

## Discussion Questions for *A Student's Guide to Herman Melville* by MaryAnn Diorio, PhD

1. What was your overall impression of this book? Did you find it to be a good companion to the study of Herman Melville and his works?
2. What, in your opinion, was Melville's chief contribution to American literature?
3. What did you take away from reading this book? Did it inspire you to read more of Melville and to learn more about his work? Why or why not?
4. Melville did not achieve literary fame until after his death? How important is it to pursue our dreams, even though we may not live to see their fulfillment? In Hebrews 11: 13, the Bible talks of those who kept the faith even though they did not live to see the fulfillment of the promise in their lives? In light of what you know about Melville, what do you think he would have thought to discover that his dream had been fulfilled after all? Why?
5. Much of Melville's symbolism derives from the Holy Bible. Did your knowledge of the Bible—or lack thereof—affect your understanding of Melville's fiction, particularly *Moby Dick*? Please explain why and how?
6. Melville draws from extensive personal experience in his stories. How important do you think it is for a fiction writer to have experienced what he writes about? Extremely important? Very important? Somewhat important? Not important at all? Why did you respond as you did?
7. *Moby Dick* is considered a classic in American literature. A classic transcends time. Its meaning and application are universal. Do you agree that *Moby Dick* is a classic? Why or why not?

---

Copyright 2015-2023 by MaryAnn Diorio, PhD. All Rights Reserved.

*A Student's Guide to Herman Melville*

[Learn more here.](#)