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Prestwick House
Literature
Teaching Unit
Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



Catch-22

by Joseph Heller

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



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Catch-22

Objectives

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

1. understand and explain the role of sarcasm and irony in creating satire
2. discuss what each of the following might symbolize or represent in the story:
 - The Solder in White
 - The Eternal City
 - Deja Vu
 - The Syndicate (M&M Enterprises)
 - Catch-22
3. analyze the differences between the public and private aspects of religion
4. discuss the following themes in this story:
 - The most basic force motivating most people is self-interest
 - Relationships based on self-gratification will ultimately be unsatisfying
 - Institutions will be as cruel as they need to be to survive
 - In a large society, the interests of the individual must be sacrificed for the greater good
5. identify and explain the ways that alliteration and oxymoron are combined to heighten the sense of paradox
6. identify examples of twisted dialogue and dry humor, and relate these examples to the author's style
7. discuss the relationship between the physical and emotional traits of characters in the novel
8. cite incidents from the story to illustrate the following theme: People can be fooled into following any sort of dogma as long as they are motivated by fear or by material gain
9. point out examples of allusions in the story and comment on how they enhance the reader's understanding of the narrator's ideas
10. find and define examples of numerous literary devices including metaphor, simile, alliteration, juxtaposition, oxymoron, polysyndeton, personification, etc.
11. discuss how point of view shifts within the third-person narrative

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. How do Aarfy's physical description and his comments reveal his moral character?
2. Describe the effect that the non-linear chronological structure of the novel has on the reader. Why do you think the author uses this construction?
3. Assess the overall effectiveness of Milo's syndicate. What positive and negative effects does it have on the squadron in particular, and the American Army in general?
4. List three incidents from the story that support the following theme: Relationships based on self-gratification will not be meaningful.
5. What do the differences between Colonel Korn and Colonel Cathcart tell the reader about the differences between practical reality and the reality imagined by administrative management?
6. Why has Yossarian lost his patriotism?
7. Explain the role of allusion in the story, using at least five examples.
8. Compare and contrast Nurse Cramer and Nurse Duckett.
9. Why does Yossarian fall in love with the chaplain?
10. Compare and contrast Yossarian's relationships with Nurse Duckett and Luciana.
11. Why do you think Yossarian misreads Orr so badly? Give evidence from the text to support your answer.
12. How does Yossarian feel when, despite the fact that the upper military management is focused on infighting and politics, the American army is successful in the war?
13. What kind of language is used to express Yossarian's rebirth as a non-patriot after he returns with his crew from the Bologna raid?
14. What is *déjà vu*? How does it come into play in the plot of this novel?
15. Why does Nately experience such frustration with the old man in the apartment? Why does this old man remind Nately of his father?
16. Explain how the story of Milo's enterprise turns from literal tale into farce.

Chapter 3: Havermeyer

VOCABULARY

chortle – laugh; chuckle
directive – order
exultantly – jubilantly; triumphantly
geysering – shooting steam or smoke up into the air
grotesque – distorted; oddly exaggerated
ineptitude – inability or incompetence
multitudinous – a number too large to count
pretentious – inflated; pompous
proficient – highly skilled
prolix – excessive in length, or boring
pulverized – broken into tiny pieces

1. How is repetition used to foreshadow Orr’s eventual fate?

2. What is ironic about the initial battles for turf between General Dreedle and General Peckem?

3. Explain the comparison between the pilots who have finished fifty missions and “useless young men in a depression.”

5. In your own words, give a definition of Catch-22, as it is stated in this chapter.

6. What is ironic about the diction used in Yossarian's description of Catch-22?

7. How is personification used to describe the airplanes?

8. What is the effect of the oxymoron describing the crawlway?

9. What literary devices are used to heighten the sense of horror in Yossarian's mind?

10. What central event of this novel is first remembered in this chapter?

Chapter 9: Major Major Major Major

VOCABULARY

august – wise and dignified
belligerent – hostile; aggressive
compliant – obedient
demean – to ridicule or scorn
desiccated – dried; withered
diligently – with careful determination
gamboling – carefree; frolicking
garishly – loudly; gaudily
implacable – unable to be soothed
moiling – agitated, turbulent
photostats – enlarged photographic copies
superfluous – extra
vanquished – totally defeated

1. Explain the allusion in the second sentence of this chapter.

2. Explain the play on words found in the second page of this chapter.

3. How is the description of Major Major's father satirical?
