

## *A Separate Peace*: Review

1. First and foremost, of course, is that you need to have read the entire book carefully. You know the plot, the characters, the setting, and the symbols clearly, deeply, and like the back of your hand!
2. Think about the four main characters: Gene, Finny, Leper, Brinker. How does each grow/change as a result of their experience at Devon?
3. Why is the novel titled “A Separate Peace”??? What is the literal and the symbolic meaning of the title? Think. Think. Think. Think. Think!
4. What does the last paragraph of the novel mean? What are Maginot lines? What invisible Maginot lines have each of the boys drawn? (You’ll have to understand the two paragraphs before the last paragraph, too, then.)
5. Gene says Finny is the only one who could truly escape the war. What does he mean? Why would Finny be incapable of being a “good soldier”? Gene says he fought his war and defeated his enemy before going into the army. What does he mean by that? Why is Gene “ready” for war at the end of the novel? What has Leper had to do with preparing him? What has Finny had to do with it? What has Gene himself had to do with it?
6. Reflect on the confessions of guilt that Gene attempted to make to Finny. Why was he unsuccessful at first? What is different about the final conversation between Gene and Finny? **What happens in that conversation?** *Could* it have happened before Finny’s second fall? Why or why not?
7. Phineas’s name is close to Phoebus Apollo’s from Greek mythology. Phoebus Apollo is 1)god of light and youth, represented in art as a handsome young athlete; and 2)the healer, the god who first taught humans the healing art. How are both of these appropriate for Finny?
8. How are *both* Leper and Finny “casualties” of WWII – even though neither of them actually went to war? (Brinker says this . . . so you might want to check out where he says it as the first step in answering.)
9. Discuss the two ‘trials’ that happen in the novel (The butt room and the assembly hall). Why does Brinker insist on the second trial? Is he simply trying to hurt Gene? Does he want to hurt Finny? What all is going on here?
10. There are several key moments in this novel when something about to happen is interrupted. Give examples of this -- when do significant interruptions of events happen? Why at those particular times? What purpose do they serve in the novel?

11. Finny seems to take his disability very well . . . yet the author gives the reader some clues that things may not be as they seem with Finny. Point out some of these clues and explain them.
12. What does Leper say to Gene at his (Leper's) house? Why is this so troublesome to Gene (think about this on more than one level). Is Leper right about Gene? Why is this *whole* scene at Leper's house/outside in the field so important in the novel?
13. Think about all the pairs of things in this novel, like summer session and winter session; like athletics and academics; like the Little Devon river and the Nagaumsett river; like peace and war; like physical and emotional; like Finny's first accident/fall and Finny's second accident/fall; like forgiveness and guilt; like Finny as a casualty and Leper as a casualty; like good inside us and savage inside us; like Dr. Stanpole making Gene leave and Dr. Stanpole making Gene go see Finny; like the scene at Finny's house and the scene at Leper's house; like the two trials; like Finny and Gene . . . and there are a LOT more – what other 'pairs' of things can you come up with? Some are opposites, some are *juxtapositions* (we'll define that word), and some are progressive pairs. What does that mean? And then be able to explain the pairs *and what they teach us by looking at them* regarding the themes/messages/characters in this story.
14. How is this story a "rite of passage" story? Who grows up the most in this story, in your opinion? And how does this story really, really, really demonstrate the depth of the cycle of redemption . . . what wisdom can you glean by using this story, and multiple characters in it to discuss the entirety of the cycle? Don't 'just' label events/people on the cycle . . . USE the cycle to talk about growth, forgiveness, bitterness, awareness, hope, peace, innocence, a cycle that is continuous and, and, and (!!!)
15. Pick a few quotations from the text for each of the 4 most important characters. What is each "really like"? And then pick another few quotations that are not about anyone in particular, but are important "for life" quotations . . . why did you pick them? What has this novel "taught" you about life and/or about yourself? (If it hasn't taught you anything yet, you need to think some more!!!!!!)