

Name:

Teacher:

Class:

Date:

LIFE OF PI

Discussion Questions

Directions: Answer each question on a separate sheet of paper. For each answer, make sure to cite supporting evidence (specific examples/quotes) from the novel.

Round 1

1. **Faith** is an important concept for Pi.

What is faith? How did Pi demonstrate faith throughout the novel? Give specific examples and cite evidence (quotes) from the novel to support your examples. How did Pi’s faith help him to survive?

2. In chapter eight, Pi describes the idea of **Anthropomorphism**. He says that human beings look at an animal and see a mirror. Pi looks very carefully at each of the animals in their constructed habitats and assigns human characteristics to each of the animals.

Analyze the use of Anthropomorphism in the novel. How do Pi’s experiences looking at animals as a window to human behavior give him the tools to survive on the lifeboat? Give specific examples and cite evidence (quotes) from the novel to support your examples.

3. The first part of the novel starts twenty years after Pi’s ordeal at sea and ends with the words, “This story has a **happy ending**.”

After reading Pi’s survival story, do you agree with this statement? Explain. Give specific examples and cite evidence (quotes) from the novel to support your examples.

4. Yann Martel said in an interview, “The theme of this novel can be summarized in three lines. **Life is a story**. You can choose your story. And a story with an imaginative overlay is the better story.”

Explain how this quote relates to Pi’s story of survival. Why does Pi give two accounts of his ordeal? Which is the true story? Give specific examples and cite evidence (quotes) from the novel to support your examples.

5. “We fight and fight and fight. We fight no matter the cost of battle, the losses we take, the improbability of success. We fight to the very end.”

How does this idea of **survival** play out in this text? Using the Survival Pattern the class established below, give specific examples on how Pi’s journey corresponds with each step of the pattern.

1.	4.	7.
2.	5.	8.
3.	6.	9.

Round 2

6. *From his early years in Pondicherry and visits to various religious teachers, to his journey after the ship sank, Pi examines the nature of **belief** in the face of stark realities.*

Carefully examine the text and discuss this theme of belief as it is displayed in the novel. Give specific examples and cite evidence (quotes) from the novel to support your examples.

7. *In Part 1, Pi explains “all living things contain a measure of madness that moves them in strange, sometimes inexplicable ways. This **madness can be saving**; it is part and parcel of the ability to adapt. Without it, no species would survive.”*

Find evidence in Part 2 that this “measure of madness” did, indeed, kick in to ensure the survival of both man and beast: both Pi and Richard Parker. Give specific examples.

8. *“When you’ve suffered a great deal in life, each additional pain is both unbearable and trifling.”*

Besides the **loss** of his family and possessions, what else did Pi lose when the Tsimtsum sank? What did he gain? Give specific examples and cite evidence (quotes) from the novel to support your examples.

9. *“Richard Parker has stayed with me. I’ve never forgotten him. Dare I say I miss him. I do. I miss him. I still see him in my dreams. They are nightmares mostly, but nightmares tinged with love.”*

Go back through Part 2 and trace the **relationship between man and beast**, Pi and Richard Parker, as well as Pi’s changing attitude toward the tiger. Consider why and what would cause him to describe the memory of Richard Parker as involving both nightmares and love. Give specific examples and cite evidence (quotes) from the novel to support your examples.

10. *“It is true that those we meet can change us, sometimes so profoundly that we are not the same afterwards.”*

What characters/animals in the novel affected Pi profoundly? How did they **change** Pi for the better? For the worse? Give specific examples and cite evidence (quotes) from the novel to support your examples.