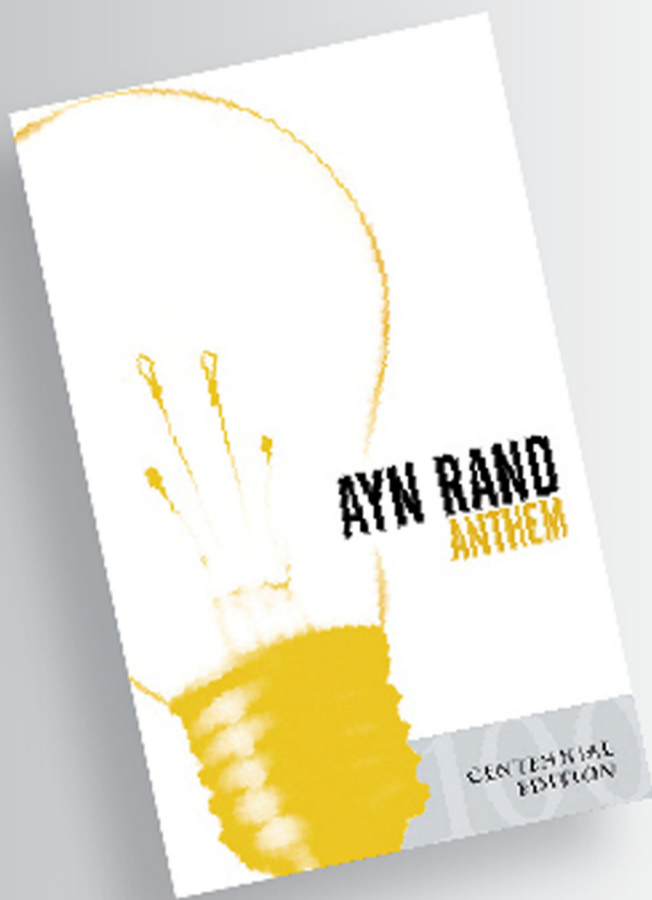
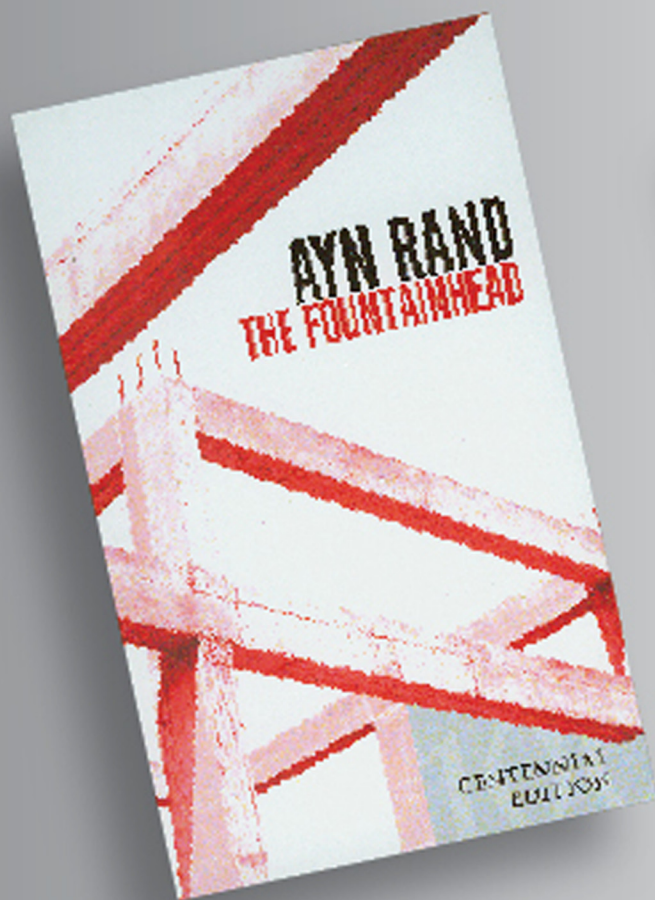


# Lesson Plans and Study Guide

*The Fountainhead*  
by Ayn Rand

*Anthem*  
by Ayn Rand



# ***The Fountainhead* Lesson Plans and Study Guide**

By Andrew Bernstein

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## ***Understanding the Plot: Questions for Study***

### **Part One**

1. Explain in detail the reasons for Howard Roark's expulsion from the Stanton Institute of Technology. The Dean states that Roark has "a determined little group of defenders" among the faculty, while other professors "felt it their duty" to vote for his expulsion. Why do the faculty members on each side evaluate Roark and his work so differently?
2. At the end of chapter 1, Roark comprehends that there is a fundamental difference between his approach to life and the Dean's. Roark understands his own, but not that of the Dean and those like him. He recognizes that there is a principle that explains the difference, which he calls the "principle behind the Dean." Based on subsequent events of the story, explain the "principle behind the Dean."
3. Peter Keating graduates as valedictorian from the Stanton Institute of Technology. Does this mean that he is an outstanding architecture student? By what methods did he get such high grades? What does this say regarding his moral character?
4. Keating goes to work for Guy Francon, the most successful and prestigious architect in the country. What are the methods by which Francon has achieved commercial success? Does he have anything in common with Keating? In what ways do they both differ from Roark?
5. Roark gains employment with Henry Cameron. Cameron, though a genius, is a commercial failure. Why has society rejected his work? Why does Roark nevertheless revere him? What qualities do Roark and Cameron share in common? What is the fundamental difference between them and Francon and Keating?
6. Citing specifics from the story, describe the means by which Keating seeks to rise to the top of Francon's firm? Explain the meaning of Keating's methods. Why do they work at Francon's? Would Keating's methods work similarly well at Cameron's? Why?
7. Though Keating often leaves Catherine Halsey waiting weeks for him to call, the author makes it clear that Catherine is special to him. How does the author show Keating's love for Catherine? In contrast to Keating's motive for pursuing his other values (in work, e.g.), what personal significance does his relationship with Catherine have? What fate will befall Peter if he betrays his love for her?
8. The design of the Cosmo-Slotnick Building establishes Keating's fame. What is the nature of Keating's relationship with Roark at this point in the story? Why does Keating both approach him for advice and help and take pleasure in making him perform menial tasks while an employee at Francon's? Why does Keating feel a need to degrade the man who is his meal ticket?

9. Cameron and Roark, though brilliant designers, get few commissions. At one point Cameron urges Roark to surrender his principles and design conventionally. Given that Cameron himself neither did nor would do such a thing, what is the meaning of that scene? What does Ayn Rand stress about the price paid by great creative thinkers in a society that does not recognize the merit of their new ideas?
10. Austen Heller hires Roark to build a private home, giving him his first commission. What qualities does Heller possess that enable him to recognize the merit of Roark's work when virtually the entire society does not? Despite the professional differences between Heller and Roark's other supporters, e.g., Mike, Mallory, Enright, what fundamental attribute do they share in common? What point does the author make regarding the ability to recognize genius?
11. The character of Dominique Francon is introduced in this section. Dominique criticizes the work of her own father in her newspaper column and recognizes the fraudulent nature of Keating's work and character, though many admire him. What does Ayn Rand thereby show the reader about Dominique? Why is this important for the reader's ability to understand her coming relationship with Roark?
12. Despite extreme poverty Roark refuses the lucrative commission for the Manhattan Bank Building rather than permit the adulteration of his design. When the Board asserts that he is "fanatical and selfless," Roark responds that his action was "the most selfish thing you've ever seen a man do." Given that Roark has just turned down a major commission in order to protect the integrity of his design, what is "selfish" about this? What is Ayn Rand's view of "selfishness" and "selflessness"? Contrast her view to that of Christianity and of Socialism.
13. Compare Howard Roark and Lois Cook. Are they both individualists? Why or why not?

## Part Two

1. At the granite quarry Dominique is deeply attracted to the red-headed worker who stares at her insolently. She pursues him aggressively, but resists him in the moment of her triumph. Given that Dominique is eager to make love to Roark, why does she physically resist? Ayn Rand once stated regarding this scene that if it is rape, "then it is rape by engraved invitation." What does she mean? Is this actually rape, i.e., is Dominique an unwilling victim?
2. Though strongly attracted to Roark, Dominique both pursues and fights him. Is this inner conflict regarding her love representative of some deeper aspect of her character? How does this ambivalence relate to her destruction of the Greek statuette that she loves? To joining forces with Ellsworth Toohey in an effort to wreck Roark's career? To refusing to pursue a serious career in spite of her great intelligence? Are Dominique's motives for thwarting Roark the same as Toohey's?
3. At this point in Roark's career he is hired by Roger Enright, Anthony Cord and Kent Lansing to construct major buildings. What kind of men are Enright, Cord and Lansing? Do they share some fundamental characteristic in common with each other and with Austen Heller? What does Lansing mean when he tells Roark that "the shortest distance between two points is not a straight line—it's a middleman"?
4. At Kiki Holcolmbe's party Keating gives advice to Roark. He says: "Always be what people want you to be." What is the meaning of such a statement? Why does Keating believe this? What does such an approach to life reveal about the soul of Keating and of people like him?
5. At the same party Dominique thinks of Roark's as "the face of a god." What is she responding to in Roark? In seeing such beauty in Roark's face, an evaluation not shared by the rest of society, what does Dominique reveal about her own soul?

6. Dominique begins to write about Roark's buildings in her column. She words them in such a way as to give the appearance of criticism while actually offering extravagant praise. Why does she hope that Roark's buildings will be destroyed in a future air raid? What is her view of human society, and of the possibility of great men succeeding in it?
7. Toohey convinces Hopton Stoddard to hire Roark to build the Stoddard Temple. What is Toohey's purpose? Why does he seek to brand Roark an enemy of religion? What is Toohey's deeper reason for attempting to end Roark's career?
8. Though Dominique testifies for the plaintiff at the Stoddard Temple trial, she praises the building and criticizes both Toohey and society. Why does she want the building torn down? How do her motives differ from Toohey's? In what way is the trial Dominique's worst nightmare come true?
9. Roark hires Mallory to do the sculpture for the Temple, but Mallory, despite his youth, is already bitter and disillusioned. What is the cause of Mallory's nascent cynicism? What does Roark do that helps Mallory overcome his disillusionment? Are there similarities between Mallory's early career and the life of Henry Cameron?
10. After the trial Dominique accepts Keating's earlier proposal and marries him. Given her undying love for the integrity of Roark's buildings and person, and her recognition that Keating is the antithesis of everything she reveres, it is appropriate to ask what Dominique seeks in such a marriage. For what purpose does she marry the man she considers society's most despicable representative?
11. At the end of part 2, Roark's career is again at low ebb and it appears that Toohey's scheming has been successful. Toohey seeks him out to ask what Roark thinks of him. What does this question reveal about Toohey's soul? Roark answers in simple honesty that he does not think of him. What does such an answer reveal about Roark's soul? These two characters represent the fundamental antipodes in the universe of the novel. What is the primary difference between them?

## Part Three

1. Gail Wynand is a brilliant individual who rose out of the slums by means of his own talent and effort. But despite his reverence for man's noblest achievements, his newspaper presents lurid, loathsome values to the most vulgar people. Why does Wynand pander in this manner? What is the meaning of such a self-betrayal?
2. Toohey presents Mallory's sculpture of Dominique to Wynand in an effort to bring Dominique and Wynand together. What is the purpose of Toohey's scheme? Why does he need something to distract Wynand's attention away from his newspaper?
3. What is Toohey's overall purpose on the New York *Banner*? What is his overall purpose in regard to society in general? Dominique warns Wynand against Toohey, but he is too contemptuous of Toohey to heed her. Is Dominique correct in her assessment of Toohey's actual motives?
4. What is Dominique's motive in marrying Wynand, for becoming "Mrs. Wynand Papers"? Does it bear any similarity to her reason for marrying Keating? Does she accomplish the goal she set out to reach? Tie this discussion to the quote from Nietzsche—that nobility of soul is not to be lost—that the author cites in the introduction to the 25th anniversary edition: "It is not the works, but the *belief* which is here decisive and determines the order of rank—to employ once more an old religious formula with a new and deeper meaning,—it is some fundamental certainty which a noble soul has about itself, something which is not to be sought, is not to be found, and perhaps, also, is not to be lost.—*The noble soul has reverence for itself.*—" (Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*)

5. Why does Wynand fall deeply in love with Dominique? Do they share noble qualities in common? Have they made a similar mistake? Because of Wynand's undeniable virtues, do Dominique's feelings for him change?
6. On her way to Reno to secure a divorce from Keating, Dominique stops in Clayton, Ohio, to visit Roark. Why is Dominique willing to marry Roark only if he renounces architecture? What is the meaning of Roark's response that if he wanted to be cruel, he would accept her proposal? Aside from the obvious fact that she loves Roark, what does this visit show the reader about Dominique?

## Part Four

1. Roark's resort at Monadnock Valley provides for a disillusioned young man, who had always wanted to write music, "the courage to face a lifetime." Given that Roark had never met the boy before, and would never see him again, what point does the author make regarding the nature of creative achievement? Contrast this episode with the effect that Toohey's counseling has on the young people who come to him for advice. Which has a benevolent impact on other men—Roark's life of personal accomplishment or Toohey's call for sacrifice to the collective?
2. Although Roark receives the commission for Monadnock Valley as part of a swindle by the owners, his work is so highly valued by the customers that the resort makes money despite its fraudulent origins. Further, Roark has been kept busy over the previous several years designing a variety of small structures. "It was as if an underground stream flowed through the country and broke out in sudden springs that shot to the surface at random, in unpredictable places." What is the nature of this "stream" that now flows in recognition of Roark? There is an old saying that "the truth will win out." What does Ayn Rand show regarding society's ultimate response to the great work of a creative genius?
3. Gail Wynand hires Roark to build a fortress to protect Dominique from human society. Despite the irony, there is almost an inevitability to this event. Why does Wynand choose Roark from among all the architects of the country? Why is it fitting? What is the essence of their bond?
4. As Roark enters the building that houses Wynand's paper, he remembers Henry Cameron's words that Wynand and the mindless conventionality that his papers represent are the fundamental cause of the world's ills. Despite this, Roark comes to love and respect Wynand beyond all others, even stating at one point, "You have been the one encounter of my life that can never be repeated." Why does Roark love Wynand despite the deathbed warning against him from Cameron? Despite his flaws, what major virtues does Wynand possess?
5. By this time Peter Keating's career is badly slipping, as Toohey pushes his new protege, Gus Webb. Why did Toohey support Keating in the first place? What is Toohey's purpose in promoting the careers of such mediocrities as Keating, Gordon Prescott, Lois Cook, Ike the Genius, and Webb? In what way does his purpose integrate with his anti-Roark campaign?
6. Why is Roark's brilliant design for Cortlandt Homes altered by Gus Webb and Gordon Prescott? What factors in society make it possible? Why is Keating, despite his best efforts, powerless to stop it?
7. In dynamiting Cortlandt Homes, Roark breaks the law. What is his moral and philosophical argument for the rectitude of his action?
8. Dominique assists Roark in the dynamiting, and tells him that she will wait for him even if he serves time in prison. She is no longer afraid of what society will do to him. What is the essence of Dominique's change of thinking? What error had she previously made that she now corrects? What enables her to finally see the truth? How does her change of mind integrate with the novel's theme?

9. When Wynand defends Roark in the New York *Banner*, it is the first time that, in the deepest sense, the paper belongs to him and not to the crowd. This is exactly why his crusade fails. Why does Wynand fill the paper with his own values only now? Why is it too late? Explain Wynand's failure to save Roark—and himself—in terms of the mixed premises that form the essence of his character.
10. Wynand closes the New York *Banner* rather than turn control of it over to Ellsworth Toohey. What kind of defeat does this represent for Toohey? In terms of Toohey's two principal goals—to prevent Roark's success, and to control the New York *Banner*—he fails utterly. What point does the author make regarding the nature and power of evil men?
11. In his courtroom speech Roark discusses the outstanding innovators who have carried mankind forward, arguing that it was their independent thinking—not compliance with their brothers—that enabled them to reach their monumental achievements. In terms of some of history's great independent minds—Galileo, Darwin, Pasteur, the Wright Brothers, et al.—explain and defend Roark's thesis.
12. At the end of the novel, Roger Enright buys Cortlandt Homes and hires Roark to build it in accordance with his original design. Wynand hires Roark to erect the Wynand Building, the world's tallest skyscraper. Roark marries Dominique Francon. He has succeeded completely, and on his own terms. What point does the author make regarding the nature of success? In contrast to the evil Toohey, what point does she make regarding the nature and power of the good?



## Research on the Novel's Philosophical Content

(Challenging work for the most advanced students)

- Read book 4, chapter 3 of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (and as much of the rest of Aristotle's ethics as possible) and write an essay answering the question: Does Howard Roark qualify as an example of Aristotle's "proud man" (sometimes translated as "the great-souled man")?
- Read Ayn Rand's novel *Atlas Shrugged*. Both novels are about the role of the mind in man's life. In *The Fountainhead* the focus is on the individualistic nature of the mind's functioning, while in *Atlas Shrugged* the emphasis is on the mind as man's tool of survival. Compare Ayn Rand's understanding of the mind's role in human life as presented in *The Fountainhead* with the broader and deeper understanding in *Atlas Shrugged*.
- Read Marx and Engels's *The Communist Manifesto*. Is the collectivist society envisioned by Ellsworth Toohey consistent with the communist state advocated by Marx and Engels?
- Read Ayn Rand's *The Virtue of Selfishness* or Leonard Peikoff's *Objectivism: The Philosophy of Ayn Rand*. How does Howard Roark's character and life illustrate Ayn Rand's theory of rational egoism?

## Class Projects

(There are many things that students can do, in addition to writing critical essays, that will enhance their understanding of *The Fountainhead*.)

1. Discuss in class what the world would be like if Roark's ideas were the dominant philosophy. If Toohey's ideas were preeminent. If Keating's were. If Dominique's were.
2. Dramatize a scene from the novel, with students playing the parts of the relevant characters. Present the scene in accordance with your best understanding of the novel's meaning.
3. Create a Web site that explains to other people what you find illuminating and exciting about the book. Explain what advantages they will derive from reading it and understanding the novel's theme.
4. Debate in class the contrasting philosophical theories that the story dramatizes, with some students defending the individualism of Roark, and others the collectivism of Toohey.
5. Write a letter to Ayn Rand describing your reaction to *The Fountainhead*. Did you find it uplifting, exciting, educational? Many people have found that reading this book gave them the courage to pursue their own dreams. Describe to the author your own response to it.
6. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper, arguing that the individualistic philosophy of Howard Roark is the solution to specific contemporary problems, e.g., racism, drugs, poverty, crime, war.

## Understanding the Novel's Theme

1. Since the novel is deeply philosophical, it is important for the student to learn definitions for the book's relevant philosophical terms.
  - (a) **independence**: reliance on one's own thinking in the search for truth, and on one's own effort to support oneself. To Ayn Rand, independence is fundamentally a cognitive concept. It means the willingness to think, to go by one's own best judgment, to never accept a claim as true merely because others believe it. Independence does not preclude cooperation or friendly relations in human society, e.g., Roark's cooperative work, in different forms, with Cameron, Mallory, Mike—and his close relationships with, notably, Dominique, Cameron, and Wynand. It is important for the student to recognize that independence is not the rugged individualism of the type that entails survival by oneself in the wilderness or the mountains. The best examples of independence are the great men of the mind who have discovered new truths, often in the teeth of intense social opposition, and have consequently carried mankind forward, e.g., inventors like Robert Fulton, innovative architects like Frank Lloyd Wright, scientists like Marie Curie, entrepreneurs like Henry Ford.
  - (b) **dependence**: permitting other people to dominate one's thinking and one's life; a refusal to think, a willingness to derive one's beliefs uncritically from others, either by means of blind obedience or an equally blind rebellion. Both conformists and nonconformists, each in their own way, are examples of dependency.
  - (c) **conformity**: living in unthinking adherence to the judgment, the standards, the values of others. In the novel Peter Keating is, of course, the outstanding example of this.
  - (d) **individualism**: the philosophy of man that emphasizes the reality and cognitive efficacy of the individual. Individuals are real, not splintered fragments of the group; they can and should be autonomous thinkers, not molded playthings of "social conditioning." Politically, individuals must be free to act on their own thinking and live their own lives. The political/economic system that is the logical culmination of individualism is limited constitutional government and laissez-faire capitalism, because it is this system alone that protects the rights of the individual. Howard Roark is, of course, an outstanding fictional representative of individualism.
  - (e) **collectivism**: in contrast to individualism, the philosophy of man that emphasizes the reality and cognitive efficacy of society as a whole. Only the group is real, only the group's beliefs determine truth. The individual is merely a fragmented chunk of the whole, whose thinking is conditioned and controlled by the beliefs of society. Individuals have no rights. Politically, the state is all-powerful and the individual must unquestioningly obey the will of society. The political/economic system that is the logical culmination of collectivism is socialism in some form, whether National Socialism (Nazism), Communism, or Fascism. In the book Ellsworth Toohey is the leading advocate of collectivism.
  - (f) **first-handers**: those independent thinkers who face nature directly and thereby survive first-hand, i.e., by their own effort. These are the individuals who discover how to make fire, how to grow crops and domesticate livestock, how to cure diseases, how to build homes, etc.—and also those who use their own minds to learn from the innovators, and are therefore able to live productively.
  - (g) **second-handers**: those dependent persons who, in one form or another, are not productive, do not survive by means of their own mind or effort, but who, rather, survive second-hand by leeching off of others. There are many types of second-handers—criminals, family bums, welfare recipients, military conquerors, political dictators, social climbers (like Keating), and others.
2. Ayn Rand states that the theme of *The Fountainhead* is: "individualism vs. collectivism, not in politics but in men's souls." Explain fully what she means.



3. The central conflict of the novel is the contrast of and conflict between first-handers and second-handers. Using both examples from the novel and from real life, examine the nature of this conflict.
4. Related to the theme is the relationship of the moral and the practical. Wynand and Dominique both believe that men of integrity have no chance to succeed in society, that only the corrupt make it to the top. Based on their view that men must choose between corrupt success and noble failure, they make different choices. Wynand opts for success by any means while Dominique chooses to pursue no values in a world in which success would require her to sell her soul. Roark, on the other hand, rejects the belief that men must make such a choice. He believes that morality and success stand in direct, not in inverse, proportion to each other, that success is achieved not by compromising one's soul but by remaining true to it. Based on events in the story, analyze Ayn Rand's thinking regarding the relationship between the moral and the practical.

## Comparison and Contrast with Other Literary Works

1. In dynamiting Cortlandt and waiting to be arrested, Roark breaks the law deliberately in order to make this a test case. In Washington and Lee's play, *Inherit the Wind*, high school biology teacher Bertram Cates also breaks the law with the conscious intent of going to court and putting the law on trial. In both cases the hero (and/or his lawyer) fights a legal/intellectual battle in support of a moral principle. What are the similarities and differences between the struggles waged by these intellectual heroes?
2. In Chaim Potok's novel *The Promise*, the main character, Danny Saunders, struggles with the conflict between independent living and conformity to tradition. In what ways are the battles waged by Danny and Howard Roark similar? Are there important differences in the nature and outcome of their respective struggles? Do Chaim Potok and Ayn Rand value independence equally?
3. In Sinclair Lewis's *Babbitt*, the main character, George Babbitt, is an abject conformist of the Peter Keating ilk. Compare and contrast the two characters. By using Keating as a foil to the independent Roark, does Ayn Rand achieve a deeper level of understanding than does Lewis regarding the nature of conformity?
4. Gail Wynand is a great man who destroys himself by means of his moral flaws. Does he qualify as a tragic hero by the definition expounded in Aristotle's *Poetics*? Compare his life and the causes of his downfall with one of the great tragic figures of literature, e.g., Oedipus, Antigone, Macbeth, Hamlet, Othello.
5. In refusing to send Dominique back to Wynand, Roark will not sacrifice himself and his love for Wynand. How does this compare—in Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*—to Cyrano's choice not to tell Roxane of his love in order to honor the memory of his dead friend, Christian?
6. In *Hamlet* Polonius urges his son, Laertes, "to thine own self be true." In *The Fountainhead* Roark lives out this principle, refusing to ever be untrue to his self. In one scene in which he refuses to compromise his design in exchange for a lucrative commission, he states, "That was the most selfish thing you've ever seen a man do." Is Roark true to his self in the sense that Shakespeare means? What is Ayn Rand's meaning of being true to the self? Based on the events of *Hamlet* (or other of Shakespeare's plays) would the great English poet agree with Ayn Rand?

## The Personal Significance of the Novel

1. High school and college students often struggle with questions of personal identity, career choice, parental, and peer pressure. Students can discuss and/or write on the question of what *The Fountainhead's* message of independence means to them personally.
2. Just as Roark's accomplishment at Monadnock Valley gave to the boy who had always wanted to write music the courage to face a lifetime, so Ayn Rand's achievement in *The Fountainhead* has changed many persons' lives. Discuss the inspiration that can be derived from the sight of a heroic achievement.

## The Influence of *The Fountainhead* on Recent Film

1. The theme of the movie *Dead Poets Society* is independence vs. conformity—the same theme as *The Fountainhead*. Compare and contrast *Dead Poets Society* to *The Fountainhead*. Discuss the similarities and differences of these views of independence, conformity, and man's fundamental outlook on life.
2. The Australian film *Strictly Ballroom* features a young hero attempting to introduce new steps into ballroom dance competition. He is opposed by the heads of the dance federation who hold that all the proper steps of ballroom dancing have been identified long ago by the great dancers of the past. Which fundamental principles are shared by this film and *The Fountainhead*? Are there any important differences in their understanding of human nature and human life? If so, what are they?
3. Compare and contrast the philosophic ideas presented in *Dead Poets Society* and *Strictly Ballroom*. Which of these two films is closer to the outlook on human life as presented in *The Fountainhead*? Explain your answer fully.

# Anthem Lesson Plans and Study Guide

By Lindsay Joseph

Ms. Joseph received her Honors Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Education from York University, and her Honors Specialist Certification in the Teaching of English from the University of Toronto. She has worked as an administrator and teacher of English and history at various private schools in Toronto, Canada, where she specialized in curriculum development. Ms. Joseph is currently working as executive director of LePort Elementary and Junior High School ([www.LePortSchools.com](http://www.LePortSchools.com)) in Mission Viejo, California. LePort Schools offers a rich classical curriculum, presented inductively and informed by the principles of Objectivism.

## Detailed Chapter Questions

### Chapter I

- In a well-organized paragraph, describe the society in which *Anthem* is set. Some areas to consider are the political structure, degree of technology, social relationships, quality of life, and education.
  - Would you want to live in this society? Explain why or why not.
- In this chapter Equality 7-2521 states that it is very unusual for men to reach the age of 45. Offer several possible explanations as to why life expectancy is so short in his society.
- Copy and complete the following chart, and continue to add to your entries as you read each chapter. (The first entry is partially completed, as an example.)

Term and Definition	Examples from <i>Anthem</i> (Try to find several examples per term)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>Why is this character or act condemned in <i>Anthem</i>?</li><li>Should it be condemned? Explain why or why not.</li></ol>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Transgression: the breaking of a law or oath</li><li>Sin:</li><li>Curse:</li><li>Crime</li><li>Evil</li><li>Damned</li></ul>	Transgression of Preference: Equality chooses International 4-8818 as his friend (pg. 27).	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>They are taught that the individual is nothing, mankind is everything, and that everyone must be treated with absolute equality. To choose a friend is to single out, and elevate, one man from the group. Also, choosing a friend requires individual thought, personal choices, and value judgments, all of which are forbidden. They are expected to be mindless, and thus selfless.</li><li>Personal response required.</li></ol>

- Clearly, Ayn Rand intended Equality to stand out from his “brothers.” Explain how she accomplishes this by contrasting Equality’s physical qualities and character traits to those of his fellow men.

5. Why does the Council of Vocations assign Equality the job of street sweeper? Is it due to error, incompetence, or a more sinister motivation? Explain.
6. When does this novel take place—in the past, the present, or the future? How do you know?
7. (a) How would your teachers react if you had Equality’s “curse”?
- (b) Why do Equality’s teachers disapprove of his quick mind?
8. At this point in the novel, does Equality accept the moral teachings of his society? If so, why doesn’t he feel shame or remorse when he knows that he’s committing a crime? Find textual evidence to support your answer.
9. Would you want to be friends with someone like Equality? Why or why not?

## Chapter II

1. Reread the account of Liberty 5-3000 on page 38. What character traits are revealed in this brief description?
2. Find several examples of the ways in which this society tries to obliterate each individual’s mind (and self) by quashing personal choices, desires, and values.
3. Contrast Equality with the rest of the men living in this society (pg. 46).
4. Of the whole range of feelings possible to man (joy, excitement, anger, embarrassment, etc.), why is fear the prevalent emotion in this society?
5. Start a personal glossary in which you explain the following terms: the Great Truth, the Unmentionable Times, the Uncharted Forest, the Evil Ones, the Great Rebirth.
6. (a) What word is Equality struggling to recapture on page 49?
- (b) In your opinion, why is mentioning this word the only crime punishable by death in this society? How does this word contradict the ideals of this society? What could its rediscovery possibly lead to?

## Chapter III

1. (a) What does Equality discover in this chapter?
- (b) How important is this discovery? Describe four or five ways in which it would help society, and make life easier or more enjoyable.
2. Outline some of the Council of Scholars’ beliefs, and Equality’s refutation of those beliefs.

## Chapter IV

1. Discuss the appropriateness of Equality’s new name, “Unconquered.”

## Chapter V

1. Equality understands that his invention will benefit mankind greatly; however, this was not his main motivation in conducting his experiments, and it is not the primary source of the great joy he experiences. Discuss.
2. In your opinion, why is Equality so interested in seeing his own image at this point in the novel? What emotion is he feeling?

## Chapter VI

1. The old locks and lack of guards in the Palace of Corrective Detention indicate that prisoners never tried to escape. Why not?

## Chapter VII

1. Outline four of the Council's reasons for rejecting Equality's invention.
2. What are the real reasons behind the Council's rejection and fear of the gift?
3. What does Equality mean, at the beginning of the chapter, when he says, "We are old now, but we were young this morning" (pg. 68)?

## Chapter VIII

1. What is Equality experiencing for the first time in this chapter, and what does he feel as a result?
2. Explain why Equality laughs when he remembers that he is "the Damned."
3. What does the Uncharted Forest symbolize in *Anthem*?

## Chapter IX

1. On pages 93–94, Liberty contrasts Equality to his fellow men. Paraphrase this passage.
2. In this chapter, Equality questions the morality of his former society. Contrast what he was previously taught about solitude, good, evil, and joy to what he now believes.

## Chapter X

1. Describe the house and its contents in your own words, and explain why Liberty and Equality find it so strange and unique.



## Chapter XI

1. What great discovery does Equality make in this chapter?
2. Explain the following quotes in your own words, and discuss how they can be applied to your life:
  - (a) “Whatever road I take, the guiding star is within me.”
  - (b) “For the word ‘We’ must never be spoken, save by one’s choice and as a second thought.”
3. What does Equality now realize is the proper goal and purpose of his life?
4. In what ways is “I” like a God?
5. Reread the incident with the Saint of the Pyre (pg. 50). What was he trying to communicate to Equality?

## Chapter XII

1. Why do the main characters take the names Prometheus and Gaea? Why weren’t they allowed to choose their names in their old society?
2. What does Prometheus plan to do in the future?
3. Prometheus reaches the important realization that “To be free, a man must be free of his brothers” (pg. 118). Cite several examples from *Anthem* that illustrate the truth of this statement.

## Creative Writing Activities—*Anthem*

1. *Anthem* illustrates the importance of thinking and judging independently and of acting according to our rational principles—even when “our brothers” oppose us. In light of the fact that smoking, drugs, shoplifting, and gang violence often involve peer pressure, write a letter to a teen magazine explaining *Anthem*’s benefits for teenage readers. (Send your letter to a national teen magazine or your local paper—it might get published!)
2. You are applying for a job to direct the movie version of *Anthem*. Write a letter to the producer in which you try to convince him to hire you. Your letter must indicate
  - (a) which actors you would cast as Prometheus and Gaea, and why. Think about physical characteristics and personality traits;
  - (b) a detailed description of the setting;
  - (c) an explanation of the theme of this novel, and why it is particularly relevant and valuable to modern viewers;
  - (d) musical suggestions for certain scenes, costumes, a description of the opening shot, etc.
3. Write a brief letter to Ayn Rand about *Anthem*. You can state your reaction to the text (What did you find particularly surprising? Exciting? Moving?), ask about aspects of the novel that puzzled you, and relate the novel to personal experiences, etc.

4. Write the “missing scene” from chapter 1 in which the Council of Vocations is deliberating Equality’s future profession. Are any of the Council members sympathetic to Equality? If so, would he dare to voice his opinion? Ensure that you reveal the Council’s true motives in assigning Equality the job of street sweeper.
5. Write a factual newspaper article about Prometheus’s escape from jail, his surprise appearance at the World Council of Scholars, and his flight into the Uncharted Forest. Then, write an opinionated editorial about the same events, written by one of his “brothers.”
6. Rewrite the meeting between Equality and Liberty from her perspective.
7. Rewrite the scene about the Saint at the Pyre from the Saint’s perspective. What did he want to communicate to Equality?
8. Write a new ending for *Anthem* in which Prometheus is captured while attempting to rescue his friends. Include a court scene of Prometheus’s trial before the Council for his “sins.” How will Prometheus use his new understanding of morality to defend himself and his actions? (As a possible extension, act out this scene in class, and invite another class to judge.)
9. At the end of the story, Prometheus confidently declares that he is not afraid of his brothers. He knows that his new home is invulnerable to them, “For they have nothing to fight me with, save the brute force of their numbers. I have my mind” (pg. 116). Write a short story in which the main character’s intelligence, resourcefulness, and ingenuity (i.e., his mind) triumph over his opponents’ brute force or sheer numbers.

## Further Questions for Discussion or Written Response

1. (a) *Before reading the novel:*  
The transition from adolescence to adulthood involves developing a personal identity, a sense of self. Write a paragraph that describes you, and explains what makes you uniquely you. Consider your future goals and dreams; what you value in a friend; favorite pets; preferred sports and hobbies; best-loved music, literature, movies, etc.

### *Note to the teacher:*

Discuss with the students how and why they chose these values. Focus on the role of the individual mind in developing values. You want students to understand that—without a mind to think, to judge, to choose—there can be no personal values and ambitions.

- (b) *After reading the novel:*  
Review your pre-reading activity. Which of your personal values, goals, and loves would be allowed in the society portrayed in *Anthem*? Why would any of them be forbidden?

### *Note to the teacher:*

This exercise can help students to concretize and relate to the completely selfless society in *Anthem*. Students can see how living in this society would affect them directly. They will more fully understand the link between the obliteration of the mind and the destruction of all personal judgments, hopes, dreams, and values.

2. In many real and fictionalized totalitarian societies, children live apart from their families. Why would dictatorial leaders enforce this living arrangement?
3. What does Equality finally understand about his society when the Council threatens to destroy his invention?
4. Contrast Equality’s view of morality at the end of the novel to that of his society.

5. At first glance, most characters in *Anthem* appear to be near-automatons, blindly conforming to the rest of society. Upon closer study, however, we see that all of the characters in *Anthem*—Equality, International, Liberty, the Council members, everyone—make choices and decisions that affect their lives and their futures, for better or for worse. In short, they all possess the choice to think or not, and that choice determines everything else. Discuss.
6. Many people blame their hardships, poverty, or unhappiness on external conditions. “It’s not my fault,” they cry, “it’s because of the family, class, race, society, or culture into which I was born!” They believe that outside factors control and determine their lives. Use Equality as an example to refute this deterministic view of man.
7. *Anthem* is a heroic and inspiring story about the triumph of the individual’s independent spirit. Even though, at the end of the novel, Equality is greatly outnumbered, and modern society lies in ruins, it is a story of liberation and hope—not of despair. Discuss.
8. Aside from very rare exceptions (Equality, the Saint at the Pyre) there is literally no opposition to the leaders in this society. Why is this? What ideas must these men have accepted to live a life of obedience, drudgery, and fear?
9. *Anthem*’s theme is, in Ayn Rand’s own words, “the meaning of man’s ego.” Explain the ways in which the characters and plot in *Anthem* illustrate this theme.
10. To fully control a man, dictators must not only enslave his body, but also destroy his mind. Discuss how the leaders in *Anthem* seek to accomplish this tyrannical end.

## Advanced Research Topics

1. In *Anthem* Equality observes that “At forty, [men] are worn out . . . [and] are sent to the Home of the Useless, where the Old Ones live . . . The Old Ones know that they are soon to die. When a miracle happens and some live to be forty-five, they are the Ancient Ones, and children stare at them when passing by . . .” (pg. 25). According to the World Health Organization’s ranking of 191 countries, ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)) there is a huge discrepancy in the average life expectancy of various nations; it ranges from a high of 74.5 years in Japan to a low of 25.9 years in Sierra Leone. Why does life expectancy vary so greatly around the world? What are the main factors that determine life expectancy in a given country?

Select several countries with high, medium, and low average life expectancy, and briefly research their political systems. Consider the following questions:

- How are their leaders chosen?
- Do citizens enjoy freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of mobility, and of religion? Do they have the right to life, liberty, and ownership of private property?
- To what extent does the government control and regulate the economy?
- Is the primacy of rule of law acknowledged?

Write a paper on your findings concerning the causal impact that a country’s political system has on the life expectancy of its citizens.

2. In *Anthem* Prometheus discovers the meaning of the word freedom. He states that “To be free, a man must be free of his brothers. That is freedom. That and nothing else” (118). In fact, Ayn Rand defined freedom, in a political context, as “the absence of physical coercion” (*Capitalism: The Unknown Ideal*). This definition

of freedom, however, stands in direct contrast to the one held by many modern thinkers, writers, and politicians. Today, modern liberals often assert “Freedom must [entail] . . . an increased power on the part of the individual to share in the goods which society has produced and an enlarged ability to contribute to the common good” (George Sabine, *A History of Political Theory*).

Write an essay contrasting Ayn Rand’s definition of freedom to that of modern liberals, and consider the form of government each would necessitate.

3. Is *Anthem* a realistic portrayal of life in a totalitarian society? Compare the fictionalized society in *Anthem* to a real dictatorship, past or present. Some options are Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, Cuba, China, Cambodia, etc.
4. While recounting man’s struggle for freedom throughout history, Equality laments that “At first, man was enslaved by gods . . . then by kings . . . then by his birth, his kin, his race. But he broke their chains. He declared to all his brothers that a man has rights which [no men] can take away from him. And he stood on the threshold of freedom . . . But then he gave up all that he had won, and fell lower than his savage beginning” (pg. 119).

Find a specific example from history for each of these five stages in mankind’s political history, including an example from the twentieth century for the final stage. What, according to this novel, must man understand to enable him to pass through the threshold of freedom that, in the past, he so nearly reached?

5. How does our society treat independent thinkers, daring innovators, and successful entrepreneurs (like Equality)? Are they applauded or criticized? Write an essay on this topic, offering specific case studies to support your argument.

## Additional Questions on Plot, Figurative Language, and Point of View:

1. Create a plot diagram of the novel, including the five major components (initial situation, trigger incident, rising action, climax, denouement).
2.
  - (a) Ayn Rand wrote *Anthem* in a deliberately simple, austere style. Explain why this style is appropriate, given the novel’s setting and characters.
  - (b) Figurative language is employed effectively, if sparingly, in this novel. Often, a well-chosen simile captures the essence of a character, or the significance of an event. Discuss the meaning and significance of the following similes in *Anthem*.
    - “We blew out the candle. Darkness swallowed us. There was nothing left around us, save night and a thin thread of flame in it, as a crack in the wall of a prison” (pg. 64).
    - “But International 4-8818 are different. They are a tall, strong youth and their eyes are like fireflies . . .” (pg. 26).
    - “[Liberty’s] body was straight and thin as a blade of iron . . . Their hair was golden as the sun; their hair flew in the wind, shining and wild, as if it defied men to restrain it. They threw seeds from their hand as if they deigned to fling a scornful gift, and the earth was a beggar under their feet” (pg. 38).
    - “The shoulders of our Brothers are hunched, and their muscles are drawn, as if their bodies were shrinking and wished to shrink out of sight” (pg. 47).

3. Ayn Rand wrote *Anthem* in diary form, using first-person-major point of view. Discuss the merits of this form and point of view for this particular novel. Consider: Why is the diary form crucial to plot and character development in *Anthem*? How does it help to reveal the setting and establish the nature of this society? How does it contribute to the mystery surrounding the Unspeakable Word? How would using first person minor or third person omniscient point of view weaken the novel?

It might be necessary to review some common methods of narration with students:

**First Person Major:** Main character simply tells his own story. (*Anthem* or *Huckleberry Finn*)

**First Person Minor:** A minor character, who “happens to be there,” tells the story. (Dr. Watson in Conan Doyle’s stories, or Nick in *The Great Gatsby*)

**Third Person Omniscient:** Narrator recounts the story, and knows the thoughts of all the characters in the story.

**Third Person Limited:** Narrator recounts the story, but tells the reader only what he perceives; he does not know the thoughts of the characters.

**Third Person Central Character:** Narrator recounts the story, and knows the thoughts of only the central character.

## Teaching Relevant Philosophical Concepts

### *Note to the Teacher:*

In order for students to fully comprehend *Anthem*, they need to be taught the precise meaning of relevant political, moral, and philosophical concepts. Thus, selected terms, definitions, and textual illustrations are included below. This information can be used in a variety of ways:

- Socratic Method: Begin by asking basic questions about the novel. For example, “In the society portrayed in *Anthem*, what is considered to be good, or virtuous?” Elicit several students’ examples from the text, and then explain that they illustrate the moral code of Altruism. Supply a precise definition for students to learn. Then, discuss the opposite code of Egoism. Repeat for each concept.
- Alternately, supply terms and definitions to the class. Ask students to find examples of each term from the novel, and from real life. They can consider personal experiences, current laws, newspaper articles, etc.
- After teaching, ask students to match terms and definitions on a quiz, or to supply examples for each term.

Term and Definition or Explanation	Illustrations in <i>Anthem</i>
<p>Collectivism: “Collectivism means the subjugation of the individual to a group—whether to a race, class or state does not matter. Collectivism holds that man must be chained to a collective action and collective thought for the sake of what is called ‘the common good.’” (<i>The Ayn Rand Lexicon</i>, pg. 74)</p>	<p>“We are one in all and all in one. There are no men but only the great WE, One, indivisible and forever.” (pg. 14)</p>
<p>Individualism: “Individualism regards man—every man—as an independent, sovereign entity who possesses an inalienable right to his own life, a right derived from his nature as a rational being. Individualism holds that a civilized society . . . can be achieved only on the basis of the recognition of individual rights—and that a group, as such, has no rights other than the individual rights of its members.” (<i>The Ayn Rand Lexicon</i>, pg. 218)</p>	<p>“I wished to know the meaning of things. I am the meaning. I wished to find a warrant for being. I need no warrant for being, and no word of sanction upon my being. I am the warrant and the sanction.” (pg. 109)</p> <p>“I am not a tool for their use. I am not a servant of their needs. I am not a bandage for their wounds. I am not a sacrifice on their altars. I am a man.” (pg. 110)</p>
<p>Altruism: “The basic principle of altruism is that man has no right to exist for his own sake, that service to others is the only justification of his existence, and that self-sacrifice is his highest moral duty, virtue and value . . . which means: the <i>self</i> as a standard of evil, the <i>selfless</i> as a standard of the good.” (<i>The Ayn Rand Lexicon</i>, pg. 4)</p>	<p>“If you are not needed by your brother men, there is no reason for you to burden the earth with your bodies.” (pg. 18)</p> <p>“Indeed you are happy . . . how else can men be when they live for their brothers?” (pg. 46)</p>
<p>Egoism: “Egoism states that each man’s primary moral obligation is to achieve his own welfare, well-being, or self-interest . . . He should be ‘selfish’ in the sense of being the beneficiary of his own moral actions.” (<i>Glossary of Definitions by Ayn Rand</i>, pg. 12)</p>	<p>“The only things which taught us joy were the power we created in our wires, and the Golden One. And both these joys belong to us alone . . . ” (pg. 97)</p> <p>“My happiness is not the means to any end. It is the end. It is its own goal. It is its own purpose.” (pg. 110)</p>
<p>Conformity: “The act or habit of bringing [oneself] into harmony or agreement with others; of adhering to conventional behavior.” (<i>Webster’s Dictionary</i>, pg. 149)</p>	<p>“It is not good to be different from our brothers . . . ” (pg. 16)</p>
<p>Obedience: “Complying with a command; yielding to those in authority.” (<i>Webster’s Dictionary</i>, pg. 533)</p>	<p>“You shall do that which the Council of Vocations prescribe for you . . . for the Council knows . . . better than you.” (pg. 18)</p>
<p>Independence: “One’s acceptance of the responsibility of forming one’s own judgments and of living by the work of one’s own mind . . . is the virtue of independence.” (<i>Glossary of Definitions by Ayn Rand</i>, pg. 23)</p>	<p>“We forget all men, all laws and all things save our metals and our wires. So much is still to be learned! So long a road lies before us, and what care we if we must travel it alone!” (pg. 56)</p> <p>“We made it. We created it. We brought it forth from the night of the ages. We alone. Our hands. Our mind. Ours alone and only.” (pg. 63)</p>

Glossary = *Glossary of Definitions by Ayn Rand*. Edited by Allison T. Kunze and Jean F. Moroney. (Second Renaissance Books, 1999).

Lexicon = *The Ayn Rand Lexicon*. Edited by Harry Binswanger. (Meridian Books, 1986).



## Linking *Anthem* to Literature, Poetry, Myth, Song

1. Conduct a study of literary heroes. Consider, first, what is a literary hero? In addition to referring to the central character, “[This term] includes a moral evaluation and implies courage, honor, great strength or achievement, or some other noble quality . . . the hero is the doer of great deeds” (C. Carter Colwell, *A Student’s Guide to Literature*).

Compare and contrast Equality to a few of your favorite literary heroes. Discuss the qualities that they share and argue which one, in your opinion, is the most heroic. Consider the quality of his soul, the severity of his opposition, and the significance of his battle.

Characters to consider: Atticus Finch in *To Kill a Mockingbird*; Cyrano de Bergerac in *Cyrano de Bergerac*; Saint Joan in *Joan of Arc*, Sir Thomas More in *A Man for All Seasons*; Henry Drummond in *Inherit the Wind*; Howard Roark in *The Fountainhead*; Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables*.

2. Write a comparison of *Anthem* to other anti-utopian novels, such as George Orwell’s *1984*, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World*, or Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*.
3. Write a conversation between George Orwell and Ayn Rand, in which she explains why a totalitarian dictatorship would ultimately resemble the primitive stagnation of *Anthem*, rather than the highly technological society of *1984*.
4. Liberty chooses “Unconquered” as a fitting name for Equality. Similarly, William Henley’s most famous poem is titled *Invictus*, which is Latin for “Unconquered.” Write a short essay on the similarities between the main characters in each of these works.
5. Contrast the hero in a Romantic novel such as *Anthem* to the anti-hero in a Naturalistic work, such as *Death of a Salesman*.
6. Research the Greek myths about Gaea and Prometheus, and explain why Ayn Rand chose these names for her characters in *Anthem*.

## *Invictus*

By William Ernest Henley

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.  
In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.  
Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds, and shall find me, unafraid.  
It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate;  
I am the captain of my soul.