

***War of the Worlds* A (Bk 1 Chs.1-7): Discussion Questions**

A. WHERE? (Places)

1. In what area of the world do the events described in these chapters take place? Why this area?
2. How is Mars described in these chapters, especially in relationship to our own world?

B. WHEN? (Times)

3. In what period do the events described take place - the past, present or future? Is this important?
4. At what specific historical time are the events described as taking place? What was happening in the world at this time?

C. WHO? (Characters)

5. What do we learn here about the 'I' of the story – his home, his job, his age, his personality, etc?
6. How many other characters appear in these chapters? What role or significance do they have in the story?

D. WHAT? (Events)

7. What are the main things that happen in each of the seven chapters? How significant is the order and pace of events? What do you think is likely to happen in the following chapters?
8. How important is machinery and technology to the events described?

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E. HOW? (Style and Tone)

9. What kind of person is the narrator (the person telling the story)? What kind of people does he seem to be telling the story to? What tone and style is used?
10. What sort of balance is found here between dialogue (conversations between characters), narration (relating events), description (of people and places), and commentary (discussion of the significance of these).

F. WHY? (Context and Theme)

11. Who was H.G. Wells? When and where did he live? How much and what did he write? What general beliefs does he seem to have held?
12. What sort of image of science and the scientist is found in these chapters?

***War of the Worlds* B (Bk 1 Chs.8-12): Discussion Questions**

A. WHERE? (Places)

1. A number of scenes in the story so far have taken place in the narrator's house. Where is it and how is it presented?
2. List the other specific settings described in these chapters. How are they described and why are they included?

B. WHEN? (Times)

3. The events of the story are supposed to take place in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century? What are the main differences that stand out from our own world of the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century?
4. How much time passes during these chapters? How much of the action takes place during the night time? What effect does this have?

C. WHO? (Characters)

5. How have the Martians been described and presented in the chapters so far? Why do you think they are presented in this way?
6. The narrator meets a number of people casually during his travels. Who are they? How do they react to the Martian invasion?

D. WHAT? (Events)

7. There are a number of scenes of battle in these chapters. How is the fighting presented? Why?
8. How much attention has there been so far in the novel to the role of the military during the Martian invasion? How are soldiers generally presented here?

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E. HOW? (Style and Tone)

9. Today people would tend to classify *War of the Worlds* as Science Fiction. When the book was written it was often described as a Scientific Romance. Is the difference significant? Which fits better?
10. The narrator includes a large number of real place names in his account of the invasion? Try to find them on a map. What effect does this have on the story?

F. WHY? (Context and Theme)

11. How apparent are social status and social class in the descriptions of social relations in the story? What attitude does the narrator seem to take to this?
12. How important does it seem to be that the story is written and narrated by a man rather than a woman?

***War of the Worlds* C (Bk 1 Chs.13-17): Discussion Questions**

A. WHERE? (Places)

1. Here a number of scenes take place on or in water. Which scenes? Where? Why?
2. List the other specific settings described in these chapters. How are they described and why are they included?

B. WHEN? (Times)

3. How much time passes during these chapters? Does the narrative always move forward time at an even pace?
4. How is the passage of time generally marked and measured in the course of the story? What effect does this have?

C. WHO? (Characters)

5. What sort of person is the narrator's brother? Why do you think he is introduced into the story in the way he is?
6. What companions do the narrator and his brother strike up with during the course of their adventures? Why these people?

D. WHAT? (Events)

7. How is Martian technology presented in the story generally? In particular, what weapons are they shown to use? Why these?
8. How much attention has there been so far in the novel to the role of the mass media in reporting the Martian invasion? What sort of role is it?

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E. HOW? (Style and Tone)

9. Why isn't the narrator's brother allowed to tell his own story? What difference would it have made if he had done so?
10. Think about the way individual human emotions and relations are presented generally in the story? Why do you think there is so little emphasis on this aspect.

F. WHY? (Context and Theme)

11. Why do you think the author decided to set the novel in Britain? Why around London?
12. How is religion generally and Christianity in particular introduced in the story so far? What attitude does the writer seem to take towards religious belief and practice?

***War of the Worlds* D (Bk 2 Chs.1-6): Discussion Questions**

A. WHERE? (Places)

1. Where is the basement in which the narrator and the curate are imprisoned? How is it described? What effect does this have in the story?
2. How is the surrounding area described when the narrator eventually escapes from the basement into the open air? What effect does this have in the story?

B. WHEN? (Times)

3. How long is the narrator trapped in the basement? How do we know? What happens in the world outside while he is there?
4. Seeing events through the eyes of both the narrator and his brother means that we go over the same time period of time twice. What effect does this have in the story?

C. WHO? (Characters)

5. How is the curate described in these chapters? Why do you think Wells decided to focus so much attention on this minor character in the story?
6. For the first time in these chapters we see the Martians from close-up. What new do we learn about them? How are we encouraged to react to them?

D. WHAT? (Events)

7. How do the narrator and the curate get to the white house? How do they come to be trapped in the building? What is the main purpose of this episode in the economy of the story?
8. How does the curate die? How does the narrator feel after his death? How is the reader like to react to this?



E. HOW? (Style and Tone)

9. How many other beings does the narrator talk to in these chapters? What is the effect of having so little dialogue, especially in these chapters but also in the novel generally?
10. What sort of language does the curate use? How does this contrast with the way the narrator speaks?

F. WHY? (Context and Theme)

11. Why is the Martian weed *red*? What effect does this have on the effect of the story?
12. When in these chapters is the narrator shown to have a choice about what to do? What does he actually decide to do? Why? How important are *moral* questions generally in this story?

***War of the Worlds* E (Bk 2 Chs.7-10): Discussion Questions**

A. WHERE? (Places)

1. What sort of images of London are found in these chapters? How do they contrast with the images found earlier in the novel, especially at the end of Book I?
2. The narrator returns to his home at the end of the novel? What does he see on the journey back? How is his home described?

B. WHEN? (Times)

3. Many adventure stories and romances end by going back to the place where they started and show ordinary life beginning again. Is this the case with *The War of the Worlds*?
4. What vision of the future does the artillery man have? What vision of the future does the narrator have at the end of the story?

C. WHO? (Characters)

5. The artillery man reappears in the story in these chapters? How is he presented here? What is the significance of this?
6. What is final image of the Martians in the story? Are we encouraged to feel any sympathy for their situation?

D. WHAT? (Events)

7. How do the Martians die? When are we first given a hint that this will be the resolution of the story? Why do you think Wells chose this resolution?
8. Scenes of eating and drinking occur quite frequently in the novel. Think of some of the main ones. What is the significance of this focus?

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E. HOW? (Style and Tone)

9. The phrase “last man left alive” occurs several times in this section. Where does it occur? What significance does it have?
10. What is the main tone and mood at the ending of the story? Would you describe the story as a comedy or a tragedy or neither?

F. WHY? (Context and Theme)

11. How important is the narrator’s relationship to his wife in the development of the story? Are there any other references to love, romance or sex in the story?
12. In the end, what is Wells’s main theme in the novel? Is his attitude towards science and progress a positive one?