

The Interactive Oral for *The Plague*, by Albert Camus

According to an adaptation of the Wikipedia entry in regards to this novel, *The Plague* (Fr. *La Peste*) is a novel by Albert Camus, published in 1947, that tells the story of medical workers finding solidarity in their labour as the Algerian city of Oran is swept by the plague. *La Peste* asks a number of questions relating to the nature of destiny and the human condition. The characters in the book, ranging from doctors to vacationers to fugitives, all help to show the effects the plague has on a populace.

Students need to understand the historical significance behind Camus setting the novel in Oran – specifically in light of the fact that the city has suffered through many plague epidemics, including major epidemics following the 1849 French colonization of Algeria. Students must also be able to articulate what Existentialism is, and how this novel fits under the banner of this philosophy despite Camus' objection to the label. Students also need to grasp the concept of the Absurd, a theory which Camus himself helped to define. Concepts that students would need to explore in this interactive oral include a discussion on the following topics:

1. Provide an extensive biography of Albert Camus. Focus on Camus' relationship to the French Intelligentsia, specifically his relationship to Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, and his reluctance to embrace the Existentialist philosopher label along with your biography of Albert Camus.
 2. Research and discuss the impact of the Nazi occupation of France and her colonies, and the subsequent French Resistance and Camus' role within the partisan resistance movement, on the development of the novel and its themes.
 3. Research and discuss the history of the colonization of Algeria by the French between 1830-1962, and the ramifications of that colonial legacy in Algeria since independence up to today.
 4. Discuss an analysis of the function of the novel's point-of-view.
 5. Discuss an analysis of the function of the novel's use of symbolism.
 6. Discuss an examination of the following themes and how they relate to each other:
 - a. Solidarity and Resistance
 - b. Exile and Separation
 7. Explain the philosophy of Existentialism as it is understood in Western Europe (as opposed to the existentialistic philosophies as we studied in *Hunger*). Then, based on that definition, briefly discuss whether you agree with Camus that this novel is not a work of Existentialism, or do you believe it is? Defend your position?
 8. Explain the notion of the Absurd. Then, explain and discuss how *The Plague* represents how the world deals with the philosophical notion of the Absurd, a theory which Camus himself helped to define.
 9. Extensively research and focus upon Camus' relationship to the French Intelligentsia, specifically his relationship to Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, and his reluctance to embrace the Existentialist philosopher label.
 10. Extensively research and discuss Camus's reluctance to embrace the Existentialist philosopher label along with your biography of Albert Camus
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The group of students assigned to conduct the Interactive Oral for *The Plague* must assign responsibilities and report to me by _____.

Each student is responsible for conducting a brief presentation in response to his or her assigned prompt, followed by facilitating a class discussion in response to the information or analysis he or she presented. Each student should conduct a total of 10 minutes for interactive oral presentation.

ALL students in class will write a reflection for each Interactive Oral Presentation, so not only do you need to fully participate, you need to keep notes on all information and analysis covered in these presentations/seminars on your Major Works Data Sheet.