

Lewis Carroll's  
*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*  
&  
*Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*  
Study Guide

*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

Chapter 1

1. What is suggested by the fact that the rabbit Alice sees speaks and wears clothing?
2. What literary device does the author employ when he describes the rabbit?
3. Why is it thematically significant that all of the large doors are locked and that the only door for which Alice has a key for is too small for her to fit through?
4. What literary term is used in the following sentence: "I must be shutting up like a telescope"?

Chapter 2

1. What does Alice's conversation with the mouse reveal about how she feels about her conversations with adults?
2. What happens to alert Alice to the fact that she is shrinking again?
3. What makes Alice shrink again?
4. At what point in the story does Alice say to herself, "Who in the world am I? Ah *that's* the great puzzle!"? Why does Alice begin to recite her multiplication tables.

Chapter 3

1. In what ways can the Caucus-Race be interpreted as satiric? This race, as Carroll portrays it, is intended to satirize politics.
2. Why is the poem an example of pattern of figurative verse?
3. Alice has either offended or frightened every creature she has met since her arrival. What does this reveal about Alice's opinion of herself?

Chapter 4

1. Why does Alice drink the portion at the White Rabbit's house?
2. Why is it significant that Alice grows too large when she drinks the potion? How does this relate to Alice's outlook on the future when she associates growing up with becoming an old woman and staying young with always having lessons to do?
3. How does Alice eventually get out of the White Rabbit's house?
4. What type of animal does Alice encounter when she gets to the woods?

## Chapter 5

1. Why does Alice come close to losing her temper with the Caterpillar?
2. What person from Alice's life does the Caterpillar represent?
3. Read "The Old Man's Comforts" by Robert Southey, and compare it to the poem in this chapter. How is Carroll's version a parody of the original? (A parody is a mocking piece of literature that is designed to ridicule the subject in an exaggerated, often sarcastic way).

### **The Old Man's Comforts**

Robert Southey (1774 – 1843)

"You are old, Father William," the young man cried,  
"The few locks which are left you are grey;  
You are hale, Father William, a hearty old man,  
Now tell me the reason I pray."

"In the days of my youth," Father William replied,  
"I remember'd that youth would fly fast,  
And abused not my health and my vigour at first  
That I never might need them at last."

"You are old, Father William," the young man cried,  
"And pleasures with youth pass away,  
And yet you lament not the days that are gone,  
Now tell me the reason I pray."

"In the days of my youth," Father William replied,  
"I remember'd that youth could not last;  
I thought of the future, whatever I did,  
That I never might grieve for the past."

"You are old, Father William," the young man cried,  
"And life must be hastening away;  
You are cheerful, and love to converse upon death:  
Now tell me the reason I pray."

"I am cheerful, young man," Father William replied,  
"Let the cause thy attention engage;  
In the days of my youth, I remember'd my God!  
And He hath not forgotten my age."

4. What useful information does the Caterpillar give to Alice?
5. Why is the Pigeon upset with Alice?
6. What's significant about Alice's not being able to say what she is: "'But I'm *not* a serpent, I tell you! . . . I'm a—I'm a—'?"

## Chapter 6

1. What kind of animal is sitting on the hearth in the Duchess's house? What is peculiar about this animal?
2. What does the cook do when she takes the soup off the fire?
3. What happens to the baby after Alice takes it outside?
4. What proof does the Cheshire Cat give that he is mad?
5. How does Alice's conversation with the Cheshire Cat differ from the conversations she has with the other animals she has met so far?

## Chapter 7

1. What three characters are seated at the table having tea?
2. What is odd about the March Hare's watch?
3. Why is it perpetually six o'clock and teatime for the Hatter?
4. Why does Alice leave the party before hearing the end of the Dormouse's story?
5. What literary term does the Hatter use when he describes time in the following quote:  
"If you know Time as well as I do, . . . you wouldn't talk about wasting *it*. It's *him*."

## Chapter 8

1. How does Alice save the gardeners from being beheaded?
2. How is this game of croquet different from any Alice has played before?
3. Why does the Queen of Hearts order that the Cheshire Cat be beheaded?
4. Why does the executioner say he cannot behead the Cheshire Cat?
5. What do you think Carroll is satirizing (exposing someone or something to ridicule) in this chapter?

## Chapter 9

1. Describe an incident in the story that satirizes or pokes fun at the idea that Victorian children's lessons usually have a moral.
2. Why does the croquet game come to an end?
3. Give an example of a pun used by the Mock Turtle or Gryphon during their conversation with Alice.
4. Explain the meanings of the "branches of Arithmetic—Ambition, Distraction, Uglification, and Derision."

## Chapter 10

1. What is a Lobster-Quadrille?
2. The Mock Turtle singing about eating turtle soup is an example of what literary device?
3. During most of her conversations with animals in Wonderland, Alice says something to offend them. Find an example from her conversation with the Mock Turtle and Gryphon that demonstrates that she is learning how to speak to the animals without offending them.
4. Compare Alice's new version of the poem with the original, below.

## **The Sluggard**

Isaac Watts (1647 – 1748)

'Tis the voice of the sluggard; I heard him complain,  
"You have wak'd me too soon, I must slumber again."  
As the door on its hinges, so he on his bed,  
Turns his sides and his shoulders and his heavy head.

"A little more sleep, and a little more slumber;"  
Thus he wastes half his days, and his hours without number,  
And when he gets up, he sits folding his hands,  
Or walks about sauntering, or trifling he stands.

I pass'd by his garden, and saw the wild brier,  
The thorn and the thistle grow broader and higher;  
The clothes that hang on him are turning to rags;  
And his money still wastes till he starves or he begs.

I made him a visit, still hoping to find  
That he took better care for improving his mind:  
He told me his dreams, talked of eating and drinking;  
But scarce reads his Bible, and never loves thinking.

Said I then to my heart, "Here's a lesson for me,"  
This man's but a picture of what I might be:  
But thanks to my friends for their care in my breeding,  
Who taught me betimes to love working and reading.

## **Chapter 11**

1. What is the role of the White Rabbit during the trial?
2. Who is the first witness called in the trial? How does the witness act?
3. Who is the last witness called by the White Rabbit?

## **Chapter 12**

1. What do you suppose is indicated by Alice's remembering that she had broken a fish bowl "the week before" and by her growing larger?
2. Why is Alice no longer afraid of the Queen?
3. How does Carroll, at the end of the story, explain the real life origins of the following creatures in Alice's dream: Mock Turtle, the Queen, and rattling teacups?
4. Explain the final paragraph.
5. What tools does Alice use to try to cope with the unpredictable world she finds herself in? How successful do you think Alice was in adapting to her new surroundings?

## *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*

### Chapter 1 – Looking-Glass House

1. What is the point of view of this novel?
2. Identify an example of personification in this chapter.
3. What is an appropriate estimate of Alice’s age according to suggestions in the text?
4. Alice sits in her chair and explains Looking-glass House to her kitten. What is Looking-glass House?
5. Alice decides to explore Looking-glass House. How does she enter? Does the setting change once she enters?
6. How does the second illustration of Alice in the mirror portray that Alice has passed through the glass? What does the illustration of Looking-glass House reveal about the world?
7. Why is Alice surprised by the chess pieces?
8. How does Alice’s helpful gesture upset the White King and Queen?
9. Why does Alice have difficulty reading the poem “Jabberwocky”? How does she solve this problem?
10. What does the illustration that accompanies “Jabberwocky” suggest about the poem’s meaning? What is the actual meaning of the poem?
11. How does Carroll manipulate the language in “Jabberwocky” to make nonsense sound like proper English?
12. On her way to the garden, Alice finds herself floating down the stairs and along the hall. What significance, if any, is there to her floating?

### Chapter 2—The Garden of Live Flowers

1. Alice enters the garden and converses with the flowers. What do the flowers symbolize?
2. The chattering flowers amaze Alice because normal flowers in her garden do not talk. What is the Tiger Lily’s explanation as to why Alice’s flowers do not talk?
3. Why does the rose advise Alice to avoid the Red Queen?
4. How does the Red Queen treat Alice when they meet?
5. When Alice and the Red Queen reach the top of the hill, Alice looks over the countryside in amazement. Why does she find the countryside fascinating?
6. What request does Alice make of the Red Queen, and how does the Queen respond?
7. After a great deal of running, Alice and the Red Queen are still under the same tree. Alice comments about the wasted effort, to which the Red Queen replies, “ ‘Now, *here*, you see, it takes all the running *you* can do, to keep in the same place. If you want to get somewhere else, you must run at least twice as fast as that!’ ” What does the Queen’s remark suggest about Victorian society?
8. When Alice is parched, the Red Queen hands her a dry biscuit for refreshment. What does the Queen’s action symbolize?

### Chapter 3—Looking-Glass Insects

1. Why does the guard scold Alice?
2. Explain Alice’s response to the passengers when they reprimand her.
3. Why do the passengers on the train repeatedly price things at thousands of pounds?
4. Locate a pun.

5. How are insects in the Looking-glass world different from insects in Alice's world?
6. Alice must pass through the forest to reach the Eighth Square. What is unusual about the woods?
7. Describe Alice's encounter with the Fawn.

#### Chapter 4—Tweedledum and Tweedledee

1. Who does Alice meet along the road, and how does she react?
2. Tweedledee recites "The Walrus and the Carpenter" for Alice. The first stanza discusses the sun's effort to brighten a dark land. What does this stanza forecast about the poem?
3. Explain the following verses from the fourth stanza of "The Walrus and the Carpenter":

*The Walrus and the Carpenter*

*Were walking close at hand:*

*They wept like anything to see*

*Such qualities of sand:*

*"If this were only cleared away,"*

*They said, "it would be grand!"*

4. What do the oysters in "The Walrus and the Carpenter" represent? What is significant about the young and old oysters?
5. What do the Walrus and Carpenter represent?
6. What does the Walrus wish to discuss with the oysters, and why are these things important to the oysters? What is significant about the Walrus's topic selections?

The Walrus announces to the oysters:

*"The time has come," the Walrus said,*

*"To talk of many things:*

*Of shoes—and ships—and sealing wax—*

*Of cabbages—and kings—*

*And why the sea is boiling hot—*

*And whether pigs have wings."*

7. Why does the Walrus claim to sympathize with the oysters?
8. What is the theme of "The Walrus and the Carpenter"?
9. How does Alice respond to Tweedledee's poem, and what is interesting about her response?
10. Alice spots the Red King sleeping on the ground and is concerned for his health; Carroll describes her as "a very thoughtful little girl." Why is this description of Alice ironic?
11. Why do Tweedledee and Tweedledum fight?
12. Describe the preparation that Tweedledee and Tweedledum undertake for their battle. What statement is Lewis Carroll making about chivalry?

#### Chapter 5—Wool and Water

1. The White Queen attempts to hire Alice as a lady's-maid, and she offers to pay with "jam every other day." Explain how Alice misunderstands the Queen's offer.
2. According to the White Queen, why is the King's Messenger in prison? How can the Messenger's situation be interpreted as a statement about England's judicial system?
3. Why does the White Queen begin to scream?
4. What happens to the White Queen and Alice as they run after the shawl?

5. Alice attempts to browse in the shop, but she cannot focus on any particular item because the items continuously move. What does this situation represent?
6. Alice begins “vainly pursuing a large bright thing, that looked sometimes like a doll and sometimes like a word-box, and was always in the shelf next above the one she was looking at.” What does this item symbolize?
7. How does Alice suddenly find herself in a boat?
8. How does Carroll address materialism with Alice while she is on the boat?
9. What does it mean when the rushes “lose all their scent and beauty” once Alice picks them?

### Chapter 6—Humpty Dumpty

1. Why does Humpty Dumpty think that Alice is rude?
2. According to Humpty Dumpty, what is the King’s promise? How does he react when Alice knows about the arrangement?
3. What is Humpty Dumpty’s response when Alice tells him that he is in a book?
4. Why is Alice corrected when she gives her age?
5. Describe Humpty Dumpty’s character. Based on the illustration, what does the term “Humpty Dumpty” likely mean?
6. Who is Humpty Dumpty likely a parody of?
7. What is Humpty Dumpty’s interpretation of “Jabberwocky”? According to him, what are a majority of the nonsense words?
8. Does Humpty Dumpty’s poem about the fish have any meaning, and if so, what is the meaning?

### Chapter 7—The Lion and the Unicorn

1. Explain the pun in the conversation between the White King and Alice when she says, ““I see nobody on the road.””
2. How does the pun about nobody continue between the King and the Messenger?
3. Name the literary device in the phrase, “And Hatta went bounding away like a grasshopper.”
4. Alice spots the White Queen running through the countryside. How is the Queen’s character accurate with her role as a chess piece?
5. How does the Unicorn react when he sees Alice, and how is his reaction ironic?
6. Why do the Lion and the Unicorn fight? What do the creatures represent?
7. Alice has difficulty cutting the cake because the slices reattach. How is she instructed to handle the cake?

### Chapter 8—“It’s My Own Invention”

1. After the noise fades and Alice opens her eyes, whom does she meet? Why do they fight, and who wins?
2. What does Alice perceive to be the rules of battle?
3. What is unusual about the White Knight’s armor and his horse’s gear?
4. How does the White Knight depict chivalry?
5. Name at least two of the White Knight’s inventions. Discuss what Carroll suggests when the White Knight says, ““In fact, the more head-downwards I am, the more I keep inventing new things.””

6. Explain the various names associated with the White Knight's song. What is the meaning of the Knight's song?
7. Why does the White Knight ask Alice to wave her handkerchief, and why is his request ironic?
8. What does Alice receive at the end of the chapter?

### Chapter 9—Queen Alice

1. What does Carroll insinuate about England's educational system when the Queen ridicules Alice for her poor math skills? What do the Queen's questions suggest about the education of the upper class?
2. The White Queen questions Alice, "How is bread made?" How is the Queen's response to Alice's answer and example of a pun?
3. Does Alice's succession to Queen support or oppose the coming of age theme?
4. Why does Alice become annoyed when she comes to the door marked "Queen Alice"? How does the frog frustrate her?
5. At the banquet, what is Alice's experience with the mutton? What does this experience convey about Carroll's opinion of Victorian etiquette?
6. What is the outcome for Alice since she has been introduced to all the foods?
7. How does the banquet end? In what way is it a commentary on Victorian society?

### Chapter 10—Shaking

1. What does Alice do to the Red Queen and why? How does the Queen react?

### Chapter 11—Waking

1. What happens in this chapter?
2. What is the significance of Alice's confrontation with the Red Queen?
3. What do the titles of chapters ten and eleven suggest about Alice's adventures in the Looking-glass world?

### Chapter 12—Which Dreamed It?

1. What lesson does Alice retain from the Looking-glass world that she tries to teach her kitten?
2. Who does Alice claim her kittens are?
3. Why does Alice think that Dinah is Humpty Dumpty?
4. The novel ends by questioning whether or not the Looking-glass world is Alice's dream. What are the benefits to the story being a dream?
5. Discuss the meaning of the final poem. What do the first letters of each line spell?



## Essay Topics

For each of these, remember to go beyond mere plot summary and argue a point.

### *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

1. What makes *Alice's Adventure in Wonderland* a coming-of-age story, a story in which the main character(s) grow, mature, or understand the world in adult terms)?
2. Discuss the effects that the strict social rules for women in the Victorian era have on Alice's outlook on the future.
3. Discuss how Carroll uses satire and parody to poke fun at political races, moralistic education, and rules of etiquette during the Victorian time, citing examples from the book.
4. Comment on Alice's ability or lack of ability to cope with Wonderland's inconsistent laws, rules, and argumentative inhabitants.
5. Discuss Carroll's use and purpose of poetry throughout the novel.
6. Discuss the major themes of the novel:
  - The loss of innocence and childhood is tragic and inevitable.
  - Life is a meaningless puzzle.
  - Death is a constant and underlying menace.

### *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*

1. Discuss the various nursery rhymes that arise in the novel and how they contribute to the story.
2. The basis of Alice's trip through the Looking-glass world is a chess game. Describe several elements or characters that are evidence of an ongoing game.
3. Discuss how the flower garden is used to represent the Victorian class system, how Alice's treatment depicts the Victorian perspective on children, and how Alice's banquet shows Carroll's opinion of Victorian society.
4. What is the meaning of "The Walrus and the Carpenter"? Give two possible interpretations.
5. In what way does Alice portray materialistic behavior?
6. Discuss how the Coming of Age theme relates to Alice.