

Twelve Angry Men: Act I

Directions: Please answer the following questions in complete sentences using direct examples from the play.

Vocabulary

- **unanimous** – complete agreement with no one dissenting
- **refugee** – a person who flees one country and seeks safety somewhere else
- **el** – a train of the same design as a subway train that runs on tracks elevated a few stories above street level.
- **retire** – to leave the open court to go to a private room
- **calculus** – a complicated mathematical process
- **belligerently** – in a hostile or angry manner
- **monopoly** – the exclusive ownership of a business
- **switch knife** – more commonly referred to as switchblade, one whose spring-loaded blade is concealed inside the body of the knife
- **proposition** – a deal; bargain
- **bickering** – arguing
- **mugging** – a physical attack to take money or goods from another person
- **breeding ground** – a place that feeds and nourishes the growth of what is born there
- **flimsy** – weak and thin

1. In your own words, state what instructions the judge gives to the jurors.
2. How many jurors must vote guilty for the accused to be convicted?
3. What does the guard do that upsets the group?
4. Before the jurors are locked in their room, what is the last thing they hear that might influence their thinking when deciding the defendant's guilt or innocence?

5. Describe the staging for this play and indicate what mood the staging generates. (In addition to the set, mention something about the climate and temperature of the set.)

6. In the opening minutes, what is worrying Juror 12?

7. "A man can't be held in double jeopardy. Unless it's a hung jury, they can't try a man twice for the same crime."

a. What is double jeopardy?

b. What is a hung jury?

8. What is the prosecution in a criminal trial?

9. What is the defendant in a criminal trial?

10. Of what is the defendant accused?

11. What is the count of guilty—not guilty votes on the first check?

12. Why does Juror 8 hesitate to vote guilty on the first vote?

13. Describe the defendant.

14. What evidence is there against him?

15. Who is the protagonist in this play and what is he doing when we first see him?

16. Who does it appear will be his major antagonist? How is this antagonist differentiated from the other jurors?

17. What will be the cause of the conflict between the protagonist and antagonist?

18. What is the cause of Juror 3's anger toward all young men?

19. Juror Ten says, "Well, look, you've gotta expect that. You know what you're dealing with..." and later says, ""How can you believe him, knowing what he is? I lived among 'em all my life. You can't believe a word they say. Look at the kind of people they are—you know them."

a. What is Juror 10 talking about here?

b. What can the reader infer about Juror Ten?

20. Explain why Juror 5 gets so upset with Juror 10.

21. Using examples from the text, explain Juror 8's concerns about the trial.

22. The foreman asks the guard to bring in the switchblade knife. Why?

23. What happens that surprises the jurors as they examine this evidence?

24. What dramatic climax occurs toward the end of Act I?

25. What proposal does Juror 8 make at end of the act? What is his motive for making the proposal?

27. From what you have learned of the jurors thus far, which one(s) would you want on your jury if you were on trial, and explain why. Which one(s) would you not want? Why?

26. How do the jurors vote this time?

28. Why do you think Juror 8 stands up instead of just voting guilty and going home?

29. Prediction: Who do you think is the juror who changed his vote to not guilty at the end of the act? Support your prediction with your logic.

30. What is the difference between proving that someone is guilty or proving that someone is innocent? Why do you think this distinction is such an important concept in our legal system?

