

**Reflections:**

*A Student Response Journal for...*

# *Cyrano de Bergerac*

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*Cyrano de Bergerac*

**ACT I**

1. At the beginning of this act, many different types of people show up at the theater to enjoy the show scheduled for that evening. Make a list of the many different places you can think of where people of different cultures, classes, ages and interests gather. Then pick one, the one you'd most like to be in, and explain why you chose that one.
2. The tradesman seems to be uncomfortable bringing his son into a theater full of people of a lower class. Write a diary entry from the point of view of an observer watching and hearing the tradesman and his son. What do you think of their behavior?
3. The theater is full of audience members looking to make trouble. The pickpocket is looking for victims, for instance, and the pages prepare to torment spectators with pea shooters and fish hooks. In a paragraph, describe a time in your life when either you created some mischief, or were the victim of someone who did.
4. The tradesman lists the name of many of the writers who have come to watch the play, insisting that each of them will be a writer whose name lives on forever in history. How many writers' names can you recall? Make a list of as many famous writers as you can. Across from each name, list at least one book published by that author.
5. It becomes clear through Ragueneau's first description of Cyrano that his nose is not only his most obvious feature, but also his biggest insecurity. Those around are warned not to point out this feature, or make any comment concerning it, or Cyrano will exact his revenge. What is your biggest insecurity? It may be something physical, or something internal, like a bad habit, or a weakness. Write a diary entry that discusses your insecurity, where you think it comes from, and how you deal with it on a day to day basis.

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6. Christian is in love with Roxane, but finds out the Count de Guiche is already pursuing her affection. Have you ever desired something it would seem you can't have? This is a common theme in movies, television shows, as well as in books. Describe one incident that is similar to Christian's. Be sure to identify where the situation comes from, the people involved, and the outcome.
7. A pickpocket shares a secret with Christian concerning his friend Ligniere. While revealing secrets can at times work against you, it can also work to your benefit. Write two paragraphs, one describing a time when sharing a secret with someone had a positive effect, and one describing a time when it had a negative effect. If you cannot think of an instance in your own life for each, think of a time when revealing a secret could be both positive and negative, and describe both.
8. A hush falls over the audience with the arrival of the Cardinal. What is a Cardinal, and why is his presence so respected? Using the Internet or an encyclopedia, look up the position of Cardinal, and write a paragraph or two describing what his powers and duties are now and what they were during this time period.
9. When Cyrano first verbally attacks Montfleury, he uses many epithets. An epithet is a term that renames a person, usually with words that describe the character well. For instance, he calls Montfleury "King of clowns" and "Monarch of misfits." What epithets would people use to describe you? Make a list of ten epithets that could be used in place of your name. Choose one and write a sentence explaining why that specific epithet fits you.
10. Montfleury is stuck in a difficult situation. If he stays on stage, he must fight Cyrano and potentially die. If he leaves the stage, he suffers great humiliation and potential personal ruin. What would you do if you were in Montfleury's position? As Montfleury, write a diary entry describing what you would do. Explain why.

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11. Cyrano makes fun of his own nose in an attempt to prevent Valvert from doing so, and to make Valvert look ignorant and incompetent. Continue Cyrano's list of insults concerning his nose by creating a few additional ones, using the following prompts:
  - Envious:
  - Confused:
  - Curious:
  - Childlike:
  - Sympathetic:
12. Imagine you were a newspaper reporter who witnessed Cyrano's swordfight with Valvert. Write a newspaper article describing in detail the events that led up to the fight, the fight itself, and its aftermath. Remember that an article for a paper includes who, what, when, where, why, and how in the first paragraph. Try to come up with a clever or catchy title for your article.
13. Cyrano is overjoyed when he is told that Roxane wishes to meet with him. Give advice in dialogue form to Cyrano, telling him how he should handle the meeting, and what he should say to Roxane to win her love.
14. Cyrano claims "I love Cleopatra; do I appear Caesar? I adore Beatrice; have I the look of Doufe?" Use the internet to look up information about these characters. Explain why Cyrano is making these comparisons to a classmate who doesn't understand them.
15. Cyrano immediately goes to the aid of Le Bret when he discovers one hundred men have been sent against him. When asked why a poet would rush to fight one hundred men, the answer he gives is, "This poor, foolhardy poet is my friend." Describe a time when a person made a great sacrifice for you, simply because he or she was your friend and write that person a Thank-you note.

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**ACT II**

16. At the start of this act, Ragueneau stands before the fireplace and says, “Leave me, my Muse...” Use an encyclopedia or the Internet to find out about this reference to a muse. What is the definition of the word “muse?” Are there specific muses in literature or history? Who were they? What did they do?
17. Ragueneau is distraught when his wife wraps the children’s pastries in a paper on which was written the poem “Sonnet to Phyllis.” What is a sonnet? First, find out the requirements a poem must fulfill in order to be considered a sonnet. Then attempt to write a sonnet yourself, on the subject of your choice.
18. Time seems to go by extraordinarily slowly as Cyrano waits for his six o’clock meeting with Roxane. There are times in everyone’s life when waiting seems almost impossible? Make a list for Cyrano that has your suggestions on what one can do to pass the time while waiting.
19. Ragueneau’s poet friends arrive early in the morning to enjoy his creations while they listen to and share new poems they have created. Lise believes these poets are only using Ragueneau for his food, but Ragueneau does not want to believe this fact. Create a dialogue between Lise and Ragueneau in which they argue this point further. What would Ragueneau say in response to Lise’s accusations? How could he defend allowing these poets to continue to enjoy his food in exchange for poetic conversation?
20. For a great deal of time, Cyrano believes that the man Roxane secretly is in love with is actually himself. Only when she describes him as “Fearless, and young and handsome” does he realize it is not the object of Roxane’s affections. Compose a dialogue that recreates a time in your life similar to Cyrano’s, (or a time you saw in a movie or read about in a book) when miscommunication led to disappointment or trouble for you or another person.

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21. Cyrano shares his concern with Roxane that since Christian is so handsome, he may be rather dull and senseless. Write a letter to the editor of your school newspaper either defending or supporting Cyrano's opinion that often, beauty and intelligence do not go hand in hand. Back up your opinion with facts.
22. Cyrano says, "So many friends—so many more than I had yesterday" when he is greeted by people who wish to be his friend, only because he has gained notoriety for defeating many men with his swordplay. Many famous people in today's society have people around them who simply want to be near a celebrity. What is your opinion of this type of behavior or what celebrity would you most like to get to know, and why. Explain either one in a well-written paragraph.
23. One poet tells Cyrano he wishes to make an anagram of his name. What is an anagram? Look this term up in a dictionary if you do not know the answer, then create an anagram of your own name, using your first, middle and last.
24. Cyrano recites his "Cadets of Gascony" poem to the Count de Guiche as way to not only impress the Count, but also to introduce and describe the Cadets. Imagine you are a poet commissioned to write a poem that describes a group in your school to which you belong. Write a poem that is at least 16 lines long. Remember that not all poems have to rhyme.
25. Cyrano's long speech to Le Bret details the many reasons he chooses not to work for another, but instead remains an independent musketeer and poet. While being your own boss can have its many rewards—as Cyrano points out—it can also have its many drawbacks. Make a chart. On one side, list the many benefits to owning your own business. In the other column, list the many difficulties owning your own business might cause. List at least five of each.