

## Reading Quiz "The Open Boat" by Stephen Crane

- ✓ 1. Summarize the story (include the most important events).

After their boat wrecked, four crew members are stranded in a lifeboat. The correspondent and the Oiler work together to row, the Captain directs from the deck, and the Cook bails water. As they float, they face large waves that threaten to topple their boat. The boat comes in view of a lighthouse. The men hope that it is inhabited, and risk capsizing to get closer. When they realize that the lighthouse had been abandoned, they float back to open waters. They see people on shore and eventually decide to make a break for land. They ride the waves until they capsize and then swim. All but the Oiler live to be rescued.

- ✓ 2. Describe each of the characters.

- A. The Cook - Hefty  
Job is to bail water  
Helps with rowing  
Wishful (for rescue)
- B. The Oiler - Innocent  
Only named character  
Rows with the correspondent
- C. The Correspondent - Rows with Oiler  
Very contemplative  
Has lots of thoughts about the universe  
main focus of story
- D. The Captain - injured in the boat wreck  
Strong leader  
Smart (doesn't see the gull)  
Trusts his crew

3. Identify the major conflicts encountered by the crew.

- ✦ Conflict of going to shore but risking capsizing in the waves
- ✦ Staying at sea but never getting rescued
- ✓ ✦ Man vs. Man conflict about whether there is a rescue station and if it is even occupied.

Man vs. nature - wind/waves - cold water/air

✓4. What does the lighthouse symbolize to the men in the boat?

The lighthouse symbolized hope and rescue to the men. They saw it as an end to their struggles at sea. They figured if they could get close to it, they would be rescued by those on the island and they would not have to remain on the open water.

✓5. What did you enjoy most/or find most interesting about the story?

I enjoyed the part in the story about the seagull landing on the Captain. It showed how precarious the situation truly was, and also the intelligence of the crew and the Captain.

✓6. "The Open Boat" is considered one of the finest examples of American naturalism: an irreligious philosophy that views the universe as indifferent to the existence and struggles of humanity.

Describe a situation where nature was not helpful to achieving your goal (naturalism) or you had to work with other people to accomplish an important task (cooperation)?

In the summer before freshman year, my friends and I went on a survival camping trip: no tent, no food, no phones. Just our knowledge of nature and foraging. That also happened to be the night of the terrible rain storm and tornado that wrecked part of Kent Island. We were in Caroline County, but still felt the effects. The sky was cloudy which gave way to terrible rain that seemed to come from nowhere. For 20 minutes we hid in the park bathroom. But our shelter survived and remained dry. We did complete our goal of 24 hour survival and did it again, later in the summer.