

STUDY GUIDE

Celebrate Life

1. Explain why the writer says excitement rules his heart. With what you see around you in the world each day, do you share the same feeling? Why? Or why not?
2. In the case of Dr. Freis and Dr. Mello, why did the writer say hope endures forever?
3. Undoubtedly, the story behind the founding of the Nobel Prize causes one to feel good. What about you, what do you feel and think about it? Elaborate your thoughts and feelings.
4. Do you agree that Janet Jackson's case is one that shows the power of faith in action? Why? Or why not?
5. Within your own surrounding and with your own experiences, cite reasons why we can celebrate.
6. Which successes in your life can you cite that you are thankful about? Include big and small successes.
7. The writer refers to his source of strength. What is this?
8. What about you, where do you draw your own strength to face life's challenges?
9. Explain why the writer says life endures forever.

Childhood Memory

1. Why was the writer afraid? What exactly was he afraid of from the beginning of the story up to the climax?
2. How would you describe his brother, Jonas? What kind of character do you think he possesses as implied in this particular story?
3. The author described the street quite in detail. What do you think was he trying to convey to his readers?
4. Describe the author as a boy based on the specifics of his memorable incident in his very life.
5. Why is this event so vivid in the mind of the writer? Feel free to speculate beyond what is already obvious.
6. If you are a literary writer or critic, what can you say about the style, the flow, and the plot of the story? If you are not, either try to reflect or discuss this question.
7. Describe the author's relationship with his parents. Feel free to expound on the implied proximity or distance of such relationship.
8. What do you think is the main theme of the story inside this essay?
9. As a reader, what can you say about this short essay?
10. Is there a moral in the essay? If so, what is it?

In Everything Give Thanks

1. Is it easy to give thanks in and for everything? Why? Or why not?
2. What have troubles in the world anything to do with one's attitude? Towards giving thanks?
3. Explain: The substance of man consists of resilience during times of trouble. Give examples in life or world events when this statement is applicable.
4. Are you one of those who are affected by what you read in the daily newspapers? What do you feel and do when you hear bad news?
5. What lessons do we learn from the story of the elderly woman?
6. Read the elderly woman's story once again and look around you. Do you know of anyone like her among your friends, peers, and relatives? Could you explain why they are like the elderly woman?
7. Are you like the elderly woman yourself? If so, how can you maintain such state of mind? If not, how can you change, if you want to change?
8. Are you encouraged or discouraged by the story? Why?
9. What is the moral of the whole essay?

My First Love

Picket Fence: A Personal Journey

Essays & Stories for Meditation

By Utanes

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1. What can you say about the writer of the short story? Describe him when he was a boy, his attitude towards friendship, his relationship with people, and his feelings about love.
2. Describe Felix's real impression about the opposite sex. Does he really dislike girls? Explain.
3. Felix has a seemingly sure understanding of the differences between boys and girls. What does this speak of him?
4. Describe the girl, Jenna.
5. Felix made mention of how funny he noticed the moves of Jenna along with the details of her present. What does this imply?
6. Why do you think at one point Felix said he disliked girls and the next moment his beliefs about falling in love? How would you explain this swift change in attitude toward the matter?
7. Aren't the last few paragraphs of the short story romantic? Does this really happen in real life? Has anything like this happened to you? Spend time on reflecting or discussing your own similar experiences. You may choose to be open and transparent about such experiences.

Childhood Dreams

Picket Fence: A Personal Journey

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1. What is your own childhood dream? Has this dream inspired you to do things, even extraordinary ones?
2. What can you say about Anousheh Ansari's experience? Can you identify with her?
3. Besides determination and perseverance, what other things can make one's dream come true?
4. What are the roles of parents and school teachers in helping children pursue their dreams?
5. What role does society need to play in order to encourage people to dream and pursue their dreams for the good of many?
6. What can hold back youth from pursuing their heart's desires?
7. The writer concluded by saying that "By following your passion, you are a model to others to do the same." Elaborate on this.

Greetings Are a Lifeline

1. Have you tried living alone with nobody to talk to? How does it feel?
2. Are you the type of person who likes to be alone? Or are you the extravert one—always looking for somebody to be with, talk with, and make friends with?
3. In the case of Mrs. Rodriguez, is there a difference between being alone and being with someone? Elaborate.
4. For Tim, why would he choose to be with an older person and find security there?
5. Have you tried being a Nando or a Samuel before? Would you like to be one? If so, who do you think you could share time with just to show your attention to and make a difference?
6. Are greetings really a lifeline? Isn't this a bit exaggerating? Explain.
7. Are there other ways we could make people feel they are important and cared for besides greetings? What are these other ways?
8. Who among your friends and family members need some greetings, whom you haven't showed care or attention to for a long time? Would you care to call or see them to greet them without expecting anything in return?

How Young People Think

1. At what point in your life have you had imaginations like the writer's son?
2. Is it all right to stretch your mind and create a fantasy of your own at times? What does this do for you?
3. Describe the writer's son based on what the latter wrote for a probable novel. Can you see what characteristics he has? His values?
4. What can you say about the writer's relationship to his son? How can it be improved?
5. If you were a father, what would you do if you find out something different about your son, something good about him you did not see before?
6. How can an essay like this be used in one's daily life?
7. How would spending time with people help understand what they think?
8. Learning from this short essay, what should be our personal attitude towards other people in general?