



IN-DEPTH
STUDY
GUIDE

WRITER INSTRUCTIONS & STYLE GUIDE

NOTE: PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL – NOT TO BE SHARED

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PREPARING TO WRITE YOUR GUIDE

Assignment Overview

Thank you for being a part of the SuperSummary Study Guide Writer team! We are so happy to be working with you, and want to remind that should you have any questions along the way, we're always happy to help and advise as wanted and needed.

Your completed study guide will be part of a collection of study guides available on <http://www.supersummary.com/> and accessed by students, teachers, and general readers alike who are looking for additional assistance in understanding a book.

Your completed study guide should include the following sections:

- A plot overview of the entire book
- Chapter summaries for each chapter
- Chapter analyses for each group of chapters (most often, we've found 3 chapters is a magic number, but this will depend on the text, and how it's divided)
- Analysis of major and minor characters
- Analysis of major themes
- Analysis of important symbols/motifs
- Analysis of important quotations (we ask you to pick 25 quotes, in total)
- 10 thought-provoking essay questions

We believe that 10,000-12,000 words is a good minimum word count to aim for, and provides sufficient information on the book. For some guides, the word count will be higher (very long novels, for instance) or lower (especially for plays).

Example Guides

Prior to diving into your first assignment, we recommend that you skim through some of the sample study guide PDFs we've provided along with this file so that you have a better sense of the structure, format, and style of each section. Here are some notes on each example study guide:

***City of the Beasts* (novel) – This guide has excellent chapter summaries and excellent character analyses.**

***Dancing at Lughnasa* (play) – This guide provides an excellent example of how to model your analyses for the Important Quotes section. The Essay Topics are especially good as well.**

***Lean In* (nonfiction) – This guide has an excellent Plot Overview that is at once concise and in-depth. The chapter analyses are stellar, as is the Themes section.**

***Ruined* (play) – This guide is a great example of how to work in quoted material and how to include characterization and theme in your chapter analyses (as opposed to merely restating chapter summary content).**

***The Bite of the Mango* (novel) – This guide offers an excellent example of how to craft both character analyses and entries for the Themes section of the guide.**

***The Innocent Man* (nonfiction) – This guide is a great example of how to deal with a large amount of characters and facts while keeping chapter summaries and analyses cogent and concise.**

***The Return of Martin Guerre* (novel) – This writer does an especially nice job with their character analyses, and the Symbols/Motifs section is also especially good.**

Obtaining the Assigned Book

To simplify payment terms and logistics, the agreed-upon total payment for the study guide project includes a fixed reimbursement amount that can go towards purchasing the book. However, to increase your total net payment, you are of course also welcome to find the book for free online or at your local public library.

Background Reading

If you would like to read up some more about your assigned book, we recommend consulting websites like GoodReads.com, ReadingGroupGuides.com, BookBrowse.com, or Shelfari.com. These websites provide short overviews and/or reading guides that may help you get an initial sense of the important context, characters, and plot points to look out for prior to reading the book. We also encourage you to do a quick search online for other available resources, including book reviews—oftentimes, there is very beneficial information to be gleaned from reviews and/or interviews with the author.

Notetaking Tips

Keep some form of writing utensil—be it your laptop or a pad and pen—handy as you move through the book. This is especially important for logging sentences/passages that you'll want to use in the Important Quotations section.

STUDY GUIDE SECTION GUIDELINES

We provide some additional guidelines and information for each of the sections comprising the guide below. On occasion, we offer word count or page count suggestions; these are only suggestions, and we welcome you to use your best judgment in determining each section's length, based on the structure and content of your book. **We ask that you write the guide using the present tense.**

Plot Overview

This section is a 1-2 page overview of the entire book. You may find it helpful to organize this section into paragraphs corresponding to the major sections of the book's narrative. As other sections of the guide are focused exclusively on characters and themes, we ask that you not delve too heavily into either in this opening plot overview. If there are elements of characters and/or themes you feel are essential to include, that's okay, but the book's narrative—and the arc it creates—should take priority.

Below is an example of a plot overview, taken from our guide for Sherman Alexie's *Reservation Blues*:

Reservation Blues tells the story of Coyote Springs, a Spokane Indian rock band. The band is founded on a reservation, slowly gathers fans, and begins to play shows. Coyote Springs is given the chance to audition for a major record company in New York City, but, ultimately, the band does not succeed. The book combines traditional narrative with a mixture of other narrative techniques, including newspaper articles, song lyrics, interviews, and excerpts from journals. Together, these forms of media combine to form a presentation of reservation life that is sometimes humorous and sometimes devastatingly sad. The book also relies heavily on fantastic elements and the use of magical realism.

The novel begins with the arrival of Robert Johnson to the reservation. Robert is a fabled guitar player who sold his soul to the devil in exchange for his musical talents. Years later, Johnson regrets the deal and travels to the Spokane Indian Reservation to meet with Big Mom, a mythical figure who he believes can help him. There, he meets Thomas Builds-the-Fire, who takes Johnson to Big Mom and ends up in possession of Johnson's guitar. The magical, talking guitar instructs Thomas to start a band, and he recruits his friends Victor and Junior as guitarist and drummer, respectively.

The band gains popularity and begins to play shows. At a concert on a nearby reservation, they meet Flathead Indian sisters named Chess and Checkers. The sisters join the band as singers, and Thomas and Chess start a relationship. The band's success continues to grow, and they win a battle of the bands competition in Seattle. For a while, two white women, named Betty and Veronica, also sing in the band.

One day, two record executives arrive on the reservation and express interest in signing Coyote Springs to their label. The executives are named Sheridan and Wright, and they appear to be the same Sheridan and Wright who, as the US generals, were responsible for the murder of many Indians a hundred years ago. Sheridan and Wright bring the band to New York but decide not to give them a record deal. Instead, they sign Betty and Veronica, whom they plan

to dress in traditional Indian clothing and who will play Indian-influenced music. They want to take advantage of Indian culture without giving the Indians anything in return.

Defeated, Coyote Springs returns to the reservation, where Junior commits suicide. Thomas, Chess, and Checkers leave their homes to start a new life off the reservation. Victor stays behind and becomes the town drunk.

The novel's relatively simple plot serves a backdrop against which multiple characters are introduced. One is Father Arnold, the reservation's white Catholic priest who struggles with his faith after Checkers falls in love with him. David WalksAlong, the tribal council leader, dislikes the band and is generally angry as he worries about his nephew Michael White Hawk, who has just been released from prison. Other characters include Lester FallsApart, the town drunk; Simon, who drives his car backwards, and a man known as the-man-who-was-probably-Lakota, who stands on the corner prophesying the end of the world. Together, these minor characters come together to create a depiction of day-to-day life on the reservation.

Chapter Summaries

This section should include a short (200-400 words) summary of each chapter in the book. Each chapter summary will be its own section in the guide, as opposed to Chapter Analyses sections, where chapters are grouped together. These summaries should include the most important characters, plot developments, scenes, moments and conversations in the chapter. It will be beneficial, as you read, to jot down items and ideas that seem as though they'll remain important through the text; doing so will help you in crafting your respective Themes and Symbols/Motifs sections of the guide, and inclusions of these symbols and motifs "in action," in the chapter summaries, is encouraged.

We strongly encourage you to integrate short quotations from the book into the body of your chapter summaries. This is a way to bring some life to the chapter summaries and works to set our study guides apart.

When you do include quotations, please also provide the page numbers. In terms of formatting, we employ MLA: the page number should be displayed in parentheses at the end of the sentence, but before the period. Below is an example of MLA format, taken from one of our guides:

As Abdul hides in his 120-square-foot garbage shed, the reader gets an overview of Annawadi, the slum where "three thousand people had packed into, or on top of, 335 huts" (7).

Depending on both the text and the chapter, some summaries may extend past the 200-400 word count baseline, and some chapter summaries may be much shorter—no more than a paragraph. Feel free to use your expertise and best judgment here, and if you have questions, or would like advice, just reach out, and we'll help.

Below is an example of a three-chapter chapter summary, taken from our guide for Mark Dunn's *Ella Minnow Pea*:

Chapters 1-3

Chapter 1: "ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ"

The chapter opens with a letter from the title character, Ella, to her cousin Tassie. Ella explains to Tassie, who has been away in the States, that while she was away, some events happened on their home island, Nollop. The island is named after Nevin Nollop, who came up with a concise pangram, or sentence containing all the letters of the alphabet: "The quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog." The island's inhabitants honored Nollop with a statue with a plaque that bears the famous sentence.

While Tassie was away, the statue began to crumble. Ella details the events in the letter, beginning with the "Z" falling off the statue. A girl from town brings the fallen letter to the island Council, and, despite Ella and others' rational explanations (it fell because of age), the Council comes to another conclusion: "the fall of the tile bearing the letter 'Z' constitutes the terrestrial manifestation of an empyrean Nollopian desire, that desire most surely being that the

letter ‘Z’ should be utterly excised—fully extirpated—absolutely heavenho’ed from our communal vocabulary” (6).

Ella welcomes the challenge of not using the letter “Z” and feels it will not be missed. Tassie is upset by the news: “My friend Rachalle...reminds me that with the prohibition the reading of all books containing the unfortunate letter will have to be outlawed as well” (9). She fears the outfall from their language being controlled by the Council. In a subsequent letter from Ella to Tassie, Ella announces that Tassie is correct—all the books are gone.

Chapter 2: “ABCDEFGHJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ*”

“Z” is officially removed from the community and cannot be used else the user or the person in possession of a written use of the letter be punished. Tassie writes to Ella about the fear among the townsfolk in the hills. Tassie’s mother tells her, “I am angry and rebellious. In my head, I am reciting what I recall of my niece’s last letter, allowing the illegal words to baste and crisp. I cook the words, serve them up, devour them greedily. In the sanctuary of my thoughts, I am a fearless renegade” (18).

Several people in Tassie’s village have already committed their first offence of using “z.” “All were speakers of the banned words—words overheard upon the lanes, in schoolyards and church pews, and on the common greens. Neighbor turning upon neighbor, perpetuating old grievances with this new weapon unleashed upon us by the High Island Council” (21).

Ella writes to Tassie about the publisher and editor of the town newspaper contemplating the suspension of his business because of the banned letters. She fears the loss of news to the island and is happy the editor has not suspended his newspaper yet. On the other side of the island, Tassie notes the first person to reach the third offence is a young boy named Creevy. Creevy is banished and the town calls a meeting meant to release tensions and frustration. Tassie tells Ella that she cannot wait to attend.

Shortly after, the letter “Q” falls from the monument. Ella believes the new fallen letter indicates a possible rescindment of the law entirely. However, Tassie fears the opposite: the continuation of their rights being withheld. In the end, the letter “Q” is also removed from their language. Ella writes, “I am in agreement with you that as our anger against the Council grows, it has yet to exceed in potency the abject fear which invades all aspects of our readjusted lives” (29).

In response to the newly removed letter, Mr. Kleeman, the editor and publisher of the newspaper releases the final issue and leaves the island. Ella is devastated, but Tassie has her own troubles—her own mother commits her first offence in front of her students at school. Tassie reveals to Ella that a child from the class told his parents, who notified the authorities.

Chapter 3: “ABCDEFGHJKLMNOP*RSTUVWXYZ*”

Upset by people turning on each other, Tassie writes to the child’s family, asking why they deemed it necessary to go to the authorities about her mother’s accidental slip in class. The child’s father responds, “We believe, Miss Purcy, as you obviously do not, that there is full

cause and merit to the statutes recently passed by the Island Council. We believe, further, that Nollop does indeed speak to us from his place of eternal rest, through manipulation of the tiles upon his hallowed cenotaph, and that the Council services only as his collective interpreter” (40).

In apparent rebellion and anger, Tassie’s mother writes to Ella’s while overusing the letters available to her. Her reason behind the overuse is to make up for the two letters she has been robbed of. In an unusual turn of events, a man named Nate Warren, who met the boy who had been exiled, Creevy, writes to Tassie’s mother. He wishes to visit Nollop and document the goings on, particularly those surrounding the language events. She agrees he should stay with them under the guise of a “good old friend of the family” (46).

Tassie writes to Ella about the turn of events, but Ella reports another: an entire family is flogged in the streets for demonstrating the use of “Q.” She writes, “And so Mum and Pop and I stood and watched the harrowing and loathsome sight of children being ritually beaten, and the commensurately disturbing picture of frightened onlookers—‘the town baa-baas,’ as Pop has taken to calling our dear neighbors— doing what they do oh so very well, and that is: absolutely nothing. Lifting not even the proverbial finger to remove these high council bastinado-benediced buffoons from their pinnacle of abusive power, nor doing anything otherwise to stop or decelerate their efforts” (49).

Soon after these horrifying events, the letter “J” falls from the monument. Nate Warren, from the mainland, writes to Tassie’s mother, explaining that he has heard the news of the newly fallen letter. He further advises her that mainland chemists got their hands on the previously fallen tiles and found the glue reached a point where it is merely dust. He suspects all the letters will fall off in the coming months and fears the outcome if the Council continues its course of action. Regardless, he assures her that he cannot wait to meet her and will be on the island soon.

The concluding letter of the chapter is written from the Council to the people of Nollop. They explain that Nollop was a man of words, which makes them people of words, and as such, indebted to him. Further, they declare: “The falling tiles can represent only one thing: a challenge—a summons to bettering our lot in the face of such deleterious complacency, and in the concomitant presence of false contentment and rank self-indulgence” (55). The Council advises the citizens that thinking otherwise is heresy, which will be punished.

Chapter Analyses

Chapter analyses should utilize the plot developments laid out in the chapter summaries to dig deeper into elements of character, theme, symbols, and motifs. It may be helpful to think of these chapter analyses as a sort of middle distance between the chapter summaries and the Character, Theme, and Symbols/Motifs sections of the guide. While you're not entirely setting aside plot points, you're using these points as springboard for discussing other craft elements of the text. **Please avoid having chapter analyses simply repeat the content of chapter summaries.**

An additional way to achieve separation in content between Chapter Summaries and Chapter Analyses is through the addition, in the Analyses section, of any needed cultural or historical context for the book. For instance, if the book takes place during World War Two's Siege of Leningrad, spending just a brief moment contextualizing that event for our user is appreciated and encouraged.

Most often, you should break chapters into small groups and write an analysis of each group. Our writers have often found that three chapters make a good-sized group for each analysis section. Ultimately, we defer to you to determine what chapter groupings make the most sense for your assigned book. **Usually, breaking chapters into groups of 2-5 is a good guideline.** The only exception to this is if the book has a very small number of chapters. In this case, writing a separate analysis on each chapter may be more appropriate.

Like the summaries, the length of these analyses sections will naturally vary. In our experience, a minimum threshold in order to do a thorough job is usually 300-400 words.

Below is an example of an analysis of the first two chapters of Jennifer Egan's *A Visit from the Goon Squad*, taken from our guide:

Chapter 1 – Chapter 2 Analysis

Chapters 1 and 2 of *A Visit from the Goon Squad* establish the novel's non-linear style of storytelling. We can deduce that the events in chapter 2, "The Gold Cure", take place some years earlier than those in "Found Objects," because in the first chapter, Sasha refers to Bennie as her "old boss" (5), while in the second chapter she is still working for him. There is a suggestion that her kleptomania may be affecting her work when she gives Bennie his box of gold flakes with the explanation that he dropped it earlier. The storytelling shifts between temporal perspectives, sometimes narrating the current action, sometimes narrating it in the past from the perspective of a therapy discussion or a nostalgic reminiscence, and sometimes predicting what will happen in the future. The one indication of a fixed point in history occurs in "The Gold Cure," as Sasha tells Bennie that the last time she heard Stop/Go perform was at

Windows on the World, which she says was “five years” ago (33), exactly “four days” (34) prior to an event that is never mentioned explicitly, but which we can assume from the context to be 9/11.

The novel deals with the matter of time through its non-linear form of storytelling, but it also addresses the issue of time through the concerns of its characters. Bennie Salazar literally has trouble keeping time, as he miscalculates the number of years it has been since he last heard Stop/Go play. Bennie once said of his idol, Lou Kline, “You’re finished” (37), when the older man became nostalgic about the rock and roll industry. Bennie now behaves in the same manner, complaining about the state of the business and reminiscing about his old friends, “none of whom he’d seen in decades . . . yet still half believed he’d find waiting outside the Mabuhay Gardens (now defunct)” (23). In “Found Objects,” we see that Sasha has anxiety around aging, as, despite being thirty-five years old, “her online profiles all listed her as twenty-eight” (6). In contrast to Bennie’s anxiety about being past his prime, however, we see in Sasha a hope for her future, as in the midst of her shame about her kleptomania, she still hopes for “redemption, transformation—God how she wanted those things” (18).

Another theme that emerges in these first chapters is the power of narrative to affect reality. In “Found Objects,” the immediate story is a disturbing one, as Sasha seems to be trapped in self-destructive behavior. Having just confessed and returned a stolen wallet to one woman, she is still compelled to look through Alex’s wallet. Serving as a counterpoint to this immediate narrative, however, are Sasha’s therapy sessions, in which she discusses with Coz what is going on inside her head as she acts out these unhealthy behaviors. Through the layering of narratives, we understand that there is hope for Sasha, that this is “a story whose end has already been determined: she would get well” (6). In contrast to Sasha’s success with her therapist, Bennie rejects the therapist he and Chris are meant to see. Furthermore, he is constantly fighting what the therapist describes as the “Will to Divulge” (24); Bennie’s urge to recount to his son all those memories that provoke his own sense of shame. Bennie is burdened by the ways in which his own stories play over and over in his mind, and the closest he comes to release is when Sasha finds the scribbled notations he keeps as a means of controlling his urge to tell the stories to Chris. When Sasha finds the note, he initially feels “agony, as if the words themselves might provoke catastrophe” (37), but then he feels relief to have them uttered aloud.

Character Analyses

For this section, we ask you to pick out the significant characters in the book and write an analysis of each. If the book harbors a conventional protagonist, it makes sense to give this character the most in-depth analysis, perhaps something like two involved paragraphs. As you move down the text's character hierarchy, less and less time and space should be devoted to each character; we expect most character analyses to be no more than a paragraph, and, in the case of very minor yet momentarily essential characters, no more than a couple of sentences.

In regard to the content of these analyses, we're hoping for an amalgam of physicality, mindset, and emotional state, in addition to explaining to our users the thematic relevance of each character. How do these characters relate to one another, and how are these characters representative of what the book is about?

Below are three character analyses from the guide for Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter*:

Ramatoulaye

Ramatoulaye is a Senegalese woman, a widowed mother of twelve who had been estranged from her husband for several years before his death. When the reader is first introduced to Rama, she is mourning her estranged husband, Modou, and is living in the ritual seclusion demanded by her Muslim faith. Rama is a devout woman who feels deeply connected to her faith, her children, and her community, but is increasingly focused on building the life she wants for herself. She began adulthood as a devoted wife to Modou and bore him a dozen children before being summarily abandoned for a younger wife. In the wake of this tragedy, Rama shows unflappable compassion towards her sister-wife, Binetou, noting that the young girl is just as much a victim as she. Tender-hearted to a fault, Rama still loves Modou despite his actions, and grieves his death despite the fact that he had not visited her in five years. She is even more devoted to her children, taking care to educate her sons and daughters equally, and rising to the occasion when one daughter becomes pregnant out of wedlock. Rama's default nature is a thoughtful one, as evidenced by her detailed, almost analytic letters to Aissatou.

Despite her forgiving, generous nature, Rama is nonetheless an unconventional Senegalese woman, for her time. She believes education is the key to a girl's future, even more so than a boy's, though others around her believe education is wasted on women. She is a strong

proponent of female representation in Senegal's government, despite the fact that many Senegalese men recoil at the word "feminist." She is a firm believer in equality, though she places more value on others' rights than her own, due to her selfless nature. Rama does not often reflect on her own personality, devoting more words to Aissatou's or Modou's, but occasionally does remark on her own qualities. When speaking with Daouda Dieng, a prospective suitor, she engages him in a spirited debate about feminism. After he concedes her excellent points, she writes, "I had remained the same Ramatoulaye...a bit of a rebel" (64).

Aissatou

Aissatou is Ramatoulaye's best friend of many years. She is the daughter of a humble goldsmith and, like Rama, attended a teacher training college before moving on to work in a school. Though Rama remarks how alike the two women are, in many ways, Aissatou acts as a foil to Rama's choices. Whereas Rama stays with her polygamous husband, accepting his betrayal and abandonment with quiet grace, Aissatou leaves her own husband when he takes a second wife. Whereas Rama stays in her small community, Aissatou embarks to America, where she gets a job at the Senegalese embassy. Where Rama is introspective and keeps her cards close to her chest, Aissatou is direct and outspoken. Above all, Rama praises Aissatou for her kindness and generosity. It is Aissatou who supports Rama emotionally, through their correspondence, and it is Aissatou who buys Rama the "cream-colored Fiat" (57) that enables Rama's new independence. It is an act of true friendship that Rama never forgets. "You," she writes, "the goldsmith's daughter, gave me your help while depriving yourself" (56).

Modou

Modou is Rama's husband, whose death is the catalyst for Rama's ritual seclusion and long letter to Aissatou. Rama loves Modou deeply; in his youth he was "Tall and athletically built" (13) with "Moorish blood" (13). Rama describes her husband as "tender" (13) and admires his distaste for white women as he studies for his law degree in France. This kindness and caring is what makes his eventual abandonment of Rama so painful. She recalls that her mother always thought Modou "too honest" (39) and remarked on the gap in his teeth. His pursuit of Binetou, Rama says, is due to his "strong will, his tenacity before an obstacle, the pride he invests in winning..." (40). Binetou is the prize to be won, as Rama once was.

Themes

As you craft your guide, it's a good idea to make note of major and minor themes you see extending through the book. In this section, you'll analyze and trace the text's most important themes. We find 3-5 themes a good number to aim for, though this will depend on the book and how much you choose to write for each theme. We ask that you be specific as possible in this section; for example, as opposed to titling a subsection of the Theme section "Identity," you should aim to be more specific (e.g., Postcolonial Identity, or Feminist Identity). It may be helpful, in regard to organizing thematic content, to consider literary eras and theories; while we certainly don't expect you to be an expert in all of these, placing these texts into larger frameworks is an asset for our users, and perhaps also helpful for you, as you construct this portion of the guide.

Below is the Themes section from the guide for Ann Patchett's *State of Wonder*:

Civilization as a Corrupting Force

Though Amazonian tribes like the Lakashi and the Jinta initially seem far removed and isolated from the influence of modern life and civilization, Marina discovers that the desire for economic and social power can spread and corrupt even in the Amazon Basin. For example, during a trip down river to the Jinta Trading Post with Alan and Nancy Saturn, Dr. Budi, Benoit, and Easter, Marina is startled to find several white tourists so far up the Amazon. As well as their presence, Marina notices the considerable impact the tourists on the behavior of the Jinta Indians, who pander to them and their cameras, transforming their traditional ceremonies and dances into public entertainment. In addition, those Jinta not dancing or performing, dedicate their efforts to selling trinkets and crafts for financial gain. Rather than having an authentic encounter with another culture, the tourists are given what they want, a spectacle and a few exotic pictures that they can brag about with their friends and colleagues back home. The superficial nature of this encounter is made clear by the fact that the tourists mistake Marina for a Jinta Indian.

For the Amazon tribes, however, even the most minor intrusion from the outside world poses a grave threat to their culture and behavior. Of these intrusions, the introduction of money represents a particular threat. For example, during their return trip from the Trading Post, Benoit is so desperate to prove himself as a potential tour guide in the booming Amazon tourism industry that he attempts to single-handedly capture an anaconda, hoping to cement his reputation as a guide. His brazen attempt nearly kills Easter, and clearly traumatizes his

passengers. Though civilization can be a source of social and economic progress, the Anaconda scene draws a darker portrait; it is an unfortunate microcosmic example of how just a drop of profit motive in the Amazon can lead to wide-ranging socio-cultural contamination.

The Power of Medicine to Aid and Exploit

From a macro-economic perspective, *State of Wonder* is a novel about a powerful, global biomedical and pharmaceutical corporation, Vogel, attempting to exploit the natural resources of a fragile Amazonian eco-system for financial gain. For the Vogel Corporation, Dr. Swenson's research and development of a new fertility drug that can sustain female reproduction indefinitely represents huge potential profits. However, there is no profit potential for the Lakashi who discovered the source of such extended fertility, and the drug poses a potentially devastating public health risk to elderly women who might seek to undertake such a pregnancy. This latter danger is poignantly illustrated in the novel by Dr. Swenson's pregnancy which occurs as a result of testing the fertility drug on herself. Her subsequent miscarriage and the delivery of the fetus by C-section nearly kills her.

While Dr. Swenson's experience of pregnancy represents only a singular, fictional case study, it has universal moral implications. People in first world nations will likely pay a lot of money for this medication, however, what is the value of these medications in terms of improving global health and eradicating deadly diseases? Shouldn't this be the true moral aim of medical research and drug development? How do we reconcile the desire to make money with the humanitarian need to heal the sick? In *State of Wonder*, the Martin bark is the nexus where these questions and conflicts co-exist.

Though the financial value of the Martin bark compound lies in its ability to extend women's fertility, its real value in terms of human health is its ability to inoculate against malaria. Unfortunately, as Patchett's novel makes clear, promoting and valuing public health is rarely the primary objective of global pharmaceutical corporations. Instead, the mass production of medicine has more to do with corporate profits than with solving or curing global health crises, particularly crises that, like malaria, primarily affect the third world. Patchett's novel dramatizes the systemic problems of the global pharmaceutical industry through the conflict between Dr. Swenson, who hopes to end the scourge of malaria, and Mr. Fox, who hopes to cash in on a drug that will damage a unique ecosystem in order to extend the reproductive capacity of first-world women.

Finally, by shifting back and forth between the corporate campus in Minneapolis and the research station in the Amazon, Patchett's novel attempts to shed light on the social, cultural, economic, and geographical gulf that separates the first-world--where the pharmaceutical giants are based, the production decisions are made, and the profits are realized--and the third-world region that provides much of the raw material for these companies in exchange for minimal economic gain.. All in all, it is a system that depends on and perpetuates exploitation.

The Trauma of Separation and Loss

This is not simply a novel about macroeconomics and third world exploitation; it is also a novel

about the human struggle to cope with traumatic separation and loss. Virtually every important character experiences a devastating loss of some kind: Marina is abandoned by her father; Barbara Bovender loses her father in childhood; Dr. Swenson loses the love of her life, Dr. Rapp; Mr. Fox loses his wife to lymphoma, and Karen Eckman, suffers through a long separation from her husband even before she is mistakenly informed that he has died.

As a result of their respective losses, virtually every character makes decisions motivated by of a need to salve their wounds. Marina is attracted to older men like Mr. Fox, who serve as symbolic father figures. Dr. Swenson, who spent her life loving a married man, seeks motherhood and familial connection by abducting Easter from his birth parents and using her own body in a life threatening experimental pregnancy. Mr. Fox seeks to avoid losing another loved one by dating much younger women, and Anders Eckman, in the absence of his sons, becomes a surrogate father and mentor to Easter during his stay at the research station. To live, the experiences of these characters suggest, is to deal with the universal inevitability of loss and separation. Through these characters' personal struggles with loss, Patchett explores both the problems and the potential solutions for traumatic loss.

In the case of works of non-fiction, theme may function slightly differently, compared to novels, plays or short stories. To illustrate how guide writers of non-fiction titles have navigated theme in the past, below is the Theme section from the guide for Sudhir Venkatesh's *Gang Leader for a Day*:

Structural Racism

From the beginning of his time in Chicago, Venkatesh is interested in learning more about black people's urban living experiences. His initial discussions with Charlie and Old-Time in Washington Park point to the fact that a form of segregation continues to exist in the city. Venkatesh admits that these conversations are his first real exposure to black American culture and his desire to learn more eventually leads him to the projects. J.T.'s decision to return to the projects and join the Black Kings is based on his frustration with the opportunities available to him as a black man. He can make more money and earn more respect as a gangster than he can in the world of "legitimate" business. Throughout the book, the word "nigger" is used constantly by the tenants to refer to themselves and others. However, when he is gang leader for a day, Venkatesh uses the term and T-Bone warns him not to call him that again or he'll beat him. Coming from anyone but a black person, "nigger" is a derogatory term. Ms. Bailey also raises the issue of race: when Venkatesh first tells her about his research, she asks him if he's going to be studying white people. While he is confused at first, he soon realizes that she is referring to the way that structural racism has contributed to the circumstances at Robert Taylor.

Access to Physical Space

Gang Leader for a Day points to the fact that race doesn't exist in a vacuum. Racial identities intersect with people's class and gender identities, and this can determine which spaces they have access to. From Charlie and Old-Time, Venkatesh learns that a kind of unofficial segregation exists in Chicago: there are white areas and there are black areas. Gang boundaries are another important way that space is controlled. When Venkatesh first meets

Autry Harrison, Ms. Bailey walks him to the Girls and Boys Club because they will have to cross into another gang's territory. This desire on the gangs' part to claim a space that is theirs and theirs alone, suggests that these young men feel disenfranchised and that "normal" society has no place for them. Venkatesh's habit of stopping at Jimmy's bar—a point halfway between the projects and his home—also suggests the way that space can influence identity. At Jimmy's, he stops being the person he is in front of J.T. and becomes himself again. Similarly, the demolition of Robert Taylor is a traumatic for many of the tenants, whose sense of identity is tied to the place they live and the community they are part of. As well as losing a place to live, they are losing neighbours and friends and will have to learn to feel at home among strangers.

The Effect of Class on Perception of Self and Others

There are several references to social class throughout the book, but perhaps the most striking example, and one that ties class identity to race and space, is J.T.'s rejection of the terms "black" and "African American". J.T. does not think of himself as black or African American, he calls himself a "nigger." For him, African Americans are people who live in the suburbs and have office jobs. They don't live in the projects. They are not poor. Venkatesh's class identity is also the subject of some comment. He is upfront about his middle-class background and how it affects his reaction to events in the projects. For example, when Taneesha is beaten up by Bee-Bee, he is furious that no one called the police or an ambulance. This is something that a number of people—especially Ms. Bailey—challenge him on, claiming that because he hasn't lived in the projects he can't understand why they didn't call the police. Growing up in a middle-class neighbourhood, the police were a force for good, a kind of protection. Things are very different in Robert Taylor Homes, something he only gradually comes to terms with.

The Negative Impact of Gang-Influenced Masculinity

While gender is not addressed explicitly in the book, it is a minor theme. The Black Kings are a macho organization: this is made clear when J.T. is trying to recruit gang members in a new area and one man asks him if his aunt can join too. J.T.'s response is emphatic: "Ain't no women allowed in this thing" (153). The Black Kings—and gangs more generally—are for men only. The broader significance of this is suggested by Cordella Levy, who tells Venkatesh that before the gangs took over in the 1980s, women had a lot more authority, and with more women in power, there were more people in a position to help others in their community. Venkatesh also mentions that working men are largely absent from, or stay out of sight, in Robert Taylor Homes in case they jeopardize their family's lease. This means that while the gang, and therefore men, dominate public life in Robert Taylor, it is a particular kind of masculinity—one that encourages or at least accepts, violence, including sexual violence against women. Despite J.T.'s emphasis on the Black Kings' role in the community, it is really from women like Ms. Mae and Ms. Bailey that Venkatesh learns about how people in the projects live and help each other. It is from women that he learns about the particular challenges they face in terms of sexual and domestic violence and the difficulty of raising children in the projects.

Symbols and Motifs

As a brief reminder: symbols are images, ideas, sounds or words that represent something else either by resemblance, convention, or association. Motifs, on the other hand, are images, ideas, sounds or words that help to explain the central idea(s) of a literary work (i.e., the theme).

You don't need to subdivide this section of the guide into two separate sections, and it's perhaps best to present symbols and motifs in order of their importance, as opposed to, say, first symbols, then motifs. Additionally, and depending on the text, the amount of items populating this section will vary according to the book's content. If you perceive the text you're working with as having only a few, important symbols and/or motifs, it's good to focus more thoroughly on those. Alternately, if there are a number of these, try not to omit anything of grave importance, but feel free to give a bit less space to each.

Below is the Symbols and Motifs section from the guide for Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche's *Americanah*:

Hair

Hair, particularly Ifemelu's hair, is used frequently in the novel to comment on her adaptation and/or defiance of American cultural norms. Ifemelu's hair, whether braided, relaxed, or natural, represents her state of assimilation in America, or her attempts to push back against it. The novel begins in a Trenton hair salon—though Ifemelu lives in Princeton, New Jersey, she must travel to another city to have her hair braided. She has been wearing her hair in a small, natural Afro, but is about to return to Nigeria, and therefore must have braids, as is customary there.

Though Ifemelu understands that "the few black locals she had seen [in Princeton] were so light-skinned and lank-haired" (3) that a braiding salon would not be necessary, the fact she has to travel for this service nonetheless annoys her. The braiding salon itself is a pan-African enterprise, with female employees and customers from Nigeria, Ghana, the Caribbean, and more. The salon functions more like Africa than America, with Nigerian movies playing on TV,

and Ifemelu haggles with the shop owner, something that is not a part of American culture. In the salon, Ifemelu is better understood than in Princeton. When she complains of the heat, she knows the women around her will not say, “You’re hot? But you’re from Africa!” (13). Ifemelu feels hostile towards Kelsey, a white woman who visits the salon for Bo Derek style cornrows. Kelsey, who is full of “the nationalism of liberal Americans” (232) has invaded one of the few spaces in which Ifemelu feels she belongs, and her ignorance about black hair grates.

At the height of Ifemelu’s attempt to assimilate into American life, she hunts for a professional job after graduating university. Early on, Ifemelu is told by Aunty Uju that “If you have braids, they will think you are unprofessional” (146). Though Ifemelu has worn braids her whole life, she acquiesces to America standards and gets her hair straightened using chemicals and heat tools. Her hair stylist declares that Ifemelu now has “white girl swag” (251), though the chemicals burn Ifemelu’s scalp and cause her hair to thin and fall out. Curt, her boyfriend, hates her new hair and rails against the unfairness of her having to change her natural look for a job. Ifemelu is quiet, happy to have gotten a job and to be one step closer to American citizenship, but wonders if she would have gotten a job with her “thick, kinky, God-given halo of hair, the Afro” (252).

As Ifemelu comes to feel more alienated from Curt and his American friends, she begins to reconsider her hair choices. Influenced by a Nigerian friend, she cuts her hair short, and decides she looks “like a boy; at worst, like an insect” (258). During a heated fight with Curt, she brings up the fact that all of his other girlfriends had long flowing hair, and knows she is “being absurd” (261). After their subsequent breakup, Ifemelu gives up on assimilation. She quits her job, decides to start a blog about race, and begins to wear her hair in a natural, Afro style. “That day, she simply fell in love with her hair” (264). She has given up on approximating a white American’s wife— with a corporate job, white boyfriend, and straight, silky hair. Her change in hairstyle symbolizes a change in herself. She has accepted herself for who she is, “dense and spongy and glorious” (264) hair included.

Blaine’s Plant

When Ifemelu breaks up with Blaine, he insists that she take his houseplant—“hopeful green leaves rising from three bamboo stems” (9). The plant, though it belongs to Blaine, represents their relationship and the differences between them. Ifemelu agrees to take it, though “a sudden crushing loneliness lanced through her and stayed with her for weeks” (9). Ifemelu takes responsibility for the plant as she takes responsibility for their breakup. She accepts the plant and hangs on to it just as she hangs onto Blaine in Nigeria, lying to her parents and insisting that Blaine will be joining her later. Blaine, for his part, gives her his plant with its “hopeful” green leaves because he too is hopeful. Because Ifemelu does not understand the cause of their breakup, he believes there may be a chance of reconciliation, though Ifemelu feels that their relationship was “like being content in a house but always sitting by the window” (9)—much like Blaine’s houseplant.

Food

Food, particularly the differences between American and Nigerian food, is a consistent motif

within the novel. Food is used to exemplify Ifemelu's difficult adjustment to America, her cousin Dike's precarious position as a Nigerian-born American, and the ways living in America has changed Ifemelu, once she returns to Nigeria.

When Ifemelu arrives in America and stays with Auntie Uju and Dike, she is fascinated and perplexed by American food. She enjoys McDonalds, but is baffled when Auntie Uju suggests sandwiches for lunch, "as though those words were perfectly normal and did not require a humorous preamble about how Americans ate bread for lunch" (131). She botches the hot dogs Dike requests, cooking them like sausages despite his protestations. "She knew then that she should have listened to him" (132) because Dike, not Ifemelu, is the expert in this situation, and it unnerves her. Even food once familiar to her has changed shape, much like her world has. "She was disoriented by the blandness of fruits...bananas were so big, so evenly yellow" (139). She offers Dike bananas with peanuts, a snack from her childhood, but he rejects it and Nigeria in general, saying, "I don't think I like Nigeria, Coz'" (139). Obinze experiences a similar disorientation while out to dinner with Emenike at a posh restaurant. Emenike's assimilation is clear from his positive reaction to "three elegant bits of green weed, for which he would pay thirteen pounds" (331) Obinze, for his part, is nauseated by the sight of beef tartar.

Ifemelu adapts to the food in America, but always recognizes a divide in her tastes, one that does not dissipate. She eats bananas and peanuts and "did not like soul food" (401), the traditional dishes of black Americans. Soul food, in particular fried chicken, becomes a sticking point between her and Blaine, exemplifying their cultural divide. After a dinner party attended by Blaine's ex girlfriend, a white American named Paula, Ifemelu becomes jealous of all that Blaine and Paula share, as Americans—food included. "For you and Paula, fried chicken is battered. For me, fried chicken has no batter'" (409), Ifemelu explains to Blaine. He brushes it off, but Ifemelu cannot shake the "emotional remnants that existed between him and Paula" (409), a thought triggered by food.

When Ifemelu returns to Nigeria, she experiences feelings of nostalgia, particularly with regards to food. She is excited by the prospect of drinking malted drinks again, as the version sold in America "was not the same thing" (479) and gossips with friends over ofada rice and chicken stew. At the Nigeropolitan Club, she judges other former expatriates for missing smoothies and pining for a "good vegetarian place" (503). Ifemelu feels at home again, finally, and so enjoys "eating all the things she had missed while away, jollof rice cooked with a lot of oil, fried plantains, boiled yams" (503). She even writes a blog post rebuking those returning from America who desire non-Nigerian food. "Nigeria is not a nation of people with food allergies...it is a nation of people who eat beef and chicken and cow skin" (520). Despite her self-righteous posturing, though, Ifemelu still finds herself longing for things like "quinoa, Blaine's specialty, made with feta and tomatoes" (503) and refuses to eat fries made from frozen potatoes (548). In this way, Ifemelu's conflicted feelings towards food symbolize her conflicted feelings towards America and Nigeria. Once content with Nigerian food and baffled by sandwiches, she is later caught somewhere in middle, a Nigerian heavily influenced by her life in America.

Kosi's Dressing Table

In the midst of his affair with Ifemelu, Obinze frets about whether to tell his wife, Kosi, about it

and whether to divorce her. The day he decides to tell her about Ifemelu, Obinze goes to their room. He sees Kosi “sitting in front of her dressing table, which was full of creams and potions so carefully arranged that he sometimes imagined putting his hands under the table and overturning it, just to see how all those bottles would fare” (570).

Here, the polished dressing table with all of its delicate bottles represents Obinze and Kosi’s marriage. The marriage, like the dressing table, has been carefully cultivated and tended by Kosi—Obinze barely factors in. Though Kosi is deeply invested in her marriage and family, cooking for Obinze despite his own culinary skills and developing “an intemperate dislike of single women” (43), Obinze fantasies about overturning their life together, just as he fantasizes about destroying her bottles of cosmetics. The fact that he wonders about whether or not the bottles would break suggests that he believes that Kosi could emerge from the dissolution of the marriage intact.

Peacocks

In Part Five of *Americanah*, after Ifemelu returns to Nigeria, she begins to see an inordinate number of peacocks. For Ifemelu, the peacocks represent a sense of belonging and contentment with her life. She first sees a peacock in Ikoyi, a suburb that “reeks of gentility” (486) and she eventually moves there. When Ifemelu feels comfortable in her routine, she describes awaking “to the sound of peacocks” (506), and when she and Obinze are in the honeymoon stage of their affair, they “often stood on her verandah and watched the peacocks” (553), now feeling “in love...eager for tomorrow” (553). Peacocks appear each time she begins to feel safe and comfortable in an aspect of her life, be it a neighborhood, house, or relationship.

In some instances, when working with a non-fiction title, symbols and motifs will present themselves in a manner similar to works of fiction. In other instances, you may find it difficult to garner material for this section of the guide. Should you come to the conclusion that these literary devices are not being employed by the author at all, contact us, and we will decide how to proceed.

Important Quotations

In this section, we'd like you to list the 25 most significant quotations (or short passages) that you have identified in the book.

For each quotation, please write a short analysis that provides context for, and the significance of, the quotation. Most often, an analysis of 2-3 sentences is sufficient for each quotation. For certain, key quotations, you may want to offer a couple of sentences more. **Please also make sure to note the chapter and page numbers in parentheses after the quotation.**

As we're not quite following MLA style, for citations here, we'd like you to place the end punctuation inside the quotation, then have the chapter number and page number follow. We'd also prefer that you spell out "page," or "pages." Here's an example:

9. "In place of the greens, browns, and flashes of color which punctuated Matsu's garden, the spareness of Sachi's garden stunned me. There were no trees, flowers, or water, only a landscape made of sand, stones, rocks, and some pale green moss which covered the shaded areas." (Autumn: October 30, 1937, Page 40)

In thinking about selecting your quotes, be sure to include quoted material from the book's major moments and scenes. We ask that you look for passages related to crucial moments of plot, character and

theme that will help our guide users understand and analyze the text more effectively. This is also an opportunity to highlight specific choices made by the author, and the implications behind those choices. While you may have summarized an important plot point earlier in a chapter analysis section, a quotation and the analysis here allows our users to see, hear and feel that moment, in addition to understanding, through your analysis, why the author made the choice or choices that they did.

Beyond passages related to crucial moments of plot, character and theme, you might think about sentences and passages that highlight language and voice, and capture what the book “sounds” like. These types of passages are a useful way to round out your list of 25 important quotations.

Included below are three examples of quotations and their respective analyses that we thought worked very well. The analysis of the quoted material is in italics.

1. “Spanish seemed to me the language of home. (Most days it was only at home that I’d hear it.) It became the language of joyful return.” (Chapter 1, page 14)

As a child, even before he attended school, Rodriguez understood the divisions between the public and the private. At home, in the private sphere, Rodriguez’s family spoke Spanish, while outside the home, English was the dominant language, especially because Rodriguez’s family lived in a middle-class white neighborhood, not with other Latino families. Here he describes the joy he felt when his family spoke Spanish at home: his intimate connection with the language. By framing it as a “language of joyful return,” Rodriguez associates Spanish with the comfort of home and makes a clear division between home and public life. When he begins school and learns English, this division begins to both break down and expand.

2. “Shame kills faster than disease.” (Chapter 12, p. 30)

Shame afflicts several characters in this novel. Rama presents it as an emotion that has disastrous consequences, and indeed, the events of the novel bear this out. Rama feels shamed by her husband’s decision to take another wife, and the societal pressure to remain a faithful wife, along with this deep shame, prevents her from leaving Modou, despite her children’s pleas. Young Aissatou’s shame over her unplanned pregnancy prevents her from seeking out her mother’s help, just as Rama’s shame over sexual matters prevented her from educating her daughter on how to avoid pregnancy.

3. “Conquer taste, and you will have conquered the self” (Chapter 1, p. 3).

As the novel begins, Jagan views a person—a self—as little more than a collection of senses to be defeated. This makes it easy for him to feel morally superior. Deny oneself a little sugar and call it a great victory. The failings of this grandiose approach to his own actions will be the key to his eventual enlightenment.

If there's anything that we'd like you to try to avoid with your analyses of quotations, it's repeating the quotation's content in your analyses. While this may seem obvious, we've found it can be very easy to have analytical content simply echo the sentiment of the quotation itself, and thereby add little to the text's passage. We're hoping that these short analyses can not only position the quotation in the narrative, but also provide deeper analysis of the quotations themselves.

Essay Questions

For this section, we ask you to craft your top 10 thought-provoking essay questions for the book. Try to make these questions broad enough that one could conceivably write a full-length essay about the topic. One mode of thinking about these questions might be to divvy them up via craft element: a couple of questions around plot, a couple of questions around character, and so forth. It's best to steer clear of essay questions that ask for opinions, and towards those that require guide users to draw on observations about structure, literary devices, and—when appropriate—social/cultural context.

Please present each essay topic as a question or a series of questions. It is fine to include declarative sentences to provide context or set the stage for these questions.

Included below are five examples of essay questions possessive of the depth and breadth we're hoping for:

1. In *So Long a Letter*, Ba subverts typical tropes of African literature by focusing on African women, rather than African men or white Westerners. Why do you think Ba chose to focus so heavily on friendships and familial ties between women?
2. The trains passing through Mano Majra play a major role in the story, one that changes over the course of the book. What are some things that the trains represent over the course of the story?

3. *The Dew Breaker* is divided into nine interrelated stories, as opposed to following one story throughout. Why do you think Danticat chooses to structure the novel this way? What do you think this structure has to do with her goal of portraying Haiti's past under a dictatorial regime?
4. Greg Boyle was trained as a Jesuit priest. In what ways did Boyle's Jesuit training affect his later outreach efforts through Homeboy Industries? How did Boyle's early missionary work in Bolivia affect how he viewed the world?
5. Throughout the novel, the definition of what a "paper town" is changes. Discuss the different meanings of the term that surface as the novel progresses. How do they relate to the themes of the book?

STYLE GUIDELINES

A Note Regarding Voice

The voice for the study guide should be objective and authoritative. We provide the most value to our users when our guides eschew opinionated language in favor of language that radiates neutrality. To this end, here are some items to keep in mind, as you both write and review your guide:

- Try to be sure to avoid language one might see in a book review. Obviously, there is going to be some overlap between these two types of documents, especially in plot and character descriptions, but the book review opines, while the job of our guides is to *present*. As you write and review, be on the lookout for places where opinion may have snuck in to the guide, and edit out accordingly. Such value judgments can occur through a simple adjective choice ("riveting," for example), or through your own view of a character in the book, when it's not universally true that all readers will come away with the same perspective of that character.
- While we don't want our guides' language to feel sterile, we believe we do the greatest service to our users by offering language and content that prioritizes clarity, concision, and accessibility. On occasion, this can mean making sure that not too much of your own voice diffuses into the guide. We've found that one way to counteract such a diffusion is through the inclusion of quotes from the source text. We feel it's important for our users to have an understanding not only of the content of the text, but to hear the voice of the author. If there are places, upon review, where you

feel there is too much “you” in the guide, is there a way to supplant that with more of the voice of the author?

- As you construct your guide, remain cognizant of language at both the inter- and intra-sentence levels. Whenever possible, do not begin sentences with adverbs (e.g., “suddenly,” or “quickly,” or “then”). Avoid, too, beginning sentences with conjunctions. As you review, look towards verbs: are there areas of the guide with heavy reliance upon the same verb? If so, edit accordingly. Strong verbs are great; too many adjectives and adverbs, on the other hand, can clutter otherwise solid sentences.

Other Style Tips

We understand that every guide writer’s writing process will be unique, but wanted to offer a short list of items to keep in mind, as you proceed. We imagine many of these guidelines are items you’ve already considered, yet hope that having a list to refer to may provide some assistance.

- Remember to rely on the paragraph as an organizational tool. We’ve found that chapter summary sections with more, yet shorter, paragraphs, often read far more effectively than summaries with consistently long, dense paragraphs.
- The book’s chronology and your guide’s chronology will and should differ, though not wildly so. Aim for frontloading the guide with all necessary information. Let’s say, for example, that we don’t learn the name of the text’s protagonist until Chapter 2 of the book. Even if it’s integral to the plot that said protagonist is unnamed in the first chapter, it’s fine (and encouraged) to name that protagonist right away; that is, there’s a way for the guide’s chronology of events to parallel too closely that of the text’s itself, when doing so may actually disorient guide users. The guide should have all important information from the text in it, but this information need not (and in many cases *should* not) follow the exact order it is presented in the source text.
- Avoid rhetorical questions. If you come across rhetorical questions as you review, it’s best to find a way to make these sentences declarative, or, alternately, omit them.
- Avoid passive voice. For a refresher on passive voice, and how to make sure you’re working in active, not passive, voice, here’s a link to Purdue’s Online Writing Lab (OWL): <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/owlprint/539/>. It should provide you with everything you need.

FINALIZING YOUR GUIDE

Formatting

Along with these instructions, we have included a separate Word document that provides a template in which you can complete your study guide. The template should be mostly self-explanatory, but below are a few formatting points that we would like to highlight:

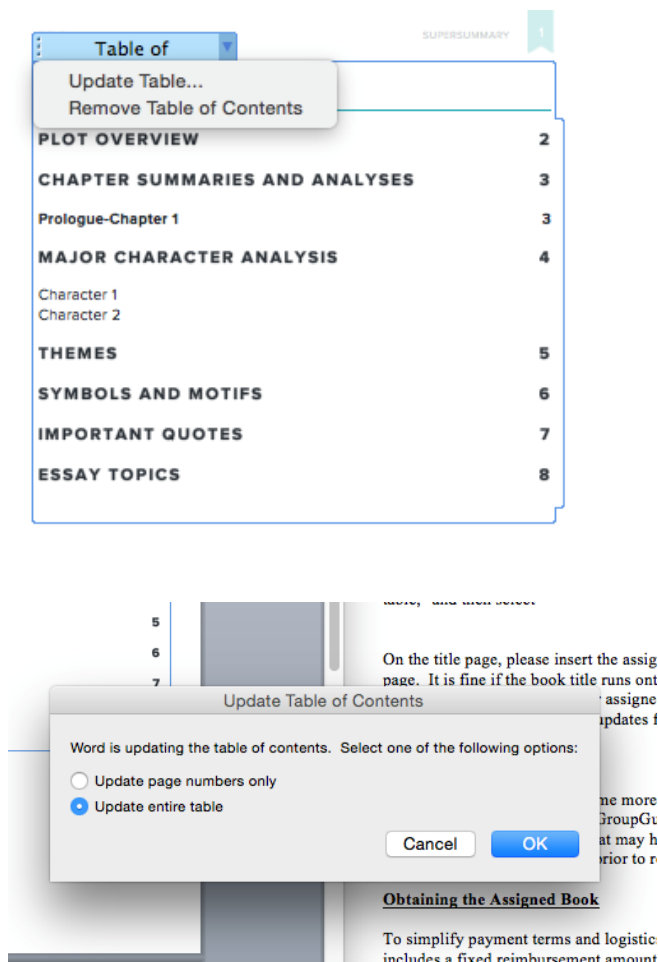
- Always italicize the title of your assigned book title, if you choose to mention it in the body of your study guide.
- If book chapters are titled, please begin each chapter summary with the chapter number, followed by the chapter title in quotations (e.g., Chapter 1: “Title”)
- Do not indent the first line of paragraphs. All paragraphs should be left-justified.
- Always begin major sections on a new page. In other words, all bolded sections listed in the Table of Contents should begin at the top of a new page.
- Bold the names of subsections. For instance, the names of specific themes within the “Themes” section should be bolded. There should be one blank line before and after each bolded subheading.
- Italicize your analyses in the “Important Quotations” section.
- If you have any questions on formatting, please refer to the example study guide PDFs. Before submitting your study guide, you should make sure that your formatting is consistent with the above guidelines and the example guides.

Proofreading

Please be sure to spellcheck and thoroughly proofread your study guide before submitting it.

Updating the Table of Contents

Once you have finished composing and proofreading your study guide, please update the table of contents. To do this, click on the table of contents. From the drop-down menu, select "update table," and then select "update entire table." The table of contents should then update.



To ensure that the table of contents updates correctly, please note:

- **Chapter headings** should be in the "SS - Heading 2" style
- **Major character names** should be in "SS - Heading 3" style

On the title page, please insert the assigned book title and the author into the text box on the middle of the page. It is fine if the book title runs onto two lines if it helps make the page look more appealing.

Finally, insert the name of your assigned book title into the placeholder in the heading of pages 2-3 of the template and make sure that it updates for all pages.

FAQS

Below, we've answered some questions that have arisen in the past, regarding payments, assignment logistics, formatting, and other miscellaneous matters. Have a look here, and if your questions aren't answered below, just get in touch and we'll help. As a general rule, it's always great to ask questions first, before proceeding with a path forward you're unsure about.

Forms and Payment

Q: Will I receive a 1099 from SuperSummary during tax time?

A: Based on changes to the tax code in 2016 ([IRS Section 6050W](#)), payments made to contractors via PayPal and other electronic payment processors are now covered by Forms 1099-K, which are issued by the respective payment settlement entity (and not the company that made the payment), but only under certain circumstances. Per PayPal's own [website](#), there are only a couple of instances when you would receive a 1099-K for PayPal payments. PayPal is required by the IRS to report the sales of goods and services for customers who, in a single year, receive:

- More than \$20,000 USD, **AND**
- 200 or more payments.

You should only ever receive roughly 12-15 payments a year from SuperSummary—far less than the 200 payments required to receive a 1099-K. As a result, you will not receive a 1099 or 1099-K form.

As with all freelance income, it is still your responsibility to report your SuperSummary income to the IRS on your Form 1040. To calculate the total amount of your income for a particular year, simply log into PayPal, and click on the **ACTIVITY** tab at the top of the screen.

Once there, you'll want to filter the activity. Change the dates to include the entire year; ex: 1/1/2017 - 12/31/2017. Add an additional filter of "SuperSummary" to the search.

This will get you a list of all your SuperSummary payments for the entire year. Print this page, and provide it to your accountant, or include it with your tax documents. It will suffice as proof of your income from SuperSummary for the year, in the same way a 1099 form would.

Q: I still haven't received payment for my guide. What should I do?

A: When we receive a guide, we give it an initial review, to make sure everything looks complete enough to send along to an editor. If there are any immediate issues to address prior to sending it to an editor, we will let you know. Once the guide passes this stage, and is sent on, we then begin the process of releasing payment to you. We always strive to keep you in the loop in regard to how soon you can expect payment. Typically, you should expect payment between 3-5 days after the guide is forwarded on to an editor. If five days have passed and you've still not received payment, email us and we will expedite the process.

Title Determination**Q: How are book titles determined? Do I get to pick my book title, or at least the genre?**

A: Our list of book titles is determined by demand from our audience and assigned to writers in order of priority. To this end, at this point we unfortunately are not able to offer much individual choice in regard to both the genre and title of the book you receive. If you are assigned a book and you feel that you are uncomfortable with the subject matter or unable to do it justice for any reason, let us know, and we will discuss how to best proceed. Over time, for long-term members of our team, we do try to do our best to balance out assignments (from a level of difficulty perspective) so that no writer is getting only a very specific type/length of book.

Formatting**Q: The Table of Contents isn't formatting correctly. Should I try to manually change it?**

A: We ask that you stay away from making any manual changes to the Table of Contents for any reason as we will have to fix it during the editing process. If the tab that updates the Table of Contents appears to be absent, email us and let us know—it could be that you're working with a different version of Word, and the template isn't compatible.

The other problem may be that sections of the guide are not formatted correctly and therefore are not showing up in the updated version of the Table of Contents. As a reminder:

To ensure that the table of contents updates correctly, please note:

- **Chapter headings** should be in the "SS - Heading 2" style
- **Major character names** should be in "SS - Heading 3" style

Make these changes to the corresponding sections, and, should the update tab be utilizable (it will appear when you click on the Table of Contents header), these changes should appear in the Table of Contents.

Q: I can't get the title of the book to appear in the top left-hand corner of the guide pages. Instead, it just says title. What should I do?

A: We're aware of this template issue affecting a small percentage of writers and will take care of it on our end. If the book title fails to show up here, just let us know when you hand in your guide.

Q: I can't get the page numbers to populate in the top right-hand corner of the guide pages. What I should do?

A: Much like above, we are aware of this issue, so if the page numbers fail to populate, just let us know, and we'll take care of it on our end. Please do not try to insert page numbers yourself, in another place.

Q: My book has no chapters or other section breaks—how should I group summaries and analyses?

A: In this case, we recommend that you group summaries and analyses by page number grouping. We recommend breaking the book down in 30-50 page chunks and writing a summary and analysis per grouping.

Q: My book has chapters with titles. Do I include these chapter titles in my summaries?

A: Yes: you would include the title of the chapter with its corresponding, individual summary. For the header that gets inputted into the Table of Contents, you would include the range of chapters that's covered by your corresponding Chapter Analyses. Here's an example from the guide for *The Samurai's Garden*.

The Table of Contents looks like this:

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER SUMMARIES AND ANALYSES	5
Autumn: September 15, 1937-Autumn: September 29, 1937	5
Autumn: October 5, 1937-Autumn: October 29, 1937	10
Autumn: October 30, 1937-Autumn: November 30, 1937	13
Autumn: December 1, 1937-Winter: December 7, 1937	18
Winter: December 21, 1937-Winter: February 4, 1938	22
Winter: February 5, 1938- Winter: March 14, 1938	25
Spring: March 28, 1938-Spring: May 30, 1938	28
Summer: June 6, 1938-Summer: July 5, 1938	32
Summer: July 9, 1938-Summer: August 16, 1938	34
Summer: August 17, 1938-Autumn: September 23, 1938	36
Autumn: September 28, 1938-Autumn: October 19	38
Autumn: October 20, 1938-Autumn: October 26, 1938	41
Autumn: October 27, 1938-Autumn: October 29, 1938	43

Here is the corresponding header for the first entry, above (this appears in the body of the guide):

Autumn: September 15, 1937-Autumn: September 29, 1937

Just below this is the sub-header for the individual chapter:

Autumn: September 15, 1937 Summary

After the summaries are done, they are followed by the analysis for the range of chapters:

Autumn: September 15, 1937-Autumn: September 29, 1937 Analysis

These steps then repeat, as you move through this section of the guide.

Deadlines

Q: I'm going to be over the 3-week deadline for completing the guide. What should I do?

A: We understand that especially when you're working on your first few guides, it can be hard to predict exactly how long each part will take, making it more difficult to plan your work so that you can meet

your initial deadlines. While we ideally seek a 3-week turnaround, we can offer you an additional one-week extension to complete the guide for any assignment. If you know you are not going to meet your deadline, please email us to let us know that you want an extension so that we can plan accordingly.

Q: I've already asked for a one week extension but I still need more time to complete the guide. Is that ok?

A: If you need a couple of days past the 4 weeks, that's usually not a major issue; again, just email us to let us know. If you expect that you will be significantly later than the 4 weeks, we will have to discuss the best way to proceed as the title you are working on is in high demand and needs to get published to the website within a reasonable period of time in order for us to meet the needs of our users. Ultimately, in determining which writers we can work with long-term, adherence to our deadlines is an important factor, but we also are open to discussing custom deadlines with specific writers (who may generally need more time to complete their guides but still want to work for us long-term) depending on our needs and availability of assignments.

Delivery of Completed Guide

Q: What is the best way to send you my completed guide? Dropbox? Email?

A: We prefer that you send the guide as a .docx attachment to an email. In the subject line of the email, if you might put the name of the book, your name, and "Full Guide Submission;" so, for example: "THE WAVES, Virginia Woolf - Full Guide Submission."

Word Count

Q: Is there a word-count ceiling I should be paying attention to?

A: To remind, we think that 10,000-12,000 words is a good minimum to aim for. While there isn't a word-count ceiling for full guides, quality should come before sheer quantity of words. Concision is clarity's sibling; to this end, should you find that your guide is significantly longer than the sample guides we provide, and the book is not significantly longer than average, it may be good to take a step back and question if all guide content is crucial, and if, perhaps, there might be a need to condense certain areas of the guide.

Nonfiction Titles—Troubleshooting

Q: My book is a nonfiction title comprised of a number of different essays. How should I structure my Chapter Summaries and Chapter Analyses?

A: There are two ways to go here, and it depends, in part, on how many essays make up the book. The first way to handle this is to provide a single Chapter Summary and accompanying Chapter Analysis for each individual essay. If the essays are longer, and there are fewer of them (ten or less), then this is the path we recommend taking. If, on the other hand, the book has a sizable number of shorter essays, it's

probably better to group the essays as you would chapters, writing a summary for each essay, then an overarching “Chapter Analysis.”

Q: My book is a nonfiction title that doesn’t really have characters. How should I handle the Character Analysis section of the guide?

A: In a situation where you’re dealing with a text that isn’t focusing on people, it’s still important to deduce how you might populate the Character Analysis portion of the guide. The first figure that almost every text will necessarily include is its author. As a default, the author becomes the prime “character” for this section of the guide. Past this, there are many cases where certain figures recur; in such cases, these figures should populate the Character Analysis section of the guide.