

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest Act I Questions

1. Williams and Washington's behaviour toward Chief Bromden could best be described as...

Cruel  Kind

Explain.

2. Why did Nurse Ratched speak with Billy's mother near the beginning of the play?

3. As explained on page 14 McMurphy doesn't argue with the courts ruling that he is a psychopath and has to be put in a mental institute because he believed life in a mental institute would be preferable to the Work Farm. What do you think? Is a mental institution preferable?

Strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree



Explain.

4. What does it mean to be acute (p. 15)?

5. What does it mean to be chronic (p. 15)?

6. In Act I McMurphy's interactions with Nurse Ratched could BEST be described as...

Tranquil  Truculent

Explain.

7. List the rules that exist in the ward. Minimum FIVE.
8. McMurphy did some research before he came to the ward. He says “near half you boys in here pull compensation, three, four hundred dollars a month.” What does this mean?
9. During Group Therapy, Billy discusses his problem. What does he say it is?
10. What is unusual about Dr. Spivey’s behaviour when he arrives late to the Group Therapy session. Consider the ‘rank’ of Doctor verses Nurse.
11. According to Dr. Spivey, the principle of the Therapeutic Community means ,“the ward is society in miniature, and since society decides who is sane and who isn’t, you must measure up. Our goal here is a completely democratic ward, governed by the patients – working to restore you to the Outside. The important thing is to let nothing fester inside you.” (p. 23) After reading Act I do you think the ward is democratic and that patients help govern it?

Strongly disagree

disagree

agree

strongly agree



Explain.

12. Why do you think McMurphy gets so angry when the Group is discussing Harding’s issues concerning his wife?
13. After the group therapy session, the narration reveals the following: “There is silence among the men, a subtle sense of shame at once again having betrayed one of their number.” What do you think is meant by this?

14. Do you agree with McMurphy's assessment on page 26 of group therapy as a "Pecking Party"?

Strongly disagree disagree agree strongly agree



Explain.

15. How would you describe Harding's feelings toward Nurse Ratched...

Abhor  Adore

Explain.

16. What is EST as described on page 28?

17. On page 30 McMurphy makes a bet with the gang. What is this bet?

18. What makes McMurphy question whether or not Chief Bromden is deaf?

19. On page 33 McMurphy asks Aide Warren for toothpaste. He is not allowed. Discuss the ridiculousness of Ward Policy when it comes to the toothpaste rule.

20. How does Nurse Ratched shut down the idea of a carnival on the ward?

21. What happened, according to Billy, that began his stuttering?
22. Why does McMurphy bet the other men he can lift the panel when he so obviously cannot?
23. How does McMurphy 'win' the battle against Nurse Ratched over the World Series?