

Charlotte's Web - Chapters One & Two - Part One

Chapter One - Before Breakfast		
1	At what time of day does the story begin?	'...said Fern to her mother as they were setting the table for breakfast.'
2	Explain what a 'hoghouse' is and how you know.	A pig-house. We know it because in the same sentence Mrs Arable says about pigs being born in the night.
3	How old is Fern?	'...Fern, who was only eight.'
4	Explain what a 'runt' is and how you can work it out from the text?	'...one of the pigs is a runt. It's very small and weak, and it will never amount to anything.' Runt - 1. an animal that is small or stunted as compared with others of its kind. 2. the smallest or weakest of a litter, esp. of pigs or puppies.
5	Why are 'away' and 'kill' in italics (a different font)?	To emphasise the words, and to show that Fern emphasised the words when she shouted. She was upset, angry at what Mr Arable was going to do.
6	Why did Fern try to take away her father's axe?	To stop her father killing the runt. She had asked why he had the axe and her mother had explained that he was going to do away with the runt. She was very upset and didn't think that he could always kill it in lots of different ways.
7	Why did Mr Arable change his mind about killing the piglet?	'A queer look came over John Arable's face.' Fern had asked him if he would have killed her if she had been a runt, and asked what the difference was. It had made him think and he was also persuaded by how emotional and upset he was.
8	Why was the kitchen so full of smells?	They had been in the middle of breakfast so the coffee and bacon must have been on the table giving off their aromas. The woodsmoke would have come from the stove that kept them warm and cooked for them. The damp plaster must have been from the weather. Remember that on the first page it says that the grass was wet and it was Springtime. It often rains a lot in Spring.
9	What can you tell me about Avery as a person. What did he like doing in his spare time?	He is the sort of person who likes guns and knives. He might like hunting or practising shooting in his spare time. He is scathing of the little piglet, isn't at all sympathetic and doesn't coo over it.
10	Why couldn't Avery have a piglet too?	'...I only distribute pigs to early risers...Fern was up at daylight, trying to rid the world of injustice.'
11	Why wasn't Fern able to just sit down and eat her breakfast straightaway?	'...Fern couldn't eat until her pig had had a drink of milk.'

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12	Why does the author describe the sound of the bus horn as 'honked', what animal honks?	Honked - The blaring sound of the horn on a motor vehicle. A horn isn't musical it, just makes a noise, loud enough to catch people's attention. A goose also honks, and that isn't musical either.
13	Why did Fern ignore everybody on the bus?	'...thinking what a blissful world it was and how lucky she was to have entire charge of a pig.'
14	What embarrassed Fern at school?	She was thinking of Wilbur when she was asked a question, and not thinking carefully enough she said his name instead of the right answer. She blushed in embarrassment, that's how we know she was embarrassed, especially when she was laughed at by the others.
Chapter Two - Wilbur		
15	Why did Fern use a bib when feeding Wilbur?	To stop milk running all down his front, just like a baby.
16	How many times did they feed Wilbur every day?	Five - '...every morning...every afternoon...at suppertime...just before going to bed...around noontime...'
17	What did Wilbur do that showed he loved being fed?	'He would stand and gaze up at her with adoring eyes.'
18	Why was Wilbur moved out to the woodshed?	'...when Mrs Arable complained, he was moved to a bigger box in the woodshed.'
19	Why was it alright for Wilbur to live outside now?	He was older, and 'it was apple-blossom time, and the days were getting warmer.'
20	What did Wilbur do with his box that made her happier about him keeping warm?	'In a short time he had dug a tunnel in the straw. He crawled into the tunnel and disappeared from sight, completely covered with straw.'
21	What did Wilbur do that was very odd for a pig?	'Every morning after breakfast, Wilbur walked out to the road with Fern and waited with her till the bus came...he would stand and watch the bus until it vanished round a turn.' Would a normal pig do that? What would it do if it was brought out to the side of a road?
22	Why did Wilbur not go upstairs?	Maybe he found it hard to climb the stairs? He's only got little legs, remember.
23	What would Fern do sometimes when Wilbur was tired?	'...Fern would pick him up and put him in the carriage alongside the doll.'
24	What made him look so cute?	'He looked cute when his eyes were closed, because his lashes were so long.'
25	What word tells us what Wilbur thinks about mud?	'delightfully' Its use by the author infers that Wilbur likes the mud. What words might the author have used instead if he didn't like the mud?

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26	Why did Mr Arable have to sell Wilbur?	He's a farmer, everything he rears had to make a profit, provide him with money to live on. He was having to feed Wilbur, and this meant less food for the other pigs. '...he was beginning to eat scraps of food in addition to milk. Mr Arable was not willing to provide for him any longer.'
27	How did Mrs Arable solve the problem of having to sell Wilbur?	'Call up the Zuckermans...you Uncle Homer sometimes raises a pig. And if Wilbur goes there to live, you can walk down the road and visit him as often as you like.'
28	Why might Uncle Homer have been happy to buy the pig?	The price was right, six dollars, doesn't sound much for something that will grow up to produce lots of pork, ham and bacon. It might also have been that Mrs Arable had been talking things over with him before, and that it had been arranged.

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Three & Four - Part Two

Chapter Three - Escape		
1	Why did the barn smell of hay and manure?	We can deduce this from the next sentence - 'It smelled of the perspiration of tired horses and the wonderful sweet breath of patient cows.' Hay is one of the foods that can be fed to horses and cows, and manure is the result!
2	Why did the barn sometimes smell of fish?	'And whenever the cat was given a fish-head to eat, the barn would smell of fish.'
3	What made the barn a nice place to stand in, in the summer?	'...it was pleasantly cool in summer when the big doors stood wide open in the breeze.' The wind blew through it and made it less hot than standing out under the Sun.
4	Can you work out what a 'grindstone' might do? Think carefully about the context and the word itself?	Grindstone - a rotating solid stone wheel used for sharpening, shaping, etc. It's in a list of tools and implements so that tells us that it is related to them in some way.
5	Why were there rat traps in the barn?	To keep the rats down. The rats would eat the fodder that the animals dropped on the floor and gnaw through the sacks, and generally create a mess.
6	Why was under the cows a good place to put Wilbur?	It was warm! It was on the sunny side of the barn! It was sheltered, out of draughts. '...a manure pile is a good place to keep a young pig. Pigs needed warmth, and it was warm and comfortable down there in the barn cellar on the south side.'
7	Why did the sheep and geese get used to Fern and trust her?	'Here she sat quietly...she was so quiet and friendly.' She didn't make sudden moves or threaten the animals with loud noises. She didn't shove them or push them out of the way.
8	Why was Wilbur bored? What had he been used to?	'...he never had any fun - no walks, no rides, no swims...' There's never anything to do round here,' Wilbur had been used to running around with Fern, watching her leave on the bus, going indoors, out around the farm. Here he was stuck in his pen and run and not allowed out. He couldn't even have much fun when Fern was there as he couldn't go out and she couldn't go in his pen. No wonder he was bored.
9	What did Wilbur say that was very, very sad thing for someone so young to say?	'I'm less than two months old and I'm tired of living.'
10	Why didn't Wilbur run for the woods as the goose suggested?	'The woods seemed a long way off, and anyway, he had never been down there in the woods and wasn't sure he would like it.' Remember he was only a little pig who hadn't had a lot of experiences, so something new would be scary for him.

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Three & Four - Part Two

11	Why did Wilbur get confused about what to do?	Because everybody was shouting instruction at once, and he didn't know which to follow first. 'He tried to follow the instructions his friends were giving him, but he couldn't run downhill and uphill at the same time, and he couldn't turn and twist when he was jumping and dancing...'
12	Why did he follow Mr Zuckerman?	It was the smell of food, and he was only a little pig and had been digging for several hours and was hungry. 'The smell was delicious...the food smelled appetising...'
13	Define 'appetising'. Explain what it means. Look carefully at the sentence it is in and think about the context.	Appetising - adjective, appealing to or stimulating the appetite especially in appearance or aroma Made him want to eat it.
14	What are 8-penny nails?	Nails that cost 8-pennies each, or 8-pennies for a certain weight of them?
Chapter Four - Loneliness		
15	Why was Wilbur so upset when he saw it was raining?	He had planned what he thought was an exciting and interesting day, and so was disappointed when he saw the rain and realised that he couldn't do some of it and so his day was spoiled. 'Rain upset Wilbur's plans...it seemed as though he couldn't bear it...'I get everything all beautifully planned out and it has to go and rain'...
16	Did Wilbur have a favourite food?	No! Just food, full stop! Think about the list of foods that he eats for his meals!
17	What, in particular, made Wilbur feel really alone?	It was when he called for Templeton and there was no answer. It made him feel very alone. 'There was no answer. Suddenly Wilbur felt lonely and friendless.'
18	What made Lurvy realise that something was wrong with Wilbur?	Wilbur didn't come running when he heard Lurvy with the food, as he would normally have done. 'Wilbur did not budge...he noticed something was wrong with the pig.'
19	Why wouldn't the goose go and play with him?	'I'm sitting on my eggs...got to keep them toasty-oasty-oasty warm.'
20	Why did the lamb get so annoyed with Wilbur?	Because he went on and on and on about something the lamb said, shooting it down in flames, showing that it couldn't possibly be true, what the lamb said about him being 'less than nothing'.
21	Why didn't Templeton know much about fun and play?	'I prefer to spend my time eating, gnawing, spying and hiding. I am a glutton but not a merry-maker.' He preferred doing things that were useful to something that produced nothing of any benefit to him.

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22	Why was Templeton heading for the trough?	'...to eat your breakfast, since you haven't got sense enough to eat it yourself.'
23	What did the tunnel reveal about Templeton?	'...a crafty rat...the tunnel was an example of his skill and cunning.' The tunnel kept him safe from his enemies, he could move around the farm safely.
24	Why did Wilbur cry so badly when he saw Templeton by the trough?	'This was almost more than Wilbur could stand: on this dreary, rainy day to see his breakfast being eaten by somebody else.' He didn't necessarily want his breakfast but he didn't want to see anyone else eat it!
25	Why was Wilbur so surprised when he got spoken to at the end of the chapter?	It was night-time and all the other animals had settled down or were asleep, so to hear somebody talking when normally it should have been quiet everywhere was a surprise.
26	Why didn't they continue the conversation?	How could they? It was dark and Wilbur couldn't see who he was talking to. He couldn't make a decision about being friends with somebody he couldn't see.

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Five and Six - Part Three

Chapter Five - Charlotte		
1	Why couldn't Wilbur sleep?	'...when your stomach is empty and you mind is full, it's always hard to sleep.' His stomach probably kept reminding him it was hungry by grumbling and gurgling. When your mind is full, it is very hard to switch off, thoughts go round and round in your head and you have to think about them - think of Christmas, or just before a holiday somewhere exciting.
2	Why is a barn never completely silent?	'A barn is never perfectly quiet. Even at midnight there is usually something stirring. All the different farm animals were sleeping in there; one might turn over, or snuffle or snore; then there were the mice and rats running around with the odd squeak; then there was the sound of old wood creaking, like in an old house.
3	Why couldn't the goose sleep?	'...I've too many things under my behind. Have you ever tried to sleep while sitting on eight eggs?' She was uncomfortable!
4	Why did the goose only leave her eggs on warm days?	'...but I cheat a little. On warm afternoons, I just pull a little straw over the eggs and go out for a walk.'
5		
6	Why is Wilbur so pleased when morning arrived? How do you know?	Because his 'friend' had said, '...you'll see me in the morning.' We know he was excited and pleased that morning had come because he said, 'Oh, beautiful day, it is here at last!' that phrase 'at last' tells us that he'd been looking forward to it for a long time.
7	Why did Wilbur feel he had to speak out in the barn?	He'd looked everywhere, a bit like 'Hide and Seek' when you can't find anyone and have to call out. 'Wilbur looked everywhere. He searched his pen thoroughly. He examined the window ledge, stared up at the ceiling. But he saw nothing new...he decided he would have to speak up...he couldn't think of any other way to locate the ...new friend who was nowhere to be seen.'
8	Why did Wilbur blush when he was speaking?	All the other animals looked at him; he was embarrassed, after all he was breaking the silence of the barn and seemingly talking to no-one! 'All the other animals lifted their heads and stared at him.'
9	Why did Wilbur's friend not speak up at first?	She was still asleep! 'How can you be sure your friend is an early riser...the sheep was right - the friend was still asleep.'
10	Why does the author keep saying 'the friend' rather than telling us who it is?	He wants to build up our anticipation so that we want to know more and more who this new friend is. It's also to show just how the excitement was building up in Wilbur to see who his new friend was?

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11	Why does Wilbur scream at his friend?	He was so excited and yet really frustrated, he couldn't contain himself. He wanted to know everything at once; who she/he was; where he/she was. And his friend was talking gobbledegook to him, words he didn't understand, which made it even more frustrating to him. '...where are you?' screamed Wilbur. 'Please, please, tell me where you are.'
12	Explain clearly what the word 'Salutations' means and how you know this	'Salutations are greetings...it's just my fancy way of saying hello or good morning.'
13	Why has the author compared the spider's size to a gumdrop?	It's a children's book; children will relate to a comparison with a sweet, because they know exactly what size a gumdrop is from their own experience.
14	Why can't Charlotte see Wilbur very clearly?	'...I'm near-sighted...I've always been dreadfully near-sighted.'
15	What does 'near-sighted' mean? Can you work it out from the situation in the story and its context in the text?	Near-sighted - adjective: able to see near things more clearly than distant ones
16	How are Wilbur and Charlotte's eating habits different?	<i>They need to look back to a description of Wilbur eating to help them.</i> Wilbur just gets his head down and slurps and gobbles it all down as fast as he can, anything and everything that he is given. Charlotte plans it in careful stages, first setting a trap, then catching something in it, then tying them up even tighter, and only then biting, and even then she doesn't actually eat the insect, just sucks their blood!
17	Why did Wilbur groan when Charlotte explained she drank blood?	He didn't like the sound of it, he felt a bit squeamish/queasy when he thought of her doing it.
18	How do we know that Charlotte is irritated by Wilbur's view of her sucking flies' blood? Look carefully at the long speech she makes when she is defending her habits. What phrases show us she is irritated, even annoyed?	'You have your meals brought to you in a pail. Nobody feeds me. I have to get my own living...and it just so happens, my friend...and <i>furthermore</i> ...do you realise...' <i>Think about the way in which you would read this speech out aloud? Where would you put the emphasis?</i>

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19	Who do you think has an easier life, Wilbur or Charlotte? Explain your answer.	<i>The big speech that Charlotte makes has got all the information to answer this question, plus any references back to Wilbur's life before he met Charlotte. Basically Wilbur has the easier life as he is fed and watered and provided with shelter, whereas Charlotte has to do all that herself and stay away from other animals that might want to eat her or destroy her webs.</i>
20	What fate does the goose think awaits Wilbur?	'...around Christmastime...he has no idea that Mr Zuckerman and Lurvy are plotting to kill him.'
21	What does the end of Chapter 5 tell us about Charlotte and how does it encourage us to read on?	That although Wilbur thought she was a cruel person, she would be a true and good and faithful friend and die for it. 'Underneath her rather bold and cruel exterior, she had a kind heart, and she was to prove loyal and true to the very end.'
Chapter Six - Summer Days		
22	Other than the trees blossoming what else makes those early summer days on the farm happy?	'School ends, and the children have time to play and to fish for trout in the brook.'
23	What does the author mean when writing about Fern he says, 'The animals treated her as an equal'?	They thought of her as one of them, not something to be wary/frightened/scared by. They behaved around her just as if she was another sheep or goose or other farm animal.
24	How long did it take to make and barn the hay?	Two days. 'All morning...the next day...'
25	Which wild plants could be used to assuage/satisfy a thirst?	'Dandelion stems are full of milk, clover heads are loaded with nectar...'
26		
27	How do the geese feel about Templeton? Find the words and phrases that describe him.	
28	What was the important event that happened in early summer?	'It was on a day in early summer that the goose eggs hatched. This was an important event in the barn cellar.'
29	'unremitting' - explain what this word means, look carefully at its use in the text and its context in telling the story.	Unremitting - not slackening or abating; incessant; persistent. There are hints in the text. We know that the goose has been sitting on her eggs, practically non-stop; it says for four weeks. It also says 'unremitting effort'. So its an effort that's gone on for a long time without stopping.
30	What does the word 'untenable' mean? Have a look at the text around it and think about which part of the story is involved?	Untenable - not fit to be occupied, as an apartment, house, etc. It actually says in the book. Charlotte explains - 'It means nobody will be able to live here (on account of the smell.'

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Seven and Eight and Nine - Part Four

Chapter Seven - Bad News		
1	Why did Wilbur like Charlotte better and better?	He began to see that she was doing a sensible thing - nobody liked flies, they were annoying. 'Hardly anybody around the farm had a good word to say for a fly. Flies spent their time pestering others. The cows hated them. The horses detested them. The sheep loathed them. Mr and Mrs Zuckerman were always complaining about them, and putting up screens.'
2	What did Wilbur appreciate about Charlotte's method of killing flies?	'He was particularly glad that she always put her victim to sleep before eating it.'
3	Why did Wilbur grow so fast?	'He ate three big meals a day. He spent long hours lying on his side, half asleep...' He ate, but didn't exercise, and he is only a piglet remember and will grow fast, think about babies, how quickly they grow and children! (Think about growing out of your clothes and shoes)
4	'They're going to <i>what</i> ?' Why is ' <i>what</i> ' in italics? Why has the author written it so?	He couldn't believe what was going to happen to him, it was as if he had misheard it. The italics emphasise the word to show he was astonished by what he had heard.
5	Why did the old sheep tell Wilbur in that way?	Is there any good, sympathetic way of telling somebody they are going to be killed and cut up? However you put it, in the end you find out you are going to be killed!
6	How else did Wilbur react to the news of his impending death?	He became out of control. He was screaming and sobbing and running around and around, a bit like a child's tantrum. He so desperately didn't want to die. '...screamed Wilbur, racing up and down...burst into tears...throwing himself to the ground.' In fact, Charlotte says, 'You're carrying on in a childish way. Stop your crying! I can't stand hysterics.'
7	Looking at its use in the story, what does 'hysterics' mean?	Hysterics - a fit of uncontrollable laughter or weeping
Chapter Eight - A Talk at Home		
8	Why did Fern's mother look worried that breakfast-time?	Fern had just said that the goose had spoken! It made her worry that there was something wrong with her! '...the goose told Templeton he didn't want it any more...'

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Seven and Eight and Nine - Part Four

9	Why do you think the author has made the whole of Chapter Eight just this one conversation?	It's very important to the reader as it tells us that Fern had been listening in to all the conversations going on between the animals. We didn't know that before. She is very matter-of-fact about it. It also tells us that her parents did not let it show that they were worried by the conversation and didn't really take what she said as if it had actually happened. Children do make up imaginary friends and things that have happened, but only in their imagination.
Chapter Nine - Wilbur's Boast		
10	Why did Charlotte have to weave her web every day?	'...a web gets torn every day by the insects that kick around in it...'
11	Why did Charlotte need so many parts to her legs?	She had to spin a web and it took a lot of work, using her legs. 'You don't have to spin a web. That takes real leg work.'
12	Why did Wilbur boast that he could weave a web himself?	He wanted to be like his friend, he didn't want to be obviously less clever than her, to have less skills than her; that's why people boast. They don't want to look as if they have less, or are less intelligent than others.
13	Why can't Wilbur spin a web?	Charlotte says, 'Now make an attachment with your spinnerets, hurl yourself into space and let out a dragline as you go down.' But Wilbur doesn't have any spinnerets and cannot make lines with his body. Every time he jumps he will just fall down because his body cannot make anything to hang from.
14	Why did Wilbur not give up straightaway?	He wanted it to happen. He hadn't realised that his body didn't work like Charlotte's.
15	Why did it not work, even though Wilbur had thought to use the string?	'But as he had neglected to fasten the other end to anything, it didn't really do any good...' He had one end of the rope tied around his tail, but the other end was just lying loose, it wasn't tied round anything else to hold him.
16	Charlotte stayed in the barn with Wilbur for two reasons; what are they?	'...she was truly fond of Wilbur, whose smelly pen and stale food attracted flies that she needed...'
17	Why did Wilbur become tearful?	'...Wilbur landed with a thud, crushed and hurt. Tears came to his eyes.' It hurt when he fell on the ground, no wonder he became tearful; he was also upset, because he had boasted that he could and would show them he could spin a web, and now he had clearly and stupidly showed that he couldn't he was embarrassed and ashamed.

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Seven and Eight and Nine - Part Four

18	How did Charlotte try to cheer Wilbur up?	By pointing out that he didn't need to know how to weave a web, because he got given food three times a day and didn't have to go and find it himself.
19	Why was Charlotte so scathing at the web the men built?	Because it took so long! 'But do you know how long it took men to build it? Eight whole years...I would have starved to death waiting that long. I can make a web in a single evening.'
20	What silly thing did Charlotte say the men did with the bridge?	'...just keep trotting back and forth across the bridge thinking there's something better on the other side. If they'd hang head-down at the top of the thing and wait quietly, maybe something good would come along.'
21	Why is Charlotte a sedentary animal?	Because she sits and waits for her prey to come to her. She doesn't go out hunting, she doesn't have to, so she can just sit around. Sedentary - accustomed to sit or rest a great deal or to take little exercise.
22	What two meanings of the word 'smell' has the author used?	Smell - 1: emit an odour; smell bad. 2: to perceive the odour or scent of through the nose by means of the olfactory nerves; inhale the odour of.
23	Why did Charlotte say that Wilbur had a 'perfect right to smell'?	Because he lives in a pen with a heap of manure to keep him warm. How could he not smell? He didn't have anywhere to roll around and clean himself in water. He was stuck with how he smelt.
24	Why did Wilbur begin to tremble, it was a lovely summer evening?	'...as he lay there he remembered what the old sheep had told him. The thought of death came to him and he began to tremble with fear.'
25	Why do you think Fern loves staying in the barn so much? Think of three reasons.	1: Wilbur is her friend, and she wants to be with them. 2: she likes listening to them all talking to each other, it's interesting. 3: she likes the stillness of the place and the smells of summer around her. <i>Accept anything else so long as they can justify their answer and it is somehow linked to the story or what we know about Fern.</i>
26	Why is Wilbur so curious about Charlotte's plan?	Wouldn't you be? After all her plan is going to save him from being killed. Of course he is dying to know how she's going to stop the killing and save his life!
27	Why does Charlotte promise to save Wilbur even though she has not got a plan yet?	She doesn't want Wilbur to get all excited and upset again, and frightened. She's got plenty of thinking time ahead of her, something will come to her, she's sure of it.

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Seven and Eight and Nine - Part Four

28	What advice did Charlotte give Wilbur? Why	<p>'...get plenty of sleep and stop worrying...never hurry and never worry...chew...food thoroughly and eat every bit of it...gain weight and stay well...keep fit and don't lose your nerve.'</p> <p>She didn't want him to worry too much; he might stop eating or lose weight and then he'd be killed sooner! She wanted him to have to think about all the usual daily routines and then he wouldn't have time to think about being killed.</p>
29	Why did Wilbur not go straight to sleep, as Charlotte told him?	<p>Well, she'd mentioned eating everything hadn't she, and now she'd mentioned it he could imagine his trough and some of the little bits left in it and it made him hungry and want to eat them!</p>

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Ten and Eleven - Part Five

Chapter Ten - An Explosion		
1	Why did Charlotte spend so much time thinking?	'Having promised Wilbur that she would save his life, she was determined to keep her promise...she knew from experience that if she waited long enough, a fly would come to her web; and she felt sure that if she thought long enough about Wilbur's problem, an idea would come to her mind.'
2	Why was Charlotte so sure she could fool Mr Zuckerman?	'...if I can fool a bug...I can surely fool a man. People are not as smart as bugs.'
3	Explain what 'gullible' means.	'Easy to fool' - easily deceived or cheated
4	What does the incident with Avery's frog tell us about his character?	He doesn't think about how to care for animals, he sees them almost as toys. If he cared for the frog, he would not have let it jump in the washing-up bowl and would have been worried in case it had harmed the frog, but he he wasn't! He put it down because he wanted the pie more than the frog at that moment.
5	Why was the swing the best in the county?	It was the height and the amount of swing; it felt dangerous, even if it wasn't. You had to hold on tight because of the distance swung and height.
6	Why didn't parents need to worry so much as they did about the swing?	'Children almost always hang on to things tighter than their parents think they will.' Children ARE aware of danger and so were not stupid where the swing was concerned.
7	Why did Fern tell Avery to take the frog out of his pocket?	She didn't think the frog would like to swing to and fro. She thought it might get squashed as he swung on the swing. <i>Take any answers that are thoughtful and link to the book or their own experiences.</i>
8	Why did their tongues change colour?	'...they went down...and picked wild raspberries and ate them. Before they had been blue from the blueberry pies Mrs Zuckerman offered them.
9	Why has the author not spelled the word 'tremendous' correctly when Avery uses it?	He can't say it properly. He may not have ever seen it written in a book, but only heard it and so misheard it.
10	Why was Fern so annoyed with Avery for wanting the spider as well?	She liked animals just left to get on with their own lives. Avery already had one animal to torment. She didn't see why he should have another. 'Leave it alone...you've got a frog - isn't that enough?'

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Ten and Eleven - Part Five

11	Why did Fern scream? After all Avery got what was coming to him? He deserved to hurt himself for wanting Charlotte?	It was a mixture of things. He was her brother after all, and if something bad happened she didn't want him to get hurt. But it was also the terrible sudden horrible smell, like we might react to as we drive by a pig farm - smell makes us strongly react.
12	Why did the goose feel so proud?	'It was that rotten goose egg that saved Charlotte's life'...the goose was proud of her share in the adventure.' If she hadn't laid the eggs and sat on them, there would never have been an addled egg for Templeton to hide under the trough and for Avery to fall onto and be driven away because of it.
13	How do we know that Lurvy tipped the pail over Wilbur and not neatly into the trough?	'The slops ran creamily down around the pig's eyes and ears.' They couldn't have got there any other way. The trough would have had to have been deeper than Wilbur and the slops to practically cover him up for it to have happened any other way!
14	Why was Wilbur such a noisy eater?	'...anxious to get everything at once.' Everything was so tasty that Wilbur didn't want to leave anything out or miss anything. He had to eat as fast as he could and eat as much as he could in one mouthful, so he couldn't help making so much noise.
15	Why did Wilbur leave extra food for Templeton?	'...he remembered that the rat had been useful in saving Charlotte's life and that Charlotte was trying to save <i>his</i> life...' He wanted to say thank you to Templeton for being so useful in saving Charlotte.
16	Why has the author not told us what Charlotte was making at the end of the chapter?	It's a cliffhanger; the author wants us to <i>want</i> to read on, to make us eager to find out what it is. The author wants to create an air of suspense.
Chapter Eleven - The Miracle		
17	Why was Charlotte's web so beautiful that morning?	Because of the fog. The water vapour in the air condensed on the web - like when a mirror in the bathroom mists up. '...each thin strand was decorated with dozens of tiny beads of water.'
18	Why did Lurvy take so much notice of the web that morning?	'He noted how clearly it showed up and he noted how big and carefully built it was. And then he took another look and he saw something that made him set his pail down. There in the centre of the web, neatly woven in block letters, was a message.'
19	Why did Lurvy feel weak?	How could a spider have written words into a web? How could a spider know how to write in English and spell the words properly! <i>Take answers that the children can expand on.</i>

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Ten and Eleven - Part Five

20	Why do you think Lurvy did not tell Mr Zuckerman about the web but asked him to come down to the pen?	He didn't think that he would be believed; they'd laugh at him; assume he'd drunk too much the previous evening; think he was making a joke. He didn't want to say too much in case it disappeared before he got back to it. He just couldn't believe what he'd seen and didn't have the words to explain it he was so amazed!
21	Why did Mrs Zuckerman turn so pale and look so frightened when told to sit down by Mr Zuckerman?	She didn't know what to think. She knew he'd just been told to go down and see something in the sheds. She might have thought some of the animals were ill, or that something worse had happened and some were dead. She was worried because he talked 'in a weak voice'.
22	'...right spang in the middle of the web.' Explain what is meant by 'spang' and how you worked it out.	Spang - directly, exactly, precisely; squarely. The children should be able to come up with another word they would use instead of 'spang'; the clue is there in 'in the middle of the web'.
23	Why did Mrs Zuckerman disagree with her husband?	He thought the pig was extraordinary, but she thought it was the spider who was extraordinary for being to write that in her web! Zuckerman says, 'It's the pig that's unusual. It says so, right there in the middle of the web.' Mrs Zuckerman says, 'It seems to me we have no ordinary spider.'
24	Why was Wilbur so pleased?	'Wilbur was pleased to receive so much attention.' He liked having the company, being watched.
25	Why did Charlotte sit so still?	She didn't want to distract the people. She meant for them to wonder at the pig; she didn't want them to wonder at her, as that would have defeated what she set out to do. That's why she quickly removed the fly that might have spoiled the reading of the web.
26	Why did everybody know about Wilbur well before Sunday and the minister's sermon?	'Secrets are hard to keep.' The four people who were the only ones who knew at the very beginning were desperate to tell their secret to others and just couldn't resist passing the secret.
27	Why did Mr Zuckerman stop doing his farm work?	'Mr Zuckerman was so busy entertaining visitors that he neglected his farm work.'
28	Why did Lurvy shave and have a haircut?	He wanted to look good, when all the people came to see Wilbur - he was going to be on show as well as he had to feed Wilbur in front of them.
29	Why was Fern both glad and a little upset?	'Fern was happy, for she felt that Charlotte's trick was working and that Wilbur's life would be saved. But she found that the barn was not nearly so pleasant - too many people. She liked it better when she could be alone with her friends the animals.'

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Twelve & Thirteen & Fourteen - Part Six

Chapter Twelve - A Meeting		
1	Try to think what 'idiosyncrasy' means from the conversation.	Idiosyncrasy - a characteristic, habit, mannerism, or the like, that is peculiar to an individual. The gander's idiosyncrasy is that he says things three times; it's a habit he has. His family have it as well!
2	Why does Charlotte call a meeting?	'Now I called this meeting in order to get suggestions. I need new ideas for the web. People are already getting sick of reading the words...'
3	Can you think of other words that Charlotte could spin into her web?	<i>Take any suggestions so long as they can justify/explain their choice and they fit in with what Charlotte is trying to do.</i>
4	Why did Charlotte not like the phrase 'Pig Supreme'?	It sounded too much like a pudding, which was a bit too close to what would happen to Wilbur if she failed! 'No good...it sounds like a rich dessert.'
5	Why did Wilbur object to the word 'terrific'? What does it mean?	Terrific - Very good or fine; splendid; or, awesome; astounding; or, causing terror or great fear; terrifying; or, very bad or unpleasant; frightful. 'But Charlotte...I'm not terrific.' Poor Wilbur did not think he fitted any of the meanings of terrific. He hadn't done anything so amazing; he wasn't terrifying to look at; he wasn't so horrible that he looked frightful.
6	Charlotte persisted though, why?	'That doesn't make a particle of difference...people believe almost anything they see in print.' Charlotte realised that these people were really gullible and would believe anything they saw written on the web.
7	Why was Charlotte so annoyed with the gander's spelling of 'terrific'?	Because of his idiosyncrasy, he had repeated several parts of it and it had sounded a very long word. She couldn't possibly write that across her web easily!
8	How did the sheep help sort out what to write?	'Templeton...visits the dump...and has access to old magazines. He can tear out bits of advertisement and bring them up here...so that Charlotte can have something to copy.'
9	How does the sheep persuade Templeton to help Charlotte?	He pointed out that Templeton was reliant on Wilbur for the scraps he left in his trough. 'You'll worry all right on a zero morning next January when Wilbur is dead and nobody comes down here with a nice pail of warm slops to pour into the trough. Wilbur's left-over food is your chief source of supply...Wilbur's destiny and your destiny are closely linked...you'll grow so thin we can look right through your stomach and see objects on the other side.'

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Twelve & Thirteen & Fourteen - Part Six

10	How did Charlotte make Wilbur feel good, and probably blush even more?	She told him just what she thought of him. 'You're terrific as far as I'm concerned...you're my best friend, and I think you're sensational.'
Chapter Thirteen - Good Progress		
11	What did Charlotte find helped her?	'As she worked, her eight legs were a great help to her. So were her teeth.'
12	Why did Charlotte use a dry thread for writing?	'If I write the word TERRIFIC with sticky thread...every bug that comes along will get stuck in it and spoil the effect.'
13	Why did she not make each letter with just one thread?	She wanted to make them clearer. 'It will show up better if I make the whole thing with double lines.'
14	Why did Charlotte feel hungry when she had finished?	She had been working non-stop for a long time, using up lots of energy; it was no wonder she was hungry.
15	Why did Wilbur feel terrific now?	They were reading the web and thinking it referred to him so it made him feel good.
16	Why does Mrs Zuckerman call the newspaper?	Because her husband told her to! 'Edith, you better phone the reporter...'
17	Why did Mr Zuckerman want the newspaper to know?	This is the next step on this pig being extraordinary! He wanted everyone to know just how extraordinary this pig was. 'There isn't a pig in the whole state that is as terrific as our pig.'
18	Why was there to be no more manure put in the pig pen?	'There is to be no more cow manure thrown down into that pigpen. I have a terrific pig. I want that pig to have clean, bright straw every day...' He couldn't possibly have such an extraordinary pig being treated like a normal pig.
19	Why do you think Mr Zuckerman planned to take Wilbur to the fair?	He was proud of him. He wanted to show him off? It was his pig that was extraordinary and he wanted everyone to know that.
20	Look at the adjectives the author uses when describing the dump - broken, dead, discarded, tattered, rusty, leaky, forgotten, useless. Why has he chosen to use these?	They all emphasise that the contents of the dump are all no good, not in working order, not needed, not useful.
21	Why did Charlotte say "crunchy" was a bad word?	'We don't want Zuckerman to think Wilbur is crunchy. He might start thinking about crisp, crunchy bacon and tasty ham.' He'd start thinking of Wilbur as something to eat which had been his plan to begin with.

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Twelve & Thirteen & Fourteen - Part Six

22	Why did Wilbur push the straw to one side?	'The straw seemed scratchy - not as comfortable as the cow manure, which was always delightfully soft to lie in. so he pushed the straw to one side and stretched out in the manure.'
23	Why was Wilbur so tired?	'It had been a busy day...dozens of people had visited his yard...and he had to stand and pose, looking as terrific as he could.' He had been on his feet all afternoon, instead of having a little snooze.
Chapter Fourteen - Dr. Dorian		
24	Why was Fern so surprised when her mother said, 'it isn't good for you to be alone so much'?	'Alone? Alone? My best friends are in the barn cellar. It is a very sociable place. Not at all lonely.' She didn't understand how her mother could think she was lonely, when she had so many animals to talk to. She didn't realise that her mother didn't believe her about the animals talking.
25	Why was Mrs. Arable worried about Fern?	'It didn't seem natural for a little girl to be so interested in animals.' I suppose she wanted her to want to go out and play with other girls, and run around and play girly games with them.
26	Why was Dr Dorian so amazed at a spider's ability to spin webs?	'A young spider knows how to spin a web without any instructions from anybody. Don't you regard that as a miracle?' He was amazed that they could just make webs, just like that, without any teaching or learning.
27	What did Dr Dorian say that helped put Mrs Avery's mind at rest about Fern?	'I have never heard one say anything, but that proves nothing. It is quite possible that an animal has spoken civilly to me and that I didn't catch the remark because I wasn't paying attention. Children pay better attention than grown-ups. If fern says that the animals in Zuckerman's barn talk, I'm quite ready to believe her.' He didn't make it seem weird at all; he explained it as if it might happen; he didn't react in a way that might imply that Fern was mad or anything like that.
28	Why does Mrs. Arable think Avery's behaviour is normal and therefore needs no worrying about?	He's a boy, they are supposed to get up to all sorts of nonsense.

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen - Part Seven

Chapter Fifteen - The Crickets		
1	Why did the crickets sing that summer would soon be over?	'The crickets felt it was their duty to warn everybody that summertime cannot last for ever.'
2	Of all those who heard the singing of the crickets who knew that it meant they would soon have to do some hard work?	'Lurvy...heard the song and knew it was time to dig potatoes.' <i>You may need to explain what hard, back-breaking work digging potatoes is, with all the spade and fork work and bending over to shake the plant and pick out all the potatoes by hand from the soil.</i>
3	What did the sheep do when they heard the crickets?	'...they felt so uneasy they broke a hole in the pasture fence and wandered up into the field across the road.'
4	Explain, by looking at its context in the sentence and your own knowledge what 'pasture' means.	Pasture - an area covered with grass or other plants used or suitable for the grazing of livestock; grassland; a field covered with grass or herbage and suitable for grazing by livestock <i>They may need help with this. They need to think about where the sheep were, what they eat, etc.</i>
5	Why would any man be proud now of owning Wilbur?	'Good food and regular hours were showing results...' He was growing rapidly and not just in size but in weight. He was getting lots of sleep and turning into a very well-looking pig (which would produce a lot of ham and bacon!).
6	Why was Wilbur trying so hard to live up to the words in the web?	'Ever since the spider had befriended him, he had done his best to live up to his reputation.' He didn't want to let his new friend down; after all she was trying her best to save him from the slaughterman.
7	What made the crowd love watching Wilbur so much?	'...when his audience grew bored, he would spring into the air and do a back flip with a half twist.' He tried hard to entertain them, and noticed when they were getting bored.
8	What did his friends worry might happen?	'Some of Wilbur's friends in the barn worried for fear that all this attention would go to his head and make him stuck up.'
9	Why did Wilbur still worry about what might happen to him?	'...he could hardly believe that a mere spider would be able to save his life.' How could such a small thing as a spider stop him from being killed for bacon and ham? He couldn't believe that she could truly do it.
10	What did Wilbur hope that he could do to save his own life?	'If he could distinguish himself at the Fair, and maybe win some prize money, he was sure Zuckerman would let him live.' He hoped by being an outstanding pig at the fair that he would save his own life that was. Surely they wouldn't kill such a wonderful pig then just to make bacon?
11	Why was the Fair date such an inconvenient time for Charlotte?	She had eggs to lay. 'Egg laying. It's time I made an egg sac and filled it with eggs.'

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen - Part Seven

12	Explain what 'versatile' means.	Versatile - capable of or adapted for turning easily from one to another of various tasks, fields of endeavour, etc.: a versatile writer: having or capable of many uses: a versatile tool. "Versatile" means I can turn with ease from one thing to another.'
Chapter Sixteen - Off to the Fair		
13	What was different about the dreams both Avery and Fern had about the fair and why?	'Avery lay dreaming that the Ferris wheel had stopped and that he was in the top car. Fern lay dreaming that she was getting sick in the swings.' Avery's was typical of his personality; he liked danger, he wanted to be the one on top, in control. Fern is more timid; she saw it as an opportunity not to have fun, but to have a miserable time also.
14	Why has the author made Zuckerman's dream so exact with Wilbur's measurements being so very specific?	The author wants us to realise just how hopeful Zuckerman is about winning prizes and about just how special his pig is going to turn out to be. The exact measurements are to show how realistic a dream Zuckerman was having. <i>Accept a variety of reasons, similar or other, so long as they can justify their answers with reference to the book.</i>
15	Why was everybody up so early on the day of the fair?	They all wanted to look their best; the fair was a very special occasion for them all. On Zuckerman's farm they had to get Wilbur ready. <i>There's lots of references to all this, make sure the children back up statements by finding passages in the book.</i>
16	Why did Mrs Zuckerman want to give Wilbur a bath?	He was filthy behind the ears because of the slop being poured over his head. 'He's filthy behind the ears...every time Lurvy slops him, the food runs down around the ears. Then it dries and forms a crust. He also has a smudge on one side where he lays in the manure.'
17	Why did Zuckerman sit down 'weakly'?	He'd just been told what was going to happen by his wife and hadn't been allowed to argue against it. As far as he was concerned Wilbur was clean, but his wife disagreed and intended to do something about it whether he wanted it or not.
18	Why did Templeton poke 'his head out <u>cautiously</u> '?	There were people there. He did not want to be seen by them. They would have wanted to chase him or dig him up or try to kill him. He wanted to remain unseen so that they didn't know he was there. If he wasn't seen they would not remember that they had rats on the farm.
19	Once Wilbur was washed and dried he was as smooth as?	'...smooth as silk.'

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Fifteen and Sixteen - Part Seven

20	Why did the goslings make so much noise? Where does it say this in the text?	They all wanted to go to the fair too and were asking their mother to let them go. 'They made quite a racket.'
21	Why did Templeton need to go to the Fair?	'...I might need somebody to run errands and do general work.' Charlotte decided that Templeton needed to come, to help her.
22	How does the sheep persuade Templeton to go? Why does he go on and on about it?	He appeals to his stomach! He points out all the opportunities available for picking up delicious scraps of food. He describes it in such detail because he wants greedy Templeton to realise what a wonderful place it will be and because it is important for Templeton to go. If Charlotte wants him then he must go. They must save Wilbur and Templeton is needed for that.
23	Why did the rat and spider go and hide in the crate so soon?	To make sure they were not seen. Being so excited about the fair and taking Wilbur, the Zuckermans would not tolerate a filthy rat or spider in the crate with their prize winning pig! If they'd entered the crate at the same time as Wilbur they might have been noticed and killed!
24	Why did Templeton not want Wilbur to fight being put into the crate too much?	'Struggle if you must...but kindly remember that I'm hiding down here in this crate and I don't want to be stepped on, or kicked in the face...' Templeton didn't want to be hurt by accident just because Wilbur was playacting not wanting to go in the crate.
25	What caused Wilbur to sink to his knees?	What Mr Arable says reminds him what his fate might be if Charlotte doesn't pull her idea off. 'You'll get some extra good ham and bacon, Homer, when it comes time to kill <i>that</i> pig.'
26	Why is the word 'immediately' in italics?	It shows that Mrs Arable emphasises that word strongly when she shouts at Avery. She really means Avery to stop right now. She means Avery to know that there must be a stop to his messing around.
27	Why was Fern so upset?	Her little piglet, Wilbur, whom she had loved and watched for so long had collapsed. She was worried for him and so was upset. She was scared in case something really bad had happened to him.
28	How did Zuckerman know that Wilbur was fine after his faint?	By him struggling when they tried to get him in the crate. 'Wilbur kicked and thrashed and grunted. 'Nothing wrong with this pig...''
29	Two or three times it is mentioned that the humans did not know about the spider and the rat in the crate. Why do you think the author has done that?	We know that they are vital for achieving their aim of saving Wilbur from death. The people don't know about the spider and the rat, but we do, As reader we know the secret, and the author wants us to feel good about knowing this secret when nobody else does.

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen - Part Eight

Chapter Seventeen - Uncle		
1	Why might the organisers want the car moved?	<p>It might be in the way of the door, and they can't get in to fetch the fireworks ready for the display.</p> <p>It might be a dangerous hazard, having a petrol tank full of petrol. If by some mischance the tank blew the shed would also blow; if the shed blew, the car would blow. Whichever happened it would make the accident much more dangerous to all the people at the fair.</p> <p><i>Take ideas so long as they children are using their own experience to justify them. Question them if necessary so that they realise their idea is a very good one or needs more thought or a complete change of idea.</i></p>
2	How do we know the children are excited when they first get there?	<p>All the questions they keep asking and the money they want. They want to go everywhere and have everything. They are desperate for the money. It's the first thing they ask.</p>
3	How does the author convey the excitement of the children as they set off around the fair?	<p>He uses the word 'wonderful' four times to show just how 'wonderful' it was to the children.</p>
4	Why did Mrs Arable sigh as she watched them go?	<p>She wasn't sure she had done the right thing, letting them go off on their own in this giant fairground. Anything could happen; they could get lost, hurt...</p> <p>'Do you really think it's all right?' It's obvious that she has been persuaded to let them go but isn't sure she should have agreed.</p>
5	Why were there crowds to watch Wilbur being uncrated?	<p>They had seen the sign 'Zuckerman's Famous Pig' and wanted to see it. They may have known Zuckerman by sight and so knew what he had there and wanted to see it. Whichever, they wanted to get an early/first look at this pig.</p>
6	Why did nobody notice Charlotte leaving the crate?	<p>They were all looking at Wilbur! She was so small no-one watching Wilbur would have noticed her movement.</p>
7	Why did Mr Zuckerman or Lurvy not stay with Wilbur?	<p>'...walked away towards the cattle barn to look at purebred cows and see the sights. Mr Zuckerman particularly wanted to look at tractors...Lurvy wandered off by himself, hoping to meet some friends and have some fun on the midway.'</p>
8	What do you think the midway might be? It has been mentioned twice now. Look at its use and context in the story.	<p>We know it's 'wonderful' from the first mention, and we know it will be 'fun' there from why Lurvy wants to go there. We can assume it's where all the excitement and stall and stalls are as the children went 'towards the wonderful music and the wonderful adventure and the wonderful excitement, into the wonderful midway.'</p> <p>Midway - the place or way, as at a fair or carnival, on or along which sideshows and similar amusements are located.</p>

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen - Part Eight

9	Why did Wilbur get wet eyes?	Charlotte told him about a much bigger pig next door. It made him sad and worried; he had to win to win his own life. 'There's a pig in the next pen and he's enormous. I'm afraid he's much bigger than you are.'
10	Why did Charlotte not take to Uncle?	'He has a most unattractive personality. He is too familiar, too noisy, and he cracks weak jokes. Also, he's not anywhere near as clean as you, nor as pleasant.'
11	How does the author make us concerned about Charlotte, but also about the task she is in charge of?	He emphasises how tired Charlotte is, by letting Charlotte reveal it herself - 'The least thing tires me these days. I don't seem to have the energy I once had...' This also makes us worried about whether she will be able to carry out her task and save Wilbur. We feel sure she will, because books usually end happily, but we can't be sure. It makes us want to read on urgently to find out what does happen.
12	Why does Wilbur say 'Oh dear'?	He is doubly worried, not only at the size of the pig next door (he knows this from comments he can hear), but also because Charlotte is not feeling well. If he doesn't win a prize or prove himself to be such a wonderful pig, he will soon be ham and bacon.
13	How do we know that Mrs Zuckerman was hoping to get a deep freeze (freezer)?	The author mentions - 'Mrs Zuckerman wanted to see a deep freeze.' Then, he shows us she is still interested because he writes - '...Mrs Zuckerman, fanning herself with an advertisement of a deep freeze.' This tells us that it wasn't just interest. She's kept the flyer to read about it and talk to Zuckerman about it.
14	How does the author make us aware of how everybody is feeling?	The author emphasises just how hot it is: 'The day grew fiercely hot...the children were hot...isn't it hot'...'it's terribly hot'...the sun beat down on everything.'
15	Did Avery really think a blanket was the perfect thing to have just then?	How could a blanket be the very thing he wanted? He was hot and annoyed when he saw the blanket and was being sarcastic. Why did Lurvy want a blanket on such a hot day! It was too hot to lie under a blanket!
Chapter Eighteen - The Cool of the Evening		
16	Why did Templeton wait until evening before coming out of his hiding place?	He didn't want to be seen by all those people who were attending the fair. He would very probably have been seen if he'd come out during the day. Now it was safer, the light would be dimming soon and there were plenty of shadows for him to run between to avoid being seen.
17	Why did Templeton not talk to anyone before leaving?	He was only thinking about himself. 'Templeton's keen nose detected many fine smells in the air. The rat was hungry and thirsty.' His stomach was calling and he had to go and find what all these wonderful smells were. He wanted to go off without having a task to do.

Charlotte's Web - Chapters Seventeen and Eighteen - Part Eight

18	Why did the evening come 'as a relief to all'?	The shadows meant that walking around became cooler as the sun wasn't shining directly on the people. The temperature drops a little in the evening also as the sun dips in the sky.
19	Why did the children have renewed energy?	The children felt refreshed after their nap.'
20	Why did Mrs Arable say, 'My my'?	'...saw her little daughter sitting with Henry Fussy...and saw how happy Fern looked.' She had been worrying about Fern being a loner and talking to animals and now here she was doing what Dr had predicted would happen - being interested in a boy!
21	How did Templeton fulfil his objectives for the evening and Charlotte's request?	He ate the food in the newspaper and then used the newspaper to find a word for Charlotte! '...he found a folded newspaper. Inside it were left-overs from somebody's lunch...the rat crawled in and ate everything. Then he tore a word out of the paper...'
22	What does Charlotte say that makes the reader surprised, sad and worried?	'It is the last word I shall ever write.' It makes the read stop and think 'What!' It makes the reader worried for Wilbur and Charlotte, and makes the reader ask and want the answer to the question 'Why?'
23	Why does Templeton not react to what Charlotte says?	He only ever thinks about himself. He wasn't listening to her because he wanted to be off having fun and eating yet more food!
24	Why did Wilbur not feel alone when the Arables and Zuckermans left?	'He would have felt lonely and homesick, had Charlotte not been with him. He never felt lonely when she was near.'
25	Why was Wilbur so curious about what Charlotte was up to?	'Why aren't you on your web? You almost <i>never</i> leave your web.' He could hear that she wasn't on her web by where her voice was coming from. To be off her web must have been something very important that Charlotte had to do.

Charlotte's Web - Part Nine - Chapters Nineteen and Twenty

Chapter Nineteen - The Egg Sac		
1	How did the animals react to the coming of the day?	'...the sparrows stirred in the trees, when the cows rattled their chains and the rooster crowed...'
2	What was the weird object next to Charlotte, what did it look like?	'It is my egg sac. <i>My magnum opus.</i> ' 'It was peach-coloured and looked as though it were made of cotton candy.' Cotton candy is candyfloss.
3	Why did Wilbur think it was a toy?	Well, he's only a little pig really and wants to play. So that would be his first thought when he saw something new (either that or he might have thought it was some kind of food, being a pig and very interested in food!).
4	Why has the author written hundred as ' <i>hundred</i> ' and fourteen as ' <i>fourteen</i> ' when Wilbur talked about the eggs?	He can't believe how many eggs Charlotte laid. He might have thought one or two like the lambs the sheep have, or four or five, like the ducks and geese. It's written in italics to show his surprise, and that he's emphasising the words when he's saying it to show his astonishment. <i>Try to get something along those lines from the children.</i>
5	Why does the egg sac need to be waterproof?	If they got cold and wet they might die, just like little babies have to be kept warm so Charlotte had to keep her eggs dry and warm to ensure as many of them as possible survive to become little spiders! <i>Question them if necessary to try and get them to think about this.</i>
6	What does Charlotte mean by, 'I just don't have much pep any more'?	pep <i>noun</i> - an informal word for energy She hasn't got any energy.
7	Why did Wilbur ask her to explain the word 'languish'?	'...he was so worried he felt he had to ask.' He was confused at Charlotte not sounding happy and when she said that she would not see them in the spring.
8	Why has the author used the word 'drag' to describe Templeton's movement across the pen?	To make us remember what he went off to do in the last chapter - to enjoy everything the fair had to offer, especially the food! To make us realise that he has been eating all night and is so stuffed he can hardly move! His speech which follows reinforces our ideas.
9	Why was Charlotte so disgusted with him?	She couldn't believe that he had eaten and eaten and not stopped when he had had enough. She is the sort of person who only eats when she's hungry so could not understand why he was prepared to eat so much.
10	Why did Wilbur say that Zuckerman would change his mind and eat Wilbur now?	The other pig had won the prize. This meant Wilbur wasn't going to win. Without a win Zuckerman didn't have a special pig and so just had a normal pig that would be turned into ham and bacon just like any other pig.

Charlotte's Web - Part Nine - Chapters Nineteen and Twenty

11	Why did Mrs Zuckerman cry?	She was disappointed that Wilbur had not won; all their hopes of winning the prize and becoming famous along with Wilbur were lost. She was disappointed.
12	Why was Mr Zuckerman not upset like the others?	He may well have been but was determined not to show it. He was also more of an optimist than the others. He hope something good would still happen, even if Wilbur had not got the top prize, and he turned out to be right!
13	Why were the Arables and Zuckermans unable to move immediately after they heard the good news?	They couldn't believe what they had just heard. They were so surprised and excited, at the same time, they couldn't think what to do! They were stunned!
14	Why was Charlotte so content?	'...she was sure that she had saved Wilbur's life, and she felt peaceful and contented.'
15	Why did Mr Zuckerman snap at his wife?	She was fussing about her hair and he had more important things to think about, like getting Wilbur crated and into the show ring as soon as possible so that they could be given the special prize. Hair? Who was bothered about hair at a time like this?
Chapter Twenty - The Hour of Triumph		
16	Other than the word 'pompous' how do we know that the man was speaking in a pompous manner? Look at what he says.	Pompous - characterized by an ostentatious display of dignity or importance: too grand in manner or speech. Everything he said was using five words where two would do! He was more interested in listening to his own voice than giving precise clear directions to the onlookers.
17	Why did Wilbur tremble when he heard the loudspeaker?	He was so excited because of course he knew what was going on, but he was also a little nervous going into the big ring and getting a special prize.
18	Why did the crowds press close to the van?	They wanted to see this extraordinary pig first before anyone else. They were as excited as the Arable, Zuckermans and Wilbur and the others.
19	Why did Mrs Zuckerman tell Avery to tuck in his shirt when he was in the middle of helping get Wilbur off the truck?	She wanted Avery to kook his best, after all he was being watched by hundreds of people. She didn't want him to look scruffy or she wouldn't look like she was a good mother.
20	Why was Fern so desperate for some money?	'Henry invited me to go on the Ferris wheel again, only I don't think he has any money left.' Fern so liked going round slowly on the Ferris wheel with Henry before, just the two of them (!), that she wanted to do it again. It was more important for her to be with Henry than with Wilbur at that moment!

Charlotte's Web - Part Nine - Chapters Nineteen and Twenty

21	Why was there no point in what the loudspeaker said then?	Everybody could see exactly what was going on; they didn't need someone to state the obvious for them. They were all excited and wanting to meet this extraordinary pig.
22	What did Charlotte do to celebrate? Why?	Nothing, she just sat there, looking after her egg sac. Remember she was tired and worn out and not feeling wonderful. We've never seen her jumping for joy anyway, she's just not that kind of person.
23	Why was Avery fussing so much around Wilbur?	Now Wilbur was famous and about to get an award, Avery wanted to be part of it all. He wanted some of that fame too!
24	Were there supernatural forces at work?	Supernatural - of, pertaining to, or being above or beyond what is natural; unexplainable by natural law or phenomena; abnormal. No, of course not, it was down to a very clever spider!
25	What was the prize for?	Not for being a wonderful pig really, just because of all the people who had come to the fair to see him. They were saying thank you because more people had come than would have done normally. '...our appreciation of the part played by this pig - this radiant, this terrific, this humble pig - in attracting so many visitors to our great County Fair.'
26	Why did Wilbur faint?	He was overwhelmed by all the fuss and attention being paid to him; that everybody was watching him and cheering him. It was just too much.
27	Why did Mr Zuckerman sigh with relief?	He was relieved that Wilbur was up on his feet so quickly. He must have been worried that it would take time to get him back up on his feet, because of the faint; then he might not have got the prize!
28	Why did Mrs Zuckerman tell Avery to stop?	She was embarrassed at her son playing the fool. She didn't want everyone to think she had a rude, ill-mannered child.

Charlotte's Web - Part Ten - Chapters Twenty-One and Twenty-Two

Chapter Twenty-One - Last Day		
1	Why were they alone?	'The families had gone to look for Fern. Templeton was asleep.'
2	What did Charlotte point out to Wilbur?	That day would follow day, and season would follow season and Wilbur would be there to enjoy it all. She had saved him, and all this was ahead of him.
3	Why did Charlotte stop all her descriptions?	It was all a bit much for her. As she was telling Wilbur all that he would be able to still enjoy she began to realise all that she would be missing out on when she was dead.
4	Why were there tears in Wilbur's eyes?	She had been so kind to him and such a good friend. She had saved his life and he would always be grateful and yet, when he had first met her, he had thought her 'cruel and bloodthirsty'. He felt guilty that he had ever thought that of her.
5	What was Wilbur looking forward to?	'Won't it be wonderful to be back home in the barn cellar again with the sheep and the geese?'
6	Why did Charlotte reveal her news in such a low voice?	It wasn't something to shout out - to tell someone else that you were going to die! It wasn't something she was happy about, but she knew it was about to happen.
7	How did Wilbur react to the news?	He became hysterical. He was being selfish; he was going to lose his best friend and what would life be like for him without her! All he could think about was how unhappy he was.
8	What good idea suddenly came to Wilbur?	'If Charlotte herself was unable to go home to the barn, at least he must take her children along.' He would take her eggs back with him to the barn/farm.
9	Why did he have to move quickly?	He could see the humans coming closer. He had to get everything sorted before they arrived, because otherwise they wouldn't be able to do it.
10	Why was Templeton so bad-tempered?	Wouldn't you be if you were woken from your sleep by being thrown up in the air? He had been sleeping off his food binge, and wanted to wake up in his own time, not when someone wanted him to!
11	How has the author made clear the urgency of the moment in Wilbur's speech to Templeton?	Short sentences emphasise the urgency of the situation. He hasn't got time to explain fully and in great detail. He needs to get it across as succinctly as possible.
12	What was Templeton doing, not jumping up straight away to help Wilbur?	He wanted something from Wilbur. He wanted Wilbur to get so wound up and desperate that he would bargain and offer to get or give something to him in exchange for his help.

Charlotte's Web - Part Ten - Chapters Twenty-One and Twenty-Two

13	Why did the rat behave in that way?	He wasn't a well-mannered rat. He was selfish, and was led by his stomach and by what he wanted. He's only ever done things for Charlotte or Wilbur because there was something in it for him. He only brought a word from the dump because he was going there to find food. He only came to the fair to help because he was persuaded by the thought of all the food that would be lying around.
14	What made climbing the wall difficult for Templeton?	'His stomach was still swollen from last night's gorge.'
15	How did Wilbur carry the egg sac back to the farm?	'...took the little bundle in his mouth and held it there on top of his tongue.'
16	Why was it a safe place for it to be?	The sac was waterproof so the eggs would not get wet. In his mouth he was unlikely to trample or lie on it, and the adults couldn't trample on it either, or see it and brush it away.
17	What is so sad about the way the author ends the chapter?	He contrasts the hustle and bustle of all the moving out with the stillness and loneliness of Charlotte, as she died among the empty buildings and rubbish. The last sentence reinforces this.
Chapter Twenty-Two - A Warm Wind		
18	Why did the medal get hung above the pen?	'...where visitors could examine it. Wilbur himself could look at it whenever he wanted to.' So could Mr Zuckerman and Lurvy of course!
19	Why did Wilbur grow to 'a great size'?	'He no longer worried about being killed..' Not being worried meant he could concentrate on one of the most important tasks he had every day - eating!
20	What words did Wilbur think of to describe his friend?	Affectionate, loyal, skilful.
21	What is meant by - 'he went out and ploughed the drifts in his yard'?	He went and made tunnels in it and made holes and ran at it and in it and generally had lots of fun!
22	What does it mean, 'they coasted down the lane'?	Coast - to slide on a sled down a snowy or icy hillside or incline; to advance or proceed with little or no effort. The lane must have sloped down to the pond; so it was a good hill to sledge on.
23	Why did Fern think about the Ferris wheel all the time, even though it was weeks ago?	She had feelings for Henry. She had enjoyed going on the wheel with him, and having such a good friend.
24	Why did Templeton not worry about living longer?	He enjoyed his life as it was! '...I get untold satisfaction from the pleasures of the feast.'

Charlotte's Web - Part Ten - Chapters Twenty-One and Twenty-Two

25	What were the first signs of springtime?	'From the ponds, in shrill chorus, came the voices of hundreds of little frogs.' 'As she walked away, Wilbur saw a new lamb following her.'
26	Why did Wilbur tremble?	The little spider that emerged, looked exactly like Charlotte! 'It looked just like Charlotte.'
27	Why was Wilbur's conversation with the spiders one-sided?	He could hear himself talking to them but their voices were so small he couldn't hear their answers! '...its voice was so small Wilbur couldn't hear it.'
28	Why was Wilbur so frantic?	He was watching all the little spiders leaving him. He didn't want to be left alone again. 'You can't all go. I would be left alone, with no friends.'