

The Red Badge of Courage Discussion Questions & Journal Entries

Directions: Sometimes we will start class with a discussion question or journal entry. If you miss class and find out that you need to answer that day's question, you will be able to find it in the list below.

Chapter 1:

What does each of the following thoughts of the youthful private suggest about his view of war or battle?

- A. He cannot believe that he is about to "mingle in one of those great affairs of the earth."
- B. "He had imagined peoples secure in the shadow of his eagle-eyed prowess."
- C. Why does he think war, which he associates with "heavy crowns and high castles," has gone forever? Why does he expect there will be no more "Greek-like struggles"?
- D. What is the connotation in the phrase "field of battle"?

Chapter 2:

Tell what is described in the following five images:

- A. "From across the river the red eyes were still peering. In the eastern sky there was a yellow patch like a rug laid for the feet of the coming sun; and against it, black and pattern-like, loomed the gigantic figure of the colonel on a gigantic horse."
- B. "Staring once at the red eyes across the river, he conceived them to be growing larger, as the orbs of a row of dragons advancing."
- C. "It was now like one of those moving monsters wending with many feet."
- D. "There was an occasional flash and glimmer of steel from the backs of all these huge crawling reptiles."
- E. "When the sunrays at last struck full and mellowingly upon the earth, the youth saw that the landscape was streaked with two long, thick, black columns which disappeared on the brow of a hill in front and rearward vanished in a wood. They were like two serpents crawling from the cavern of the night."

Chapter 6:

Is Henry's act of running away the result of a conscious decision, or is he overcome by some instinctive drive?

Chapter 7:

Why does Henry feel wronged?

As Henry walks, his feelings of self-pity, guilt, and despondency deepen. How does he use the incident with the squirrel to justify what he did?

Chapter 9:

Why do you suppose Henry wishes that he had been wounded also?

Chapter 10:

After Jim dies, the tattered soldier asks Henry again where he was hit. How and why does Henry respond in that fashion?

Chapter 14:

In what way has Wilson changed? What caused it?

Chapter 15:

What makes Henry seem less than admirable at this point?

Chapter 16:

What of Henry's own words surprises him? Why do these words surprise him?

Chapter 17:

In this chapter, Henry appears to be very courageous. In your mind, is he?

Chapter 24:

What is stated in the following passage?

In the paragraph that follows, what image does Henry use to describe the battle and his feelings during battle?

At this point, Henry gains the following insight. Put it into your own words.

Yet gradually he mustered force to put the sin at a distance. And at last his eyes seemed to open to some new ways. He found that he could look back upon the brass and bombast of his earlier gospels and see them truly. He was gleeful when he discovered that he now despised them.

What is Henry's conclusion about manhood and death?

How does the narrator use nature to emphasize the change in Henry?

The Veteran

How does Mr. Fleming describe his battle experiences?