAGE TWO:

“The Audiovisual, Part Three” is an interview between Morrie and Ted Koppel. Morrie gives Koppel the following advice:

“Be compassionate,” Morrie whispered. “And take responsibility for each other. If we only learned those lessons, this world would be so much better a place.”

QUESTION:

1. Why is this advice important? What would happen to our society if we didn’t follow this advice? 9

PASSAGE THREE:

“**The Twelfth Tuesday**” describes the importance of forgiveness. ...“A friend of mine sculpted that maybe thirty years ago. His name was Norman. We used to spend so much time together. We went swimming. We took rides to New York. He had me over to his house in Cambridge, and he sculpted that bust of me down in his basement...”

“Well, here’s the sad part of the story,” Morrie said. “Norman and his wife moved away to Chicago. A little while later, my wife, Charlotte, had to have a pretty serious operation. Norman and his wife never got in touch with us. I know they knew about it. Charlotte and I were very hurt because they never called to see how she was. So we dropped the relationship.”

“Over the years, I met Norman a few times and he always tried to reconcile, but I didn’t accept it. I wasn’t satisfied with his explanation. I was prideful, I shrugged him off.”

His voice choked.

“Mitch... a few years ago... he died of cancer. I feel so sad. I never got to see him. I never got to forgive. It pains me now so much...”

“It’s not just other people we need to forgive, Mitch,” he finally whispered. “We also need to forgive ourselves...”

“For all the things we didn’t do. All the things we should have done. You can’t get stuck on the regrets of what should have happened. That doesn’t help you when you get to where I am.”

QUESTION:

1. Write about a time you had to forgive yourself. Why was it important to forgive at that time?

PASSAGE FOUR:

All of Novel: Throughout the novel, Morrie has become a life-long inspirational teacher to Mitch.

QUESTION:

1. Write about one way Morrie influenced Mitch. Then write about one adult who has inspired you. Give a specific example that shows how this adult has helped you.