

# Candide Reading Guide

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 1

1. How does Voltaire use names to quickly reveal aspects of his characters?
2. From what narrative point of view is the story told?
3. What topics are introduced into this satire in this first chapter?
4. What logical fallacy does Pangloss make in his argument for Optimism?
5. Why might Voltaire have chosen to use a euphemism to describe Pangloss having sexual intercourse with the chamber-maid?

## Chapter 2

1. How does Voltaire's portrayal of the soldiers reveal the text's anti-war sentiment?
2. How does Voltaire continue to satirize Optimism in this chapter?
3. Why was Candide whipped? Why was he pardoned?

## Chapters 3-4

1. Chapter 3 is often thought to be a critique of war. How does Voltaire display his anti-war sentiment?
2. How does Voltaire's description of the war attack the philosophy of Optimism?
3. Why does the orator condemn Candide? What might this suggest about Voltaire's view of Christianity?
4. How does Pangloss's list of disease transmitters ridicule the concept of social class divisions?

5. How does James argue against Optimism?

6. How do these chapters introduce the problem of evil?

## **Chapter 5**

1. What does the reaction of each man (Candide, Pangloss, and the sailor) to the earthquake say about his philosophy?

2. What types of evil are demonstrated in this chapter, and how do they bolster Voltaire's argument against Optimism?

3. What is the purpose of the introduction of the Familiar of the Inquisition?

4. How has the setting of the story affected the plot?

## **Chapter 6**

1. How does the description of the people's reaction to the earthquake illustrate Voltaire's antireligious sentiment?

2. How does this chapter serve as an introduction to a central conflict of the story?

3. What is ironic about Candide's three companions' deaths?

## **Chapter 7**

1. How does the author juxtapose Candide's experience with the old woman with his previous experience (in Chapter 3) with the religious orator in Holland? What might this juxtaposition reveal about Voltaire's attitude toward religious officials?

2. How does the author foreshadow Cunegonde's return to Candide?

3. How do the settings in this chapter reflect the characters found in those settings?

4. How is Candide portrayed in this chapter?

### **Chapter 8**

1. How is the notion of divine providence criticized in this chapter?

2. What is Cunegonde's tone in telling her story? What does this suggest about how women were treated in Voltaire's time?

3. What does this chapter suggest about the nature of religion?

### **Chapter 9**

1. What purpose do Don Issachar and the Grand Inquisitor serve in the novel? Explain your answer.

2. How does Candide reason through his murder of the Inquisitor? Does Voltaire seem to share this view?

### **Chapter 10**

1. How does Cunegonde's statement, "Where find Inquisitors or Jews who will give me more," convey that men are also objectified in *Candide*?

2. What is ironic about the reverend Grey Friar stealing Cunegonde's jewels?

3. What does the journey across the sea represent to the travelers, and what are their attitudes toward it?

### **Chapter 11**

1. What religions does Voltaire satirize in this chapter? How?

2. How does Voltaire portray war in this chapter?

3. How does this chapter reinforce the idea that society views women primarily as sexual objects?

## **Chapter 12**

1. Why was the eunuch in Morocco? Explain the irony created by this situation.

2. Explain the irony (or ironies) created by the “very pious and humane” Iman’s sermon to the hungry Janissaries.

## **Chapter 13**

1. How does the description of the Governor reveal the narrator’s attitude toward him?

2. Why does the old woman think Cunegonde should marry the Governor?

## **Chapter 14**

1. How does the irony in Cacambo’s description of the Paraguayan government affect his characterization?

2. What inequality is illustrated in this chapter, and how does the author illustrate this inequality?

## **Chapter 15**

1. What effect or effects, if any, does the expository material in Chapter 15 have on the text?

2. Why does Candide think he should be allowed to marry Cunegonde? What does this contribute to Candide’s development as a character?

## **Chapter 16**

1. What might the author intend by his portrayal of Candide's encounter with the monkeys?
2. What foreshadows Candide's capture?
3. What logical fallacy does Candide make in the end of the chapter?

## **Chapter 17**

1. What is the primary purpose of the chapter's final paragraph?
2. What does the final paragraph of this chapter contribute to Candide's development as a character?

## **Chapter 18**

1. How does the narrator's description of the house satirize the concept of wealth?
2. In the paragraph beginning "At once he took Cacambo ...," how does Voltaire's diction reveal the paragraph's tone?
3. What is religion like in El Dorado? How does this compare to Candide's philosophy and experience?
4. How does Voltaire criticize European royalty in this chapter?
5. What is the narrator's attitude toward Candide and Cacambo's decision to leave El Dorado? How do you know?

## **Chapter 19**

1. What finally causes Candide to renounce Optimism?
2. What implicit argument does the text make concerning European society and the slave trade? Explain your answer.

3. What is Candide most upset by in this chapter? How does this expose his personal moral failings and reveal the target of Voltaire's satirical aim in this chapter?

## **Chapter 20**

1. Explain the differences between Martin's philosophical outlook and Optimism.
2. Compare and contrast Candide and Martin.
3. What might the fifteen-day discussion between Candide and Martin suggest about the nature of philosophy?

## **Chapter 21**

1. What is the primary conflict of this chapter?
2. How does the long list Candide employs near the end of the chapter criticize free will?
3. Is Martin a foil to Pangloss? Explain your answer.

## **Chapter 22**

1. What is the target of Voltaire's satire in the first paragraph? How does Voltaire mock this target?
2. How does Voltaire create humor during the scene at La Comédie in which Candide discusses actors and actresses with a critic?
3. How does Martin use the treatment of Parisian actresses to argue for his philosophy?
4. How are art critics satirized in this chapter?

5. How does Candide lose most of his wealth in this chapter?

6. What does Candide mean when he says, “I have seen no bears in my country, but *men* I have beheld nowhere except in El Dorado?”

### **Chapter 23**

1. In the paragraph beginning “It is another kind of folly,” how does Martin’s use of sarcasm affect the text?

2. Why have the English executed one of their own Admirals? How does Candide’s response expose the justifications for the Admiral’s execution as ridiculous?

### **Chapter 24**

1. What attitude toward authority figures and power is reflected in Paquette’s story? What does her story reveal about the criteria by which women are judged in a society dominated by male authorities?

2. Explain the effect or effects the juxtaposition of Paquette’s list of woes (beginning with “Ah! sir ...”) and Martin’s response to Candide (“You see that already I have won half the wager”) has on the text.

### **Chapter 25**

1. What does the name “Pocourante” mean? Explain why Voltaire chose this name for Signor Pocourante.

2. What is Pocourante’s attitude toward art and literature? What does Voltaire satirize through this?

3. How does Martin react to Pocourante? How does his reaction compare with Candide’s?

### **Chapter 26**

1. Are the kings sympathetic or unsympathetic characters? Support your answer with evidence from the text.

## **Chapter 27**

1. What evidence from this chapter reveals that Candide has learned nothing from his experiences in Surinam (Chapter 19)?

## **Chapter 28**

1. Explain the subtext of the stories told by the Baron and Pangloss in this chapter.

2. What does the final paragraph of the chapter indicate about Pangloss's character development?

## **Chapter 29**

1. Is the Baron a static or a dynamic character? Explain your answer.

## **Chapter 30**

1. How does the juxtaposition between the old woman's question ("I want to know which is worse ... to go through all the miseries we have undergone, or to stay here and have nothing to do?") and Candide's response ("It is a great question") affect the text?

2. Explain what the Dervish means by the following statement:

"What signifies it," said the Dervish, "whether there be evil or good? When his highness sends a ship to Egypt, does he trouble his head whether the mice on board are at their ease or not?"

3. How does the conversation between Pangloss, Candide, and the Dervish reveal the irony in the following statement?

"In the neighborhood there lived a very famous Dervish who was esteemed the best philosopher in all Turkey ...."

How do you know that the author also intends for the statement to be taken as fact?

4. What does Candide mean when he says, "All that is very well ... but let us cultivate our garden"?