

INFERNO ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

Answer the following questions with 3-4 sentences each. Remember to include examples from the poem to back up your claims.

1. **Respond:** Dante chose Virgil, his literary hero, as his guide through Hell. If you were faced with a harrowing journey through Hell, whom would you choose to be your guide?
2. **Analyze:** How does Dante show that God, not Satan, is the one who has absolute power in Hell? Why is this an important fact?
3. **Author's Purpose:** What was Dante's purpose for placing some of his contemporaries in Hell, even though they were not dead yet?
4. **Analyze:** How is God's divine judgment (making sure that each sin is punished appropriately) reflected in the punishments of the sinners?
5. **Respond:** Which group of sinners elicited the most pity from you? Explain.
6. **Author's Purpose:** Dante was a devout Catholic, but do you think he knew that corruption was a problem in the medieval church? What evidence is there in *Inferno* to back up your argument? Explain.
7. **Analyze:** Why must Dante pass through Hell first before proceeding on to Purgatory and Heaven? Think about the Christian symbolism of his journey.
8. **Author's Style:** What do the elements from Greek and Roman mythology add to Dante's concept of Hell?
9. **Respond:** Which part of *Inferno* was the most interesting to you?
10. **Theme:** Virgil tells Dante that his pity is misplaced, for to pity those that God has judged is to cast doubt on God's judgment. As Dante progresses through Hell, one of Virgil's goals for him is for him to lose his pity and accept the sovereignty of God's will and divine judgment. In your opinion should Dante pity the damned souls of Hell?
11. **Author's Purpose:** Dante is not only the author of *The Divine Comedy*, but he also makes himself the main character, an odd choice of a hero for an epic. Why would Dante choose to make himself the protagonist of this journey through the afterlife?
12. **Analyze:** Medieval thinkers viewed the universe as precise and highly-organized, so it is no surprise that Dante imagined the afterlife as highly-organized as well. How is this apparent in his presentation of Hell?
13. **Theme:** What statement is *Inferno* trying to make about the nature of evil? Explain.
14. **Create:** Dante wrote his poem in the 14th century, and since that time many new crimes against humanity have been created, yet critics have argued that all of these modern sins would still fit into the categories of sin that Dante devised. Think of a modern sin or crime and tell where it would fit into Dante's schemata for Hell.
15. **Respond:** Many critics hail Dante as one of literature's all-time greatest writers and *The Divine Comedy* as a timeless masterpiece. In your opinion does *Inferno* deserve the praise it receives?