

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

Go Ask Alice

by Anonymous

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Go Ask Alice

Objectives

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. discuss the significance of the title of the diary.
2. relate incidents from the story to discuss the extent to which society or the political problems of the time contribute to Alice's drug use.
3. cite incidents from the text to support the following statement: Alice sometimes has trouble distinguishing between what is real and what is imagined, and this problem contributes to her drug use.
4. discuss the role of Alice's parents in contributing to her drug problem and their role in helping her stay off drugs.
5. cite incidents from the diary to support the following statement: Alice's peers encourage her drug use.
6. discuss why Alice writes the diary and why she stops writing the diary.
7. point out instances of similes in the text.
8. cite incidents from the diary to discuss the negative effect of drug use on Alice's sexuality.
9. define vocabulary words from the diary, including drug-related terms.
10. point out instances of irony in the text.
11. relate instances in the diary when Alice attempts to run away from her problems and discuss the consequences of this for Alice and for her family.
12. discuss the extent to which this diary is a coming-of-age story for Alice.
13. understand why having a goal for her future helps Alice to stay away from drugs.
14. relate significant details from the story which give the reader insight into the mind of an adolescent, including how she feels about school, her family, her friends, herself, and society.
15. discuss how the diary ends and why this ending is controversial.

Go Ask Alice

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. What is the significance of the name Alice?
2. Cite two instances from the story relating how each of the following contributes to Alice's drug use:
 - her parents
 - her friends at school
 - her friends away from school
 - her self-image
 - society in general or the political atmosphere of the times
3. Why does Alice begin to write in her diary? What need does the diary fill in her life? At the end of the story, does she overcome this need?
4. Discuss Alice's relationships with the following boys and the way in which her drug use affects each: Bill, Roger, Joel.
5. Alice comments that drugs are easier to obtain than alcohol. In what sense is this idea an example of irony? In what sense is Alice's date with Sammy Green also ironic? Based on these two instances, what advice would you give to Alice's parents or to parents in general?
6. Briefly summarize the two times Alice runs away from her family. Be sure to answer the following questions: Why does she leave? What are the consequences to Alice while she is away and when she returns home?
7. A coming-of-age story is one in which the main character or characters grow, mature, or understand the world in adult terms. Some critics believe this is a coming-of-age story for Alice. Do you agree or disagree? Cite instances from the diary to support your conclusion.
8. Why does Alice decide she wants to be a social worker? How does this goal benefit Alice?
9. Before her drug use begins, do you believe Alice is a normal, average teenager? Cite incidents from the story to support your answer.

Go Ask Alice

Study Guide Student Copy

The 1960's are remembered as a time for hippies, free love, political protests of the Vietnam War, teenage rebellion from middle class values and morality, the Beatles, long hair, free sex, the birth control pill, and the proliferation of drugs (LSD, marijuana, heroin) in all walks of life.

Go Ask Alice is the diary of a fifteen-year-old girl's experiences within the 1960's counterculture of drugs and free sex. The diary chronicles her struggle to free herself from the pull of the drugs and her efforts to establish her own identity. This book is advertised as being nonfiction written by an anonymous fifteen-year-old author. Some critics believe that it is really a fictional story written by a well-know author of young adult novels. As you read, think about the extent to which you believe this is an authentic diary written by a fifteen-year-old drug user.

September 16 – January 1 (Pages 1 – 13)

1. What is the origin of the title of this diary? Hint: Read all of the information before the title page.
2. How does Roger hurt Alice?
3. What evidence is there that Alice thinks of herself as being inferior and unable to measure up to other people's expectations?
4. Cite incidents from the diary to support the following statement: Alice's moods swing from feeling worthless and depressed to feeling excited and elated.

September 26 – December 3 (Pages 49 – 68)

Vocabulary

vindictiveness – revengefulness

retribution – punishment for evil done or reward for good done

disreputable – a person with a bad reputation

1. Why do some students try drugs but never try alcohol?
2. What evidence is there that Alice's parents are not capable of judging or evaluating her friends?
3. How does Alice pay for her drugs?
4. What evidence is there in Alice and Richie's relationship that Alice is more interested in Richie than he is in her? In what way does Richie hurt and use Alice?
5. Why do you think Alice decides to turn Richie in to the police before she moves to San Francisco with Chris?
6. In what sense is the following statement ironic?

Alice is writing about Richie: "I wish all dealers could be put away!" (Pg. 56)
7. Describe Alice and Chris' apartment in San Francisco.

Diary Number Two

April 6 – May 16 (Pg. 104 – 121)

1. Compare Tim's relationship with his parents to Alice's feelings about them. In your opinion, do you think Tim will be able to resist trying drugs? Why?
2. Some critics believe Alice's interest in religion is a motif in this diary. For example, Alice begins her new diary in the spring, which in many Christian religions, is Easter or a time for renewal. Other indicators of a religious motif include the author's use of religious terms such as, revelation, renewal, and rebirth. Find a passage in these entries which supports this idea.
3. Why does Alice consider the principal to be a jerk?
4. Alice writes that she is feeling stronger because she has a goal in life. What is her goal? What happens to frighten her and make her doubt her ability to achieve it?
5. Alice feels alone and isolated. She does not have anyone to talk to about her problems except for her diary. Find a passage in these entries to illustrate this idea.
6. Alice writes that she is "trying so hard to have a positive outlook" and to stay off drugs. (Pg. 113) What pressures in her life are making this goal difficult for Alice?

June 25 – July 30 (Pgs. 137 – 160)

Vocabulary

phosphorescent – giving off light or a continuing luminescence without heat

interminable – without or apparently without end; endless

lecherous – overly sexual; unrestrained, excessive indulgence of sexual desires

1. Why does Alice compare her high school to a minor galaxy?
2. How does Alice get hurt? Briefly describe her injuries.
3. Why is Alice sent to an insane asylum?
4. How would you describe Alice's feelings when she first goes to the youth center?
5. Alice writes that:

I know now that I could resist drugs if I were drowning in them. But how will I ever convince anyone other than Mom and Dad and Tim, and Joel, I hope, that I didn't really take anything knowingly this time? It sounds incredible that the first time I took drugs and the last time which landed me in an insane asylum were both given to me without my knowledge. (Pg. 152)

To what extent do you believe Alice when she says she can resist drugs?

6. Which students are in Group One, and which students are in Group Two at the hospital?

Wrap-Up

For each of the following statements, decide whether you agree or disagree with the statement. Then cite incidents from the diary to support your opinion.

1. At the end of the diary, Alice overcomes her problems communicating with others.
2. Despite the love and acceptance of her family and friends, Alice never learns to forgive and forget her past mistakes.
3. Alice's parents should have moved to another city so Alice could start her life over with new friends. Then Alice would have been able to stay off drugs.
4. Alice never really loses her virginity.
5. Alice might be alive today if she had continued to write in her diary.
6. In the end, Alice renews her belief in God and His ability to forgive her for her sins.
7. Alice can stay away from drugs if she exercises a little willpower.
8. A doper can be fully understood only by another doper.