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Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Tuesdays with Morrie by Mitch Albom

written by Lisa L. Burris

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To The Teacher

In order to allow the teacher maximum flexibility in his or her approach, we have grouped the prompts by sections. The teacher may, therefore, assign specific prompts or allow the students to select one or more prompts from each section

For Tuesdays with Morrie, we also have these materials:

Book Teaching Unit

See our catalogue, visit our web site at www.prestwickhouse.com, or call 1-800-932-4593 for more information.

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Class Record Sheet

25.	24.	23.	22.	21.	20.	19.	18.	17.	16.	15.	14.	13.	12.	11.	10.	9.	8.	7.	6.	5.	4.	3.	2.	1.
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Response Sheet

Name	Section	Date
		

Pre-reading

- 1. The cover of this book is pretty bland by most standards. It is a simple beige background, with different colored writings. As a publishing house executive, write a memo to your staff, defending or opposing the choice of the cover for *Tuesdays with Morrie*.
- 2. The subtitle of *Tuesdays with Morrie* is "an old man, a young man, and life's greatest lesson." Based on this subtitle, what do you think this novel is about? Write a well-developed paragraph explaining your answer.
- 3. This book's author, Mitch Albom, has dedicated *Tuesdays with Morrie* to his brother Peter, who is "the bravest person (Albom) knows." If you were to write a book about your own life experiences, to whom would you dedicate it? Imagine that you are writing a book about your life, and write a dedication of one or two sentences for that book. Then, write a short section for a press release for the book, explaining why you chose to dedicate your book to that person.

The Curriculum

4. This book's author, Mitch Albom, describes graduation from college as the beginning of being an adult. He says that graduation marks the time when "the curtain...come(s) down on childhood."

Different cultures have rituals or ceremonies to officially mark a person's passage from childhood to adulthood. When do you think a child becomes an adult? Are people officially adults when they turn 18 or 21? Do we become adults when we graduate from school, get a job, get married, or have children of our own?

Write a section about adulthood for an encyclopedia. Make sure your section includes a description of what it means to be an adult and how a person can know that he or she is no longer a child, but an adult.

5. Mitch's favorite professor is Morrie Schwartz. Morrie is so important to Mitch that at graduation, he wants to introduce Morrie to his parents.

Who is your favorite teacher? Write a scene for a television movie where you introduce your favorite teacher to your family or friends. Be sure to describe the setting and atmosphere, as well as the dialogue.

6. Mitch gives Morrie a gift. It is a tan briefcase with Morrie's initials on it. Mitch says that he bought the gift because he didn't want to forget Morrie, and he didn't want Morrie to forget him, either.

What kind of special gift would you like to give someone close to you? Think about a special gift you'd like to give someone if money were no object. Write an article for a holiday newspaper supplement, explaining a gift that you would like to give a special person and why you would want to give it.

The Syllabus

7. In the summer of 1994, Morrie got a strange feeling that something bad was coming. It is almost as if he had a premonition about his illness. He seemed to know that a major change was coming in his life.

Have you ever had a premonition or a sense of déjà vu? Have you ever felt or even dreamt that something happened, only to find out later that it actually did happen? Write an e-mail to Morrie, explaining a time when you, like he, felt that something was going to happen to you, only to find out later that your premonition came true.

8. Morrie loves to dance. He goes once a week to a church for a public dance, sometimes even taking his own music for the D.J. to play. He doesn't even care if there's no one to dance with him. He'll just fling his hands in the air and begin to dance by himself.

Dancing is a great activity for older people like Morrie. It is a social activity that also provides a bit of exercise. Write a section for a senior center's brochure, describing fun activities like dancing, crafts, and so on that can be beneficial for senior citizens. Be sure to include the benefits of each of those activities, too.

9. When Morrie dances, he is usually alone. According to Mitch, Morrie is a wild dancer, too, waving his arms around and whirling crazily on the dance floor. In fact, judging by the way he danced, most people at the church hall thought that Morrie was just some crazy old man, not realizing that he was actually an esteemed college professor. This just goes to show that we can't always tell what a person is like just by looking at him or her.

Using Morrie as an example, write a posting for an online fashion magazine, explaining how a person should be judged.

10. When Morrie and his wife Charlotte go to the neurologist's office, the doctor has terrible news to tell them: Morrie has Lou Gehrig's disease and he is going to die. This is certainly devastating news for the Schwartzes.

Doctors are, of course, professionals, but it still must be difficult for them to deliver such bad news. Write an instruction manual for doctors, giving them step-by-step guidance in how to tell a patient that he or she is going to die.

11. As Morrie is given the terrible news about his condition, he is surprised and dismayed to see that, despite his problems, the rest of the world continues as normal. In other words, the world didn't stop just because he received some devastating and life-altering news.

Make a list of at least ten words that can apply to how Morrie must be feeling. Then, using five of those words, write a poem about how the world goes on, even if you are hurting emotionally. Here are a few words to begin your list:

- Devastated
- Ignored
- Sad
- 12. Morrie's condition worsens to the point that he has to hire someone to help him change his clothes at the YMCA pool. This causes others in the pool locker room to stare at Morrie and completely disregard his privacy.

As the manager of Morrie's YMCA, write a memo to your staff in which you explain how to prevent people from pointedly staring at Morrie.

13. Mitch indicates that Morrie kept his illness a secret. Morrie only reveals it to his students when it is necessary to do so, when it becomes impossible to hide any longer.

If you were as sick as Morrie, if you had a fatal illness, would you reveal it, or would you prefer to keep it quiet? Write a well-constructed paragraph in which you explain what you would do if you were in Morrie's position.

14. Mitch explains to us what ALS (also known as Lou Gehrig's disease) can do to a person. He says it "often...begins with the legs and works its way up." Eventually, the disease takes over the whole body, rendering the patient immobile, yet still conscious. This is a devastating disease in which the patient is fully aware of gradually losing complete control of his or her muscles.

This brings up an important question about the quality of life for severely ill people. Is it preferable to allow someone to continue to life, even if he or she is immobile and unable to communicate, or do we do a disservice to someone in this condition by prolonging his or her life? What about a patient who is immobile, uncommunicative, and on life support? As a patients' rights advocate, write the text for a flyer to be distributed to the general public, telling people whether patients deserve the right to die if they are comatose or whether life should be preserved at all costs.

15. Morrie employs alternative or holistic medical methods to deal with his disease. He studies meditation and he brings in massage therapists to help him relax.

In some ways, alternative medicine like massage and meditation is controversial. Some people say these methods help them more than medication, while others say they are just a bunch of bunk. Write a debate between two doctors, one of whom supports alternative medicine and another who thinks there is no merit in it. You may begin like this:

Doctor #1: Alternative medicine...

16. His colleague's funeral has a powerful effect on Morrie. He comments about what a waste a funeral is because a person is already dead and cannot hear the nice stories and comments people are sharing. As an alternative, Morrie throws himself a "living funeral." He invites friends and family over one day so they can pay tribute to him while he is still alive to appreciate it.

If you were to have a "living funeral" like Morrie, what would you want people to say about you? Write a eulogy, a tribute to your life, that could be read at your "living funeral."

The Student

17. After his college graduation, Mitch thinks that he can do anything that he wishes, but he feels like something is preventing him from accomplishing his goals. He essentially sits around "wondering why the lights (are) not turning green for (him)." What he wants most of all is to be a professional musician, but he keeps getting rejected by music industry people. This is frustrating to Mitch, and he finds that for the first time in his life, he "(is) failing."

Failure is difficult to face, especially when you are failing at something for the very first time. Write an e-mail to Mitch, explaining to him why failure is a good and necessary thing. After all, it is sometimes important to fail at something before you find ultimate success.

18. After his uncle died, Mitch found a focus in his life. He went back to school, got a Master's degree, and started a career as a writer. He found great success as a sports writer, but he also became a workaholic, making work a priority over family and friends.

Working as much as Mitch does has both positive and negative aspects. Make a list of all of the benefits being a workaholic can bring. Then do the same for all of the drawbacks. Last, write an essay that compares and contrasts the positive and negative aspects about being so intensely focused on work.

19. Even though Mitch works a lot, he still finds time to fall in love. He meets "a dark-haired woman named Janine" and, after dating her for seven years, the two of them get married.

To some people, seven years may seem like a long time to date someone before getting married. Others may think that it is far better to date someone for a long time before committing to marriage. What is your opinion? Write the script for a Valentine's Day radio show in which you explain to people the preferable amount of time to date someone before deciding to get married and why.

The Audiovisual

20. Morrie's condition worsens, but his mind remains sharp. He starts to write aphorisms, or sayings, that reflect his views on life. One of them reads, "Accept the past as past, without denying or discarding it." Another says, "Learn to forgive yourself and forgive others."

Create five (5) aphorisms of your own, little one- or two-sentence sayings that reflect your views of life. After each one, write why that aphorism is important to remember.

21. Ted Koppel, a famous TV news anchor, comes to interview Morrie. Although Morrie's friends and family all gather around to meet the well-known newsman, Morrie is not impressed by Koppel's frame. In fact, Morrie will not allow the interview to start until he has a moment to "check him out" to discover what kind of person Koppel is.

Have you ever met someone famous? If so, how did you react? If you have not met a celebrity, what do you think you would do if you did? Write a substantial text message to Morrie, explaining either what you did when you met a famous person or what you would do if you met a celebrity.

22. When Morrie first meets with Ted Koppel, he asks Koppel some very personal yet telling questions. One of the questions Morrie asks of Koppel is to share "something that is close to (his) heart."

Imagine that Morrie has asked you the same thing, and write a response to him, telling him "something that is close to your heart."

23. After he hears Ted Koppel talking on television about Morrie, Mitch remembers his first class with Morrie in 1976. In this brief section of the book, Mitch goes into great detail in describing that first day. What struck Mitch most was the fact that Morrie made a point of asking Mitch how he would like to be addressed in class: as "Mitchell," his given name, or as "Mitch." This impressed Mitch because no other teacher had been so sensitive as to ask this. Morrie is apparently a very caring and considerate teacher who tries to set a positive tone in his classroom.

The way a teacher acts on the first day of class can often establish the feeling of a classroom for the whole year. If a teacher appears to be mean on the first day, the classroom maybe a little tense. If he or she is kind, the classroom may be a little more relaxed. Write a section for a teacher's textbook, explaining how to set a positive tone in the classroom, starting with the very first day of class.

The Orientation

24. As Mitch pulls up to Morrie's house, he is multi-tasking: he is checking the time to plan for his return flight, he is listening to a radio talk show, and he is talking on the phone with a producer about one of his programs. When he sees Morrie sitting peacefully on his front lawn, though, Mitch feels the need to hide all of this multi-tasking from Morrie.

Write a note to a classmate, explaining why Mitch feels the need to hide his activities from Morrie.

25. Although Morrie treats him with great love and affection, Mitch realizes that he does not feel like the same person Morrie knew all those years ago. This concerns Mitch a little, but he "hopes...that he can fool (Morrie)" for the short time of his visit.

Everyone changes throughout their lives. Sometimes, like Mitch, the change comes after graduation from school. Write a brochure for graduating high school seniors, explaining why their feelings toward school and their teachers may change after graduation.

26. When Mitch first started college, he tried to act like he was tough. He boxed at the school gym and walked around campus with an unlit cigarette in his mouth, even though he didn't smoke. He wanted people to think that he was someone he actually was not.

It is not unusual for teenagers, or anyone for that matter, to pretend to be someone or something they are not. Mitch wanted to be thought of as a tough kid, even though he was not. We all work hard on creating an image of ourselves. So hard, in fact, that we can often be categorized by the type of person we are or act like. For example, some people are defined as jocks, others as brainiacs, etc.

Think about the people in your school. Then, create a list of at least three (3) categories in which you can divide your classmates. Write a short sociological study, a study of student behavior, that explains the types of students who go to your school.

The Classroom

27. Mitch's first visit with Morrie causes him to reflect on some of the most important aspects of his life. Morrie asks him very personal questions, such as, "Are you at peace with yourself?" and "Are you trying to be as human as you can be?" These are in direct contrast to how Mitch is actually living his life. Nothing is as important to Mitch as his work, not his community, not giving of himself, not his own inner peace.

As society moves faster and faster, it becomes harder for all of us to find a sense of inner peace or a sanctuary away from the stress of the world. What do you do to get away from it all and foster a sense of peace within yourself? Do you paint or go for a run or read? Write a well-constructed essay in which you explain what you do to foster your own sense of inner peace.

28. A long time ago, when Mitch was still Morrie's student, Mitch took to calling his professor "Coach." It was a term of endearment that Morrie enjoyed and seemed natural to Mitch.

Why do you think the term "coach" is particularly appropriate in describing Morrie and his relationship with Mitch? Write a short section for the Cliff's Notes of this book, explaining why the term "coach" is appropriate for Mitch to call Morrie.

29. Morrie tells Mitch that dying is one thing to be sad about, but living unhappily is even worse. Morrie goes on to say that most people are, in fact, unhappy, mostly because they try to adhere to what culture tells them to do, even though it's not what they want for themselves. What are some things that culture tells us we should do or be, even if they are not right for us? Write a note to Mitch in which you use examples to support what Morrie says about why people, in general, are unhappy.

30. Mitch remembers from his college days that Morrie is a very passionate person. One of Morrie's greatest loves is reading. He can quote freely from famous writers whose works he has read, often using them to support his own opinions of topics.

Reading is, in fact, a passion for a great many people. It is something that keeps them going, fuels their imaginations, educates them, and entertains them. What is your own greatest passion? Why is that so important to you? Write a posting for an online blog, explaining your greatest passion in life and why it is so important.

31. In this section of *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Morrie explains the theory of the tension of opposites. This is a rather complex theory, and may have been hard for you to understand the first time you read it. Review what Morrie says about the tension of opposites, and then rewrite the theory in your own words, giving at least two (2) examples of how the theory works.

Taking Attendance

32. Shortly after visiting with Morrie for the first time, Mitch goes to London to cover the tennis matches at Wimbledon. It is while he is there that he remarks about tabloid journalism: the newspapers and magazines that deal mostly with stories about celebrities and their lives, while devoting little time to politics, economics, or other "real news" of the day. It is true that we, as a culture, are often more concerned about the lives of the rich and famous rather than the political and economic occurrences that affect us. For example, many people can recount the latest happenings in the lives of Britney Spears or Tom Cruise, but have no idea where the governor of their state stands on abortion or international diplomacy. The question, though, is why people are more interested in the lives of celebrities than in the political and social events that can affect their lives directly.

Write a letter to the editor of an entertainment magazine like *People* or *Entertainment Weekly*, telling him or her why people are more interested in the lives of the rich and famous than in more complex issues like politics.

- 33. This chapter, like others before and after it, offers more of Morrie's aphorisms, or truisms, about life. He continues to educate Mitch about what is important and real in life. As you continue to read *Tuesdays with Morrie*, keep a running list of all of Morrie's words of wisdom.
- 34. One of the pearls of wisdom that Morrie offers Mitch is that "the way to get meaning into your life is to devote yourself to loving others, devote yourself to your community around you, and devote yourself to creating something that gives you purpose and meaning." Do you agree or disagree with Morrie about this? Write a telegram to Morrie, telling him if you agree or disagree with his observation and why.

35. When Mitch arrives home from London, he is shocked and dismayed to learn that his union at the newspaper has gone on strike. This means that Mitch will not be able to work for the newspaper until the strike is resolved. He cannot report on sports matches for the paper, but more significantly, he will not be allowed to write for the newspaper. Mitch is most alarmed about this because it is his newspaper writing that brings him the most joy.

Mitch is upset to learn that not writing his column has no affect on the world at large. He thought his readers would miss his writing, but they seem completely unconcerned with the fact that Mitch's column has not been in the paper. It is as if the world continues, even without his input.

This idea of the world going on despite sadness is very similar to what happened to Morrie when he first learned that he was deathly ill. Draw a diagram that reflects the similarities and differences between Mitch's situation and Morrie's. Then, write a strong paragraph or two that compares the two incidents.

36. When Mitch was a student and wanted to be a professional musician, Morrie was extremely encouraging, more so than even Mitch's parents. Morrie believes that if you "really want" something, you can make it happen. In other words, if you can dream it, you can do it.

Write the text for a children's book in which you teach readers that, as Morrie says, if you really want something, you can make it happen.

The First Tuesday: We Talk About the World

37. One of the offshoots of Morrie's impending death is that Morrie seems to connect more to the suffering of the world. It's almost as if his suffering makes him more sensitive to the suffering of others around the world. He often reads the paper or watches the news on TV, only to find himself crying over the horrible things that happen to others around the world.

Many people are similarly moved by the plights of people around the world. We may find ourselves wanting to make a donation or even travel to other countries to help out victims of a tsunami or refugees from a war. Although wanting to help people is certainly admirable, there remain some people who think that rather than going to other countries to help the poor or homeless or hungry there, we should first help people in need in our country. Write a debate between two candidates for political office, one who supports helping people all over the world, and the other who believes that charity begins at home. A good way to start may be

Candidate #1: It is right to help others...

38. Morrie feels very strongly that love is the most important thing in life. He thinks that we all should be open not only to giving love, but also to receiving it. He says that, very often, people, especially men, are not comfortable with receiving love. Even so, he thinks that the greatest comfort one can have comes from receiving love.

The term "love" is sometimes difficult to define. When we tell someone we love them, what does it really mean? We say that we can give love, receive love, or show love, yet love is not really a tangible thing. More than that, love can have many different aspects. We can love our jobs, love our children, love our boyfriends or girlfriends, love our dog, or love our friends. Are there different kinds of love, or is love just one general concept that can be applied in different ways?

Write your own, all-encompassing definition of love. Make sure you address the many aspects of love and give examples of what it means to love someone or something.

39. Mitch recounts an incident in Morrie's classroom. As an experiment one day, Morrie entered the classroom, sat down at his desk, and didn't say a word for the entire first 15 minutes of class. The students' reactions varied from giggles to contemplation to indifference. Morrie's point in the experiment was to get the students to consider why we are all uncomfortable with silence. This is, in fact, a very interesting concept. You have probably noticed that, even if you're in a group of strangers, it's hard for everyone to keep completely quiet. Someone always begins to talk, to make a joke or an observation.

Why do you think that we are all so scared of silence? Why do we all feel the need to avoid quiet? As a student in Morrie's class, write a short journal entry that explains why people are uncomfortable with silence.

The Second Tuesday: We Talk About Feeling Sorry for Yourself

40. Morrie is only human. He does occasionally pity himself and his condition, but he only allows himself a short amount of time to do it. Each morning, he may mourn his disintegration a little bit, but he only does it for a few minutes and then he moves on. Although he feels sorry for losing the use of parts of his body, he also feels lucky to have so much time to say goodbye to his friends and family.

People in Morrie's condition often bathe themselves in self-pity, rather than regimenting their feelings as Morrie does. Write the verbiage for a poster to be placed in a hospital ward for the terminally ill, giving patients advice on how to deal with the self-pity that accompanies severe illness.

41. Mitch's emotional journey with Morrie causes him to examine many things about himself. Morrie's condition forces Mitch to reflect on who he is and how he conducts his personal life.

One of Morrie's college classes explored how people deal with anger and jealousy, among other emotions. Most of us just react, but never think about what we do in anger. Think, for a minute, about what makes you angry and how you react when you become angry. Then, write a well-developed paragraph that explores your own feelings of anger and how you deal with those feelings.

The Third Tuesday: We Talk About Regrets

42. On their third Tuesday visit, Mitch brings a tape recorder with him. He wants to record Morrie's stories so he will remember them. He wants to have a lasting remembrance of his time with Morrie, especially since Morrie will not be alive much longer. This is also one of the methods Mitch uses as a reporter and interviewer. He can record what was said in an interview and play it back when he writes his stories.

If you could interview anyone, alive or dead, whom would you want to interview? Write a section for your school yearbook, describing the person that you would most like to meet and interview and telling people why you would like to interview that person.

- 43. Mitch tells us that from the time he saw Morrie on "Nightline," he wondered if Morrie had any regrets about his life. "Did he lament lost friends?" Mitch wonders. "Would he have done much differently?" It may seem like a cliché when someone is facing death, but regret is a part of all of us. We may regret things we wished we had done or said or regret things we actually did. If you were in Morrie's shoes, what would you regret most? Is there something at this point in your life that you regret not doing or something that you did for which you are sorry? Write a short entry for a biography of your life, listing your greatest regret and explaining why you regret it so much.
- 44. Morrie says that everyone worries about not accomplishing enough. He says that people often ask themselves, "What if today were my last day on earth?" You may have asked yourself the same question. What would you do if you knew that the earth was going to be destroyed and today was your last day on earth? Write an article for a science fiction magazine, explaining what you would do if today were your last day on earth.

45. According to Morrie, it is an absolute necessity that each of us has someone to guide us in life. He says that certain things in life do not happen automatically, that we have to have someone to point us in the right direction. In other words, we all need teachers in life; otherwise, we may follow the wrong path.

Teachers come in all types. There are, of course, the teachers we have at school, but there are also people who teach us things who are not professional teachers. Who, for example, taught you how to walk or how to ride a bicycle? Who taught you how to be polite or how to share? What would happen to us if we had no one to teach us anything? Write a defense paper for the National Education Association, explaining what would happen to our society if we had no teachers.

46. On the flight back home, Mitch realizes that his meetings with Morrie are becoming Morrie's last classes. Mitch is Morrie's last student. Wanting to be a good student, Mitch makes a list of things he wants to talk to Morrie about: death, fear, aging, greed, marriage, family, society, forgiveness, and a meaningful life. Take each of these terms or phrases and write a brief explanation of each for yourself. As we continue through the book, note how your vision of each of the terms compares to Morrie's. You may choose to begin your list this way:

Term	What it means to me
Death	
Fear	
Aging	

The Audiovisual, Part Two

47. Morrie's first appearance on "Nightline" was so well-received that Ted Koppel returns to do a follow-up interview. Television viewers seem to have really connected to Morrie and his story. What do you think could be the attraction to Morrie?

As a writer for *TV Guide*, write a brief program description of one of Morrie's appearances on "Nightline," including a mention of why Morrie is so popular with TV audiences.

48. In his second TV interview, Morrie reads a response that he sent to a Pennsylvania school teacher named Barbara who wrote to him. Apparently, the teacher teaches a special class consisting entirely of students who have suffered the loss of at least one parent. We get to hear Morrie's response to Barbara, but Albom does not show us the letter Barbara wrote. As Barbara, write a letter to Morrie, explaining how his story has affected you and describing the children that you teach.

The Professor

49. Morrie was just a child when his mother died, and her death affected him each day of his life. Because Morrie's father was a Russian immigrant who couldn't speak English, when Morrie's mother's death notice came from the hospital, the little boy had to read and translate it for his father. Thus, Morrie had little parental comfort as he dealt with his mother's death.

Write a death notice, the official document that informs young Morrie's family about the death of Morrie's mother.

50. The death of Morrie's mother was devastating to him. Later, to try to offer Morrie and his little brother some solace, the family sends the boys to Connecticut to camp, so they can enjoy the outdoors. It is there that Morrie's brother David discovers that he has polio. Since Morrie and David were out splashing around in the rain the day before David learns that he has polio, Morrie blames himself for David's condition.

In the days of Morrie's childhood, adults would probably not have given much thought to the distress that Morrie was experiencing. In today's world, however, Morrie's father might send him to a psychiatrist to deal with his emotions. Write a dialogue between a psychiatrist and young Morrie, discussing the trauma brought on by the death of Morrie's mother and the onset of David's polio. A good way to start may be

Psychiatrist: So, Morrie, tell me...

51. Morrie's stepmother, Eva, proves to be a godsend to him. Where Morrie's father is indifferent and even cold toward him and his brother, Eva is warm and loving. She tucks them into bed each night, singing them songs in Yiddish, and she takes a strong interest in their lives, especially when it comes to education.

For Eva, education is a way out of poverty. She demands that the children do well in school. If they want to become better and more successful people, she thinks the only way is for them to become educated.

Keeping in mind how Eva, an immigrant, feels about education, write the text for a portion of an immigration handbook, expressing why it is important to have an education and what can happen to you if you don't become educated.

The Fourth Tuesday: We Talk About Death

- 52. When Mitch comes back to visit Morrie, the topic turns to death. This is a pretty deep philosophical topic, as everyone has some opinion about death and how to cope with it. Of death, Morrie says that, "Everyone knows they're going to die, but no one believes it." What, exactly does Morrie mean by this statement? Write a short e-mail to your English teacher, explaining what this quote from Morrie means.
- 53. Although Morrie is an agnostic, he borrows very heavily from all sorts of religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Buddhism, to name a few. Morrie feels very strongly that there is some sort of spiritual connection between man and nature. Too often, though, we take this spiritual connection for granted.

There have been significant studies about how spirituality positively affects people with life-threatening illnesses. We do not know if Morrie would necessarily agree with that, but it is clear that he believes that everyone should have some sort of spiritual connection to the world. Write an e-mail to a significant spiritual leader like the Pope or the Dalai Lama, telling him your viewpoints on spirituality. Do you think, like Morrie, that spirituality is important to our day-to-day lives, or do you think that spirituality has no merit whatsoever?

The Fifth Tuesday: We Talk About Family

54. If Morrie so chose, he could have his sons with him every minute of his illness. Instead, he told them that if they took time away from their lives to attend to him, three lives would be "ruined" instead of just one. In this way, Mitch says that Morrie is "respect(ful) of his children's worlds."

Respect is very important in any relationship, be it a relationship between a romantic couple, a friendship or even a parent/child or manager/worker relationship. Without respect for one another, a relationship may fall apart completely. Unfortunately, Morrie may be in the minority of parents who have respect for their children. Many parents or guardians think of their children as property instead of human beings worthy of respect.

Write a posting for an online discussion board for a parenting website, stressing how important it is for parents or guardians to respect their children. Make sure your posting also includes ways that parents can build respectful relationships with their children.

55. When Morrie asks Mitch about his own family, Mitch thinks about his relationship with his younger brother. Mitch's brother was handsome and light-haired. He was also wild and disobedient. Even so, he was the baby of the family and beloved by everyone.

Mitch's brother's life was not completely without incident, however. He contracted a rare form of pancreatic cancer. He fought it very hard, and eventually, the cancer went into remission. During his bout with cancer, Mitch's brother cut out all contact with his family. Insisting that he could handle the drug treatments himself, he refused offers for family visits. He would never return phone calls. In the end, Mitch and his brother had no contact at all.

It is always a sad thing when family members drift apart, especially when they are siblings. Write an e-mail from Mitch's brother to Mitch, explaining the reason why Mitch's brother cut off contact from the family and offering to patch things up.

56. Inspired by the talk about family, Mitch remembers going sledding with his brother when he was a child. He specifically recalls a day when he and his brother went sledding, only to be caught in the path of an oncoming car. Of course, they survived the encounter, and the event became an emblem of childhood pride.

What is your favorite memory from your childhood? Did you have one especially great birthday? Do you have a vivid memory of a trip you took or some experience you had with a friend or family member? Write a short essay that recounts your favorite childhood memory.

The Sixth Tuesday: We Talk About Emotions

57. Since Morrie is the one who is sick, a lot of the attention from family and friends is focused on him. Even so, it is his wife, Charlotte, who bears the biggest part of the burden of Morrie's illness. True, she has plenty of medical professionals to assist her, but she is still Morrie's primary caregiver. She stays up with him at night, even though she continues to work in the daytime. She gives him all of her love and support 24 hours a day.

When people have a terminal illness, it is not uncommon for their primary caregivers, usually wives, husbands, or children, to go all but unnoticed. Still, it is very important for visitors to offer comfort and support to the caregivers, too. Write a handout for a large hospital, giving visitors instructions on how to show support for the caregivers of the terminally ill.

58. In this session, Morrie explains to Mitch the importance of detaching from a situation. Morrie tells Mitch that it is important to fully experience his emotions, but once he has done that, to let go of them, to detach from them. Morrie says that we all need to say to ourselves, "All right. I have experienced that emotion. I recognize that emotion. Now I have to detach from that emotion..." This discussion is really about letting go of fear and not letting your emotions control you or your life.

What are some other ways of allowing emotion to come through, but not letting them go overboard? As a family therapist, make a list of at least five ways to deal with emotions in a healthy way so as not to let the emotions be in control. Then write a paragraph in which you explain why it is good to experience emotion, but not to let emotions overtake your life.

59. When the conversation turns to the afterlife, Mitch asks Morrie if he believes in reincarnation. Morrie doesn't answer directly, but says, instead, "Perhaps." If given the choice, Morrie goes on to say that he would prefer to be reincarnated as a gazelle. He likes gazelles because they are "graceful" and "fast."

If you could be any kind of animal, what kind of animal would you be? Write a text message to Morrie, telling him what kind of animal you would like to be and why you would like to be that animal.

The Professor, Part Two

- 60. By now, you know quite a bit about Morrie Schwartz as a man and a teacher. Do you think you would like to have been one of Morrie's students? What do you think of his teaching practices in general? Write a note to the president of Brandeis University, telling him whether you would have liked to have been one of Morrie's students and explaining to him what you like and dislike about Morrie's teaching methods.
- 61. The way Morrie dealt with his students made him very beloved by them. When the news gets out that Morrie is dying, hundreds of his students come back to visit him. They all tell him, "I've never had another teacher like you."
 - It's clear that Morrie has been a positive influence on many, many people throughout his life. Who would you say has been the most positive influence on your own life? Write the text for a thank you card to send to the person who has been the most positive influence in your life. Make sure to include examples of how that person has helped to shape who you are today.
- 62. Mitch and Morrie's relationship is unique in many ways, but familiar in others. We've all had a favorite teacher, so we can relate to their story, yet it is rare that a student continues a relationship with his or her former teacher.
 - Review Mitch and Morrie's history together, and select a song that you think defines their relationship. Then, in a memo to the producer of an audio version of this book, explain why that song defines Mitch and Morrie's relationship.

The Seventh Tuesday: We Talk About the Fear of Aging

63. Mitch bemoans the fact that he is getting older. He tells us about the billboards he has seen on his way from the airport. Each one pictured a young man or woman, but not one that looked like he or she was over 35 years old.

It is true that our culture is obsessed with youth. It seems like all adults want to look and feel younger. It does not help when only young people are shown in TV or print ads, either.

As an advertising executive, write a speech to be given at a corporate board meeting in which you explain why it is better to create ads that use older people as models.

- 64. You may have noticed that when Mitch writes about what Morrie says, he puts Morrie's words in quotes. Mitch's own responses, however, are never in quotation marks. As Mitch, write the text for you home webpage, telling readers why you wrote *Tuesdays With Morrie* so that Morrie's words are in quotes, while yours are not.
- 65. Morrie says that age is irrelevant. People who envy others for their youth do so because they are living unfulfilled lives. He says that people can have well-rounded and fulfilled lives if they "find what's good and true and beautiful" in their lives.

What kind of things are there in everyday life that are "good and true and beautiful"? Make a list of 15 things that you consider "good and true and beautiful" in life. Then, using at least five (5) of those words, write the lyrics for a song that will be called "Life."

The Eighth Tuesday: We Talk About Money

66. On Mitch's 8th visit with Morrie, Morrie offers his views on materialism. He tells Mitch that we are all brainwashed into wanting more, better, and newer things. He goes on to say that people who are obsessed with possessions are trying to substitute those possessions for love.

As an economist, write a proposal to send to Morrie, refuting everything that Morrie has to say about money. Make sure to tell him the reasons why it is important, economically, politically, and socially, for people to spend money.

67. Morrie thinks that it is more important that people donate their time to a cause, rather than their money. There are many ways to do this, Morrie says. For example, he speaks of a senior center near his house that asks any young people who have a skill to come and teach that skill to the members of the center.

Design and write a poster for this senior center, asking people to volunteer to teach at their organization.

68. Most of *Tuesdays With Morrie* consists of replays of conversations between Mitch and his former teacher, Morrie. This may seem like a pretty boring topic, yet Mitch Albom felt the need to write this book. Mitch could have easily just gone to visit his old professor, chatted with him, and left it at that. Why do you think that Mitch Albom felt the need to share his story? Write a journal entry in which you explain what motivated Mitch Albom to write *Tuesdays With Morrie*.

The Ninth Tuesday: We Talk About How Love Goes On

69. This book addresses the great complexities of life: love, success, and death among them. It causes some readers to think about where they are in life and consider what they want to accomplish in the future, as well as the legacy they want to leave behind.

In this chapter, Morrie and Mitch discuss accomplishments and the legacies of them. Morrie tells Mitch about the things we leave behind when we die and how we will be remembered. Think ahead to when you are old and facing your own death. For what would you like to be remembered? What do you plan to have accomplished by the end of your life? Imagine that you are in Morrie's position, and write a portion of a biography of your life, listing your greatest accomplishments and the legacy that you will leave behind.

70. Morrie decides that he wants his tombstone to read "A Teacher to the Last." When most people choose a phrase to list on a tombstone, they choose something that will encapsulate the life of the departed. Some tombstones read "Beloved Mother" or "Devoted Husband," even "Cat Lover" or "Kind to All Creatures." Others may offer a short poem or the lyrics of a song.

Think of a phrase or inscription that you would want on your tombstone. Then, write a paragraph that explains why that phrase captures your life and who you are.

71. Mitch comments about Morrie's ability to focus only on the conversation at hand and his ability to give each of his guests his full attention. Morrie agrees with Mitch's observation, saying that when he is with someone, he is thinking only of that person, not of how he feels physically or on the other demands on his life. In doing this, Morrie makes each of his visitors feel special, like they are the only thing of importance to Morrie at that moment.

Using this as a basis, write an entry for your school handbook, telling students why it is important to pay close attention in class.

72. When speaking of fatherhood, Morrie recalls his own father and how emotionally distant he was from Morrie and his brother, David. It is largely for this reason that Morrie had a delayed reaction when it came to mourning his father's death.

Morrie's father dies as a result of a crime that was committed against him. Write a police report that recounts this crime and details the circumstances of the death of Morrie's father.

73. Because of the way Morrie's parents die, Morrie decides that he wants people surrounding him when he dies. He doesn't want to die alone and have his loved ones notified about it by telegram or phone call.

For many people, death is a transition, something that they, like Morrie, would like to share with their families. A lot of people feel the same way about birth. They think that it is a wonderful thing to observe, so they invite their family and friends to watch when they give birth.

As a health professional for the maternity ward of a hospital, write a memo to pregnant women in which you tell them the good and bad things about inviting family and friends to witness the births of their babies.

74. Mitch tells us a story about the South American tribe the Desana. For the Desana, there is a finite amount of energy on earth. As creatures die, others are born to replace their energy. Likewise, as creatures are born, others must die to create room for the new ones. There is a similar idea in Western culture. You may have heard the phrase that for every death, there will be one child born. In fact, this was even the basis of the popular children's film *The Lion King*. It is "the circle of life."

Do you think that there is, indeed, a "circle of life"? Do you think that when one person dies, there is another born in his or her place? Write a short anthropological examination of society, explaining whether a "circle of life" exists.

The Tenth Tuesday: We Talk About Marriage

75. Mitch finally brings his wife, Janine, to visit with Morrie in order to fulfill one of Morrie's long-standing requests. They hit it off immediately, and Janine's visit causes Morrie and Mitch to think about marriage.

Mitch mentions that he has attended many weddings, only to see the groom at a restaurant years later with someone else. It seems to Mitch that the norm is for couples to marry, stay together for a short time, and then eventually divorce.

As a marriage counselor, write a 30-second radio commercial that lists the top ten reasons couples divorce and how couples can get help to save their marriages.

76. Morrie and his wife have a loving and caring relationship. Charlotte loves Morrie, but more importantly, she supports him physically and emotionally. As he becomes weaker and weaker, she takes over the responsibility of nursing him, as well as listening to his problems and feeding him.

Mitch mentions that Morrie and Charlotte have been married for 40 years. Write the text for an anniversary card, congratulating Morrie and Charlotte on their long marriage, and citing some of the good qualities of their relationship.

77. Morrie thinks that marriage "is an important thing to do" and that people will miss a big part of their lives if they don't get married. In our society today, however, marriage is not exactly a necessity. Many people live together and even start families without being married. Is it really important, then, for people to get married at all?

Write the introduction to a romance novel in which you explain whether it is important for people to be married. Your introduction should include several reasons to support your opinion.

The Eleventh Tuesday: We Talk About Our Culture

- 78. Books are often adapted into films and plays, and films and plays are rewritten into the form of novels. Select a scene from *Tuesdays With Morrie* and rewrite it in the form of a script that can be used for a play based on the book.
- 79. Morrie believes that all people are inherently good. To him, it is only a negative situation that makes people mean or bad. This is a remarkable idea, especially when just about everyone has encountered a negative, mean, or bad person. Sometimes it is very difficult to see the good in every single person.

There is a school of thought that agrees with Morrie. These people say that all people are born good, but it is the way they are raised and how they are nurtured that makes them bad. Opponents of this frame of thought say, however, that people who are bad are born that way. They think that bad people are just naturally that way. Write an instruction manual for new school guidance counselors in which you explain whether bad people are born that way or whether the environment causes their bad behavior.

80. One thing that Morrie strongly supports is the idea that we should not just automatically believe anything that society tells us to do just because we're told to do it. He doesn't necessarily mean rules or laws, but rather, body image or status. For example, we shouldn't want to be thin just because society says we should be. We shouldn't want a fancy house just because others tell us we should have a fancy house. We all need to do what is right for us.

Write a short portion of a self-help book in which you give readers the tools to live their lives according to their own rules, not according to what others think they should do.

81. Mitch's story about Morrie at the college basketball game is humorous. Apparently, at a game at Brandeis in the 70's, the crowd began shouting, "We're number one!" Morrie, puzzled, stood up in the middle of the gymnasium and shouted, "What's wrong with being number two?"

We seem to lose our sense of pride in simple accomplishment as we grow up. When we are children, most of us, for example, are just happy to be on the baseball or football team. We're really not concerned about being "number one." As the parent of a child on a little league baseball team, write a posting for the opinion section of an online newsletter, explaining why winning isn't everything.

The Audiovisual, Part Three

82. Ted Koppel returns for a third interview with Morrie. Koppel points out that there are other ALS sufferers who go on to live productive lives. One such person is the famous writer and physicist Stephen Hawking. Morrie replies that he would not want to live such a life, since Stephen Hawking is completely immobile, uses a voice synthesizer to speak and uses his eyelids to type words. To Morrie, that is not a life. Life, for him, is "be(ing) responsive to the other person."

For countless centuries, man has contemplated the meaning of life. In fact, with debates about abortion and assisted suicide, we are still trying to determine when life starts, when it should end, and what it means to really be alive.

In a short essay, explain your views on what it means to be truly alive. Is living simply a matter of having a life force, or does it entail something more?

83. Koppel asks Morrie for his final words, the one piece of advice that he wants to share with the millions of people who have continued to watch him on television. Morrie's response is, "Be compassionate."

We all have responsibilities, to family, to friends, to children who look up to us, or just to our fellow human beings. These people may come to us for advice at various times, but what one piece of advice should everyone heed? Write an advice column in which you give the one piece of advice that everyone should heed and explain why that advice is so important.

The Twelfth Tuesday: We Talk About Forgiveness

84. In speaking of forgiveness, Morrie recounts the story of a broken relationship with a friend who was very dear to him. Morrie and his friend were extremely close, but the friend moved away. When Charlotte became ill and needed surgery, Morrie was hurt that his friend did not try to contact him. Because of this slight, Morrie cut off all contact with his friend.

Everyone has lost a friend at one time or another. Someone we trust betrays us, moves away, hurts us, or makes us angry, and we just stop talking to that person. Losing a friend can be quite upsetting, especially if the person we lose is a close friend.

Write a conversation between yourself and Morrie, where you comfort him about his broken friendship and tell him about a time when you lost a friend.

85. Forgiveness is very powerful. It is hard enough to forgive others, but, as Morrie points out, we must also forgive ourselves. Peace can only be found, according to Morrie, through forgiveness.

When people are struggling through difficult times, it is sometimes helpful to make a list of people who have wronged you and then write a note forgiving them. Make a list of all the people who have wronged you. Then, write a few short words of forgiveness for each person.

The Thirteenth Tuesday: We Talk About the Perfect Day

86. Morrie chooses to have his body cremated instead of being buried. This is a very personal decision that each of us will have to make: do we want to be buried or cremated?

As a funeral director, write a recommendation to the family of a deceased person, explaining the benefits of cremation.

87. Morrie tells Mitch about a dream that he had recently. In the dream, Morrie "was crossing a bridge into something unknown." His dream is symbolic of his passage from life to death.

People have made entire careers out of interpreting dreams. Write a paragraph that describes a dream you have had recently. Then, write a second paragraph in which you interpret what happened in the dream.

88. Morrie believes that death is a natural process. It is the body that dies, but not the spirit. He says that after death, "you live on – in the hearts of everyone you have loved and nurtured while you were here."

What do you think will be Morrie's legacy to the world? What is the most important part of Morrie that lives on? Write a text message to Mitch Albom, telling him what will be Morrie's legacy.

89. Even if there were a way to miraculously go back to how he was before his disease set in, Morrie would not do it. He says that he is a different person because of his illness and he could never go back to who he was, knowing what he knows now about life.

This discussion harkens back to Morrie and Mitch's discussion about regrets and not giving into them. You often hear people say, "If you could do something different in your life, would you?" If you could go back and live your life over, would you? Write a cohesive essay in which you explain whether you would go back and relive your life if you had the chance.

90. Morrie's idea of a perfect day is to have a nice breakfast, swim, visit with friends, eat a good Italian dinner, and go dancing. If he had one more day to do everything he would like to do, this is what he would choose.

What would you do if you had the opportunity to construct a perfect day for yourself? What would constitute a perfect day to you? Write a dialogue between yourself and a friend, discussing what you consider a perfect day.

91. Mitch is still fighting to reconnect with his brother. Peter, though, doesn't want to talk to Mitch. Part of Mitch's problem is that he loves his brother and wants to help him, but Mitch also feels like his brother has rejected him. In many ways, the worst thing to endure is the rejection of someone you love.

Rejection, in any form, is hard to take. Even so, we all face it from time to time. Write the text for a PowerPoint presentation for the labor department, giving job applicants advice on how to handle being rejected for a job.

92. Morrie's story about the little wave is a metaphor – a story that is really meant to tell us something more than what it appears. The wave and the ocean stand for more than just water. For a reading group guide for *Tuesdays With Morrie*, write a well-constructed paragraph or two in which you tell readers what we are meant to learn from Morrie's "little wave" story.

The Fourteenth Tuesday: We Say Good-bye

(No Prompts)

Graduation

93. All of Morrie's family was in his house when he died, yet Morrie passed away alone in his bedroom. His funeral was very small and simple, per Charlotte's wishes.

Write an obituary for the Brandeis University newspaper for Professor Morrie Schwartz.

Conclusion

94. After his Tuesdays with Morrie, Mitch expresses a desire to talk to the work-obsessed person he used to be. He wants to tell his former self "what to look out for" and "what mistakes to avoid."

Write a message from yourself to the person you were five years ago, giving your younger self advice on "what to look out for" and "what to avoid" in life.

95. Mitch's experiences with Morrie in the last days of Morrie's life changed who Mitch is – what he thinks, how he acts, and his entire worldview. Things like this can happen to other people because of a relationship or because of an event they have experienced. Some people's lives even change because of a particular book they have read or a movie they have seen.

Write a reflective piece that recounts something significant that happened to you that forever changed your life.

96. The first pages of this book include brief blurbs, short sentences or paragraphs that recommend this book to potential readers. Write your own blurb for this book, one that can be included in a future edition of *Tuesdays With Morrie*.

Notes

Test

- 1. Morrie is a professor of
 - A. English.
 - B. History.
 - C. Sociology.
 - D. Physics.
- 2. Morrie suffers from
 - A. amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS).
 - B. muscular dystrophy (MD).
 - C. Alzheimer's disease (AD).
 - D. carotid arteries (CA).
- 3. One of the offshoots of Mitch's visits with Morrie is
 - A. that he quits his job.
 - B. that he goes back to school.
 - C. that he decides to start a family.
 - D. that he reconnects with his brother.
- 4. By trade, Mitch is
 - A. a teacher.
 - B. a sports writer.
 - C. a newspaper editor.
 - D. a TV personality.
- 5. Other than his family, Morrie's greatest passion is
 - A. eating.
 - B. sleeping.
 - C. dancing.
 - D. gardening.

- 6. Morrie thinks that funerals are a waste. After all, there are the dead person's friends and family singing his praises when he isn't even able to hear them. What does Morrie do as an alternative to a traditional funeral?
 - A. He writes his own eulogy.
 - B. He asks to be buried at sea.
 - C. He tells his wife that he does not want a funeral at all.
 - D. He has a "living funeral" so he can hear what others have to say about him.
- 7. Morrie wants his loved ones around him when he dies because
 - A. he depends on them.
 - B. he doesn't want them to suffer the pain of knowing that he died alone.
 - C. he is frightened of death.
 - D. he doesn't want anyone to feel left out.
- 8. Morrie's relationship with his father can be best described as
 - A. emotionally distant.
 - B. loving.
 - C. insightful.
 - D. mutually nurturing.
- 9. In dealing with his disease, one of the things Morrie learns is
 - A. how to communicate with a voice recorder.
 - B. to have compassion for all those who are suffering in the world.
 - C. how to treat his family.
 - D. how to sleep sitting up.
- 10. With all that Morrie has been through in his life, how does he keep from getting down about his situation?
 - A. He reads constantly.
 - B. He ignores his suffering.
 - C. He sings to himself.
 - D. He briefly acknowledges his emotion, and then detaches from it.

- 11. Mitch probably keeps bringing up the bad things he reads in the news because
 - A. his worldview is changing.
 - B. he wants to compare Morrie's teachings with the ways of the world.
 - C. it is his job to know what is going on in the world.
 - D. he enjoys reading the newspaper.
- 12. According to Morrie, people who are concerned with material things
 - A. should be pitied.
 - B. are compensating for a lack of love.
 - C. don't have a hope in the world.
 - D. are not welcome in his home.
- 13. Which of the following quotes can be attributed to Morrie?
 - A. "It's always darkest before the dawn."
 - B. "Never ask for what you know you can't have."
 - C. "When you're in bed, you're dead."
 - D. "No one can demand your respect."
- 14. Which of the following is the best definition of "the tension of opposites"?
 - A. a time in your life when nothing seems to be going well
 - B. the desire to be combative
 - C. the stress caused when you make a bad decision
 - D. the constant struggles in life that pull you back and forth
- 15. Morrie is to Mitch as
 - A. colleague is to colleague.
 - B. subject is to interviewer.
 - C. mentor is to student.
 - D. disciplinarian is to wayward child.

- 16. Why does Morrie refer to his visits with Mitch as his "final thesis"?
 - A. because he knows that they will be the basis of a best selling book
 - B. because Mitch was always a good student
 - C. because Mitch will submit the text from the visits for a doctoral project
 - D. because together, they are examining life and writing a text about it
- 17. Which of the following statements would Morrie probably support?
 - A. If you have money, you have the world
 - B. Don't look a gift horse in the mouth
 - C. Love is the most important thing in life
 - D. If you are offended by something, let someone know about it
- 18. Morrie's greatest legacy will probably be
 - A. the way he nurtured others.
 - B. his work as a professor.
 - C. the books he has written.
 - D. his interviews on "Nightline."
- 19. Which of the following would have most pleased Morrie about the success of *Tuesdays With Morrie*?
 - A. It was a best seller.
 - B. Millions of people's lives have been positively affected by the book.
 - C. It made him famous.
 - D. It made enough money to cover his medical expenses.
- 20. There are a lot of life lessons contained in *Tuesdays With Morrie*. Which of the following would be the best expression of the theme, or overall message, of *Tuesdays With Morrie*?
 - A. Teachers and students should always be friends.
 - B. Life is for the living.
 - C. Illness can be devastating.
 - D. It is never too late to learn.

Test Student Answer Sheet

Name:	
1	11
2	12
3	13
4	14
5	15
6	16
7	17
8	18
9	19
10	20

Response Journal

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Test Answer Key

1.___C_

11.___B__

2.___A__

12.___B__

3.___D_

13.___C__

4.___B__

14.___D__

5.___C__

15.___C__

6.___D__

16.___D__

7.___B__

17.___C__

8.___A__

18.___A__

9.___B__

19.___B__

10.__D___

20.___D__

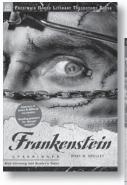
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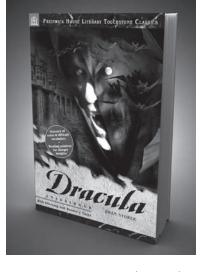
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