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**Literature**  
Teaching Unit  
*Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide*



## The Fountainhead

by Ayn Rand

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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# Literature Teaching Unit

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# The Fountainhead

## Objectives

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

1. define objectivism and explain whether he or she subscribes to it as a belief system.
2. decide which character he or she most identifies with: Dominique, Keating, Roark, Wynand, Toohey, Steven Mallory, or Katie.
3. explain which character is the most common type of person in American society today.
4. determine how Ayn Rand feels about socialism and capitalism.
5. describe how Rand feels about the influence of religion on the modern world.
6. explain how Rand feels about the guilt complex or altruism.
7. describe the economic, philosophical, political, and social viewpoints Rand expresses.
8. understand how Rand feels about religion in America.
9. define and cite examples of the following literary terms: narrator; point of view
10. explain the significance of the title of the book
11. demonstrate how imagery plays a central role in characterization
12. define and give examples of dramatic, situational, and verbal irony in the novel
13. analyze character dialogue and provide opinions as to authorial beliefs and ideas expressed in that dialogue
14. evaluate *The Fountainhead* on the basis of realism
15. identify and explain flaws and benefits of objectivist thinking
16. discuss how obesity and alcohol consumption are used to connote character flaws

# The Fountainhead

## Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. What do you suppose Rand means when she says the ego “is the fountainhead” of all mankind?
2. Do you identify more with Roark or Keating? Why? Do you believe society, as a whole would be better with more Roarks or more Keatings?
3. How do you suppose Ayn Rand feels about Ellsworth Toohey’s view of society and altruism?
4. How does Ayn Rand feel about religion, when she addresses it at all?
5. Do you like Howard Roark? Do you agree with everything he does?
6. How does Ayn Rand feel about capitalism?
7. How does Ayn Rand feel about the power of the media to influence thought?
8. Do you think Ayn Rand’s message is still appropriate today?
9. Dominique Francon is described in primarily geometric terms. What effect does this terminology have on the reader’s initial impression of her personality and character?
10. Many times throughout the novel, words like “sacred” and “sacrilege” are used outside their normal context, which would be a religious discussion. How are they used in the novel, and what is the significance of their use?
11. In what ways do Henry Cameron and Gail Wynand fail to meet the objectivist ideals so thoroughly embodied by Howard Roark? Does Dominique ultimately meet these ideals? Why or why not?
12. How does the Stoddard Temple express the ideals of Objectivism?
13. Ellsworth Toohey refers to himself as a “humanitarian.” From the text, what actions and words of his support that definition of him? What actions and words belie it?
14. Ellsworth Toohey’s fame comes with the publication of *Sermons in Stone*. How is this title expressive of the formation of his character and personality, during his childhood and adulthood?
15. Based on the text of the novel, what morals, if any, are espoused by Objectivism? Use specific examples to support your answer.
16. It is fairly clear that Ayn Rand favors capitalism over any collective sort of economy. What advantages does capitalism have over collectivism? What disadvantages does it have? Use examples from modern history and politics to support your answer.

# The Fountainhead

## Part One: Peter Keating

### Chapter 1

#### Vocabulary

**gargoyle** – grotesque animal-shaped waterspout

**indomitable** – unconquerable

**latitude** – freedom of action or choice

1. When Roark explains his views that he does not want to follow traditional architecture to the Dean, what does the Dean first mistake as the cause for his beliefs?

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2. What does the Dean mean when he says “an architect is not an end in himself. He is only a small part of a great social whole”?

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3. What is the metaphorical meaning of the description of the initial scene?

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4. How is Howard’s reaction to his surroundings in the initial scene evocative of the Objectivist view of man’s place in the universe?

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## Chapter 4

### Vocabulary

**apparition** – ghostly image

**haemophilia** – (archaic spelling) disorder causing blood not to clot; with this disorder, a simple cut can cause one to bleed to death.

**presumptuous** – making assumptions not warranted by existing conditions

**speak-easy** – term for an illegal bar operating during Prohibition.

**subordinate** – below

**tripe** – literally, stew of very low quality; here, unpleasant labor.

1. Why does Keating offer to help Tim Davis finish his drawing so Tim can go out on a date that night?

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2. What is the relationship between Keating and Catherine (Katie) like?

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3. How does Keating react when he figures out who Katie's uncle is?

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4. What does Cameron tell Roark when Roark tells him he aspires to be just like Cameron someday?

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3. How does Ellsworth's conversation with his father serve as a premonition of his later personality?

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4. Why do you think Ellsworth Toohey has such disdain for the sexual act?

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5. How is the title of humanitarian ironic in Toohey's case?

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