

Hole in My Life by Jack Gantos

SECTION 1 Quiz

- _____ 1. On page 3, the MAIN purpose of the information presented in the opening paragraph is to
- A. Show that the protagonist is a likeable character
 - B. Give background about the protagonist's personality
 - C. Introduce the unfairness of the American legal system
 - D. Present facts to prove that the events actually occurred
- _____ 2. Page 7 reveals that a character trait shared by Jack and his father is the
- A. Power of observation
 - B. Hatred of thieves
 - C. Desire to change
 - D. Love of writing
- _____ 3. The expression "professional acquaintance" at the bottom of page 9 in context means that Jack
- A. Had strong social skills
 - B. Lacked serious friendships
 - C. Relied on bribery of friends
 - D. Had only a few close friends
- _____ 4. On page 15, the MOST important difference between Jack and Mr. and Mrs. Bacon is their attitudes about
- A. Conserving money
 - B. Drinking and partying
 - C. Rules and punishments
 - D. The pursuit of happiness
- _____ 5. On pages 25 and 26 (up to "I was bored"), the meeting between Jack and Miss Hall demonstrate MAINLY a contrast between
- A. Disappointment and satisfaction
 - B. Immaturity and experience
 - C. Romance and desperation
 - D. Expectation and reality

- _____ 6. In the passage on page 30, starting with the paragraph that begins “As I watched...” and ending with “...didn’t mean I’d end up in prison,” on page 31, the MOST obvious feeling expressed by Jack is that he lacks
- A. Faith
 - B. Courage
 - C. Purpose
 - D. Intelligence
- _____ 7. Davy’s “frontier policy” on page 34 near the bottom of the page, means that at her hotel she,
- A. feels conflicts should be worked out among the guests
 - B. did not care about the health and safety of her guests
 - C. favoured some of her guests over others
 - D. Had no faith in the police service
- _____ 8. On page 40, the paragraph that begins “Reading On the Road...” expresses the idea that Jack is
- A. Desperate for risk taking
 - B. Still building his identity
 - C. Rejecting Dean Moriarty’s traits
 - D. Thinking with passion, not logic
- _____ 9. On page 53, in the paragraph beginning “I retreated to...” the STRONGEST feeling developed is
- A. Confusion
 - B. Anger
 - C. Regret
 - D. Chaos

SECTION 2 Quiz

- _____ 1. The MOST accurate statement about Jack in the paragraph on page 70 beginning “After that, there wasn’t much to say” is that he is
- A. Clouded by hashish
 - B. Clear in his thinking
 - C. Frustrated in his actions
 - D. Blinded by an opportunity
- _____ 2. Gantos’ decision to record events of their sailing journey demonstrates his
- A. Naivety about his new job
 - B. Interest in preserving a ship’s history
 - C. Anxiety to be a writer
 - D. Awareness of international requirements of sailing records
- _____ 3. The beginning sentence on page 99, “Everyone in prison has a story about how they were caught”, is an example of
- A. Distinctive writer’s voice
 - B. Foreshadow of Gantos’ fate
 - C. Irony of hindsight
 - D. Irresponsibility of prisoners for their crime
- _____ 4. On page 101, in the paragraph beginning “After our stopover...” the author uses an example of irony in the line
- A. “She was like a lookout waving her arm and giving us the all-clear.”
 - B. “Behind her, the skyscrapers of New York waited for us.”
 - C. “But were they a crowd of buyers or police?”
 - D. “Every boat I saw, every noise I heard...made me jump.”
- _____ 5. On page 112 in the paragraph beginning “By the second week...” and continuing just to the end of page 112, Jack indicates that he is surprised by the drug buyers’
- A. Amount of wealth
 - B. Wide variety of lifestyles
 - C. Mix of males and females
 - D. Level of education
- _____ 6. The last two paragraphs on page 118 show that Jack is feeling MAINLY
- A. Uneasy
 - B. Relieved
 - C. Exhausted
 - D. Maddened

- _____ 7. After running from the FBI, Gantos is greeted by the proprietress of The King's Court with "Welcome back to the Alamo". References to King's Court and Alamo foreshadow Gantos'
- A. Return to his starting point
 - B. Failure to escape judgement and punishment
 - C. Light sentence for his part in smuggling
 - D. Initiation to a writing career

SECTION 3 Quiz

- _____ 1. In the paragraph that begins “I looked at...” on page 129, the expression “I had no game...” in context means
- A. I knew these men were just playing with me.
 - B. I felt like a token in a board game.
 - C. I had no way to avoid the truth.
 - D. I liked treating this like sport.
- _____ 2. On page 136, the line that shows the MOST self-awareness is
- A. “Still, I didn’t care how blunt she was.”
 - B. “I didn’t know what to say right off.”
 - C. “I was beginning to feel how I had screwed up more lives than just my own.”
 - D. “He probably knew this already, but I suddenly had the urge to keep talking.”
- _____ 3. During the conversation between Jack and his father concerning car insurance starting on page 147 in the paragraph that begins “He pulled a set...” Jack’s state of mind changes from
- A. Accusation to contentment
 - B. Indecision to satisfaction
 - C. Outrage to responsibility
 - D. Violence to innocence
- _____ 4. On page 154 in the line “It was a bright smiling yellow that buzzed like a summer day” the author uses what literary technique?
- A. Metaphor to show Jack’s rebellion against prison
 - B. Personification to show the changes in Jack’s mood.
 - C. Imagery to point out that Jack cannot escape from prison.
 - D. Symbolism to point out Jack’s enjoyment of his surroundings.
- _____ 5. In the paragraph beginning “I also had a window...” on page 155, it is emphasized that Jack is
- A. Isolated with his thoughts
 - B. Fortunate to have a nice cell
 - C. Distracted by the other prisoners
 - D. Satisfied with the routine of prison

- _____ 6. On page 163, in the final paragraph, Jack describes his new job. He indicates that he is feeling
- A. Constantly worried
 - B. Intensely paranoid
 - C. Moderately amused
 - D. Cautiously optimistic
- _____ 7. The word “cop” in the context of the paragraph that begins “While I was...” on page 166, means
- A. Complete a transaction
 - B. Inform on the dealer
 - C. Become a dealer
 - D. Hide in a cell
- _____ 8. On pages 174 and 175, the MOST important purpose of Jack’s flashbacks to a Hallowe’en experience and other childhood images is that they
- A. Remind him of his parents
 - B. Distract him from prison duties
 - C. Bring him forgiveness and satisfaction
 - D. Provide him with pleasure and temporary escape
- _____ 9. On page 181, the paragraph that begins “But by the time...” and ending on page 182 with “...the best I could do” shows that Jack is capable of
- A. Self-hatred
 - B. Self-deception
 - C. Self-awareness
 - D. Self-centeredness
- _____ 10. Read the paragraph on page 185 that begins “For a long time...” Jack explains that the MAIN reason he had not yet become a writer was because he was too
- A. Worried about getting his work published
 - B. Unskilled to express his innermost feelings
 - C. Preoccupied with using drugs to settle into writing
 - D. Insecure to see the writing opportunities around him
- _____ 11. On page 199 in the paragraph beginning “I never returned...” right up to the end of the novel, Jack’s MOST obvious reason for leaving the hash he had buried in Central Park is that
- A. He was terrified of the violent consequences of getting caught.
 - B. His old partners in the drug deal had threatened him.
 - C. He wanted to keep buried that dark part of his past.
 - D. His need for money did not exist any more.

Personal Response Essay

Throughout his experience with smuggling, Jack Gantos wondered whether he was doing something wrong or simply afraid of punishment if he was caught. Afterwards, he chose a quotation by Oscar Wilde for the dedication of his novel:

I have learned this: It is not what one does that is wrong, but what one becomes as a consequence of it.

How does this quotation apply to Jack Gantos' experience?

Planning

Respond in several paragraphs to the following questions, supporting your opinions with specific detail from the novel and your personal experience.

Support from the Novel

- What did Gantos believe about his involvement in smuggling?
- What led him to conclude "I'm not doing anything wrong"?
- What did he become because of his involvement in smuggling?

Support from Personal Experience

- What do you believe about Gantos involvement in smuggling?
- Do you believe he did anything wrong? Explain.
- What can you learn about your life by reflecting on Jack Gantos' experience?

Hole in My Life Quiz Keys

SECTION 1

1. D
2. A
3. B
4. D
5. D
6. C
7. A
8. B
9. C

SECTION 2

1. D
2. A
3. B
4. A
5. B
6. A
7. B

SECTION 3

1. C
2. C
3. C
4. B
5. A
6. D
7. A
8. D
9. C
10. D
11. C

Key for Personal Response Essay

Students should consider details from the novel as they respond to the following questions:

- What did Gantos believe about his involvement in smuggling?
Gantos wondered more than once whether he was doing something wrong, which demonstrates that his conscience bothered him. He used drugs and alcohol to quiet his doubts about his behavior. He chose to focus on the promises of his accomplices (\$10 000) and his desire to enroll in a college writing course to explain his wrong-doing.
- What led him to conclude “I’m not doing anything wrong”?
Gantos adopted an “everybody’s doing it” attitude, which seemed to make it right (Everybody around him – Rik, Hamilton, others – used drugs and alcohol and engaged in illegal behavior.). However, keeping his activities a secret from his father is a strong indication that he knew what he was doing was wrong. Society has laws about behavior that, indeed, make certain actions wrong. Gantos was not being truthful with himself because he feared punishment; people who live justly are rarely punished.
- What did he become because of his involvement in smuggling?
Gantos had many negative and a few positive consequences of his smuggling experience. He was caught by the FBI and became a prisoner for over a year. His imprisonment brought shame and disappointment to his family. He became aware of inhumane behavior of individuals in prison and did whatever he could to avoid those people. His experience traumatized him, evidenced by his waking in the middle of the night anxious and fearful. His incarceration did enable him to address his addictions and to stay still long enough to pursue his goal of a career in writing.

Student support from personal experience will vary.