

Study Guide 1, Packet 2: "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"

These questions are based on the background readings found on the website and the lectures. Use the links about the authors in particular.

Background:

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|--|---|---|
| a) Thurber enjoyed drawing. | T | F |
| b) Thurber believed that comedy was easier than drama. | T | F |
| c) "The Secret Life..." was never popular during Thurber's life. | T | F |
| d) "The Secret Life..." was made into a movie once. | T | F |
| e) Thurber lost his eyesight completely before this death. | T | F |

Vocabulary.

List 1: You should be able to guess the meanings of these words. They are non-academic, ordinary English. For each word, try to:

- 1) Identify the part of speech
- 2) Translate into your first language, and
- 3) Give a synonym

auxiliary	cocky	touselled
turret	slush	dugout
hurtling	automatic (gun)	barrage
hydroplane	insinuatingly	menacing
grossly	bickering	vaguely
remote	pandemonium	derisive
intimate	savagely	sleet
aimlessly	cur	firing squad
distraught	ruined	motionless
haggard	cannonading	disdainful
jammed		inscrutable

List 2: These are academic words. You should learn these words and their word families. Make a vocabulary card for each one if needed.

uniform	expertly
tasks	briefly
insert	occur

Comprehension: Answer these questions with a few complete sentences.

1. Who are three different people the main character imagines that he is?
2. What season of the year is it in the story, and how do you know ? (Tell 2 clues.)
3. What is one thing the main character does that his wife doesn't like?
4. What does his wife go to do while they are in town?
5. What is one thing that Walter Mitty really does while he is in town (not his daydream)?
6. What kinds of things does Walter Mitty spend most of his time thinking about?

“The Secret Life of Walter Mitty.” In this story, Walter Mitty has five daydreams, or fantasies. Tell me what elements in reality **TRIGGER** the daydream and what events in reality **INTERRUPT** the daydream.

trigger	fantasy	interruption
The sound of car engine reminds him of a ship's engine.	Commander of a Navy hydroplane	
	Famous surgeon; repairs anesthesia machine	
	On trial in courtroom scene	
	Air Force pilot in dugout, WW I	
	Proudly facing the firing squad	There is no interruption

Longer Answers.

On your own paper, please!

1. Why does Mitty’s final fantasy involve facing a firing squad? Is this heroic or cowardly?
2. How would you describe Mrs. Mitty? Does she love Walter Mitty? Is she a nag? How are we supposed to feel about her?
3. What is the conflict in this story? How does Mitty resolve the conflict (or does he?)