

**SYNOPSIS**

Four days before her fifteenth birthday, Alice begins a diary to express her feelings. Frustrated with "the blaaaa-ness of the universe," she complains of her mother's nagging and the failure of a relationship with Roger. By September 20, Alice remarks: "It's my birthday. I'm 15. Nothing." Annoyed by seven extra pounds, she wishes to change herself. Her depression subsides after her father accepts an invitation to serve as dean of political science at a university.

Her parents look for a house that they can move into by mid-term. Alice loses ten pounds and drops Roger for Scott. Over Thanksgiving, Gran and Gramps have a good time with the family. Alice fears that moving away from them may not be the right decision. In early December, her mother makes her begin eating more sensibly.

In early January, the move to a new house is a fiasco of frazzled nerves, illness, no electricity, and furniture in the wrong places. On January 6, Alice enrolls at a new school and worries about wearing the right clothes and finding friends. On the first day, no one speaks to her. She leaves school on pretense of a headache. That night, her sister, brother, and mother tell of their new friends. Alice thinks of herself as a misfit. A month later, she bemoans her weight gain, bad skin, and oily hair.

In April, Alice looks forward to visiting her grandparents for the summer. In May, she meets Beth Baum, a bright, sensitive Orthodox Jewish girl whom Alice's parents like. Alice and Beth double-date to a movie; Alice dislikes her escort, Sammy Green, who is "all hands."

The summer visit to her grandparents bores Alice. Jill Peters, a former school friend, invites her to a party held July 9. The group sits together and plays "Button, button," an unknown game to Alice, who must drink a Coke selected from a tray. Alice's glass is laced with LSD. While Bill Thompson encourages her to relax, she observes the psychedelic drug overwhelming her senses and inhibitions.

Alice approves the drug as "ecstatic" and "glorious" and looks forward to trying pot. A date with Bill introduces her to torpedoes and speed. Several days later, Gramps suffers a heart attack. Alice makes a half-hearted vow to give up drugs. On August 3, Alice goes to an acid party at Bill's house. Three days later, she loses her virginity while high on acid.

Back at home on August 14, Alice is depressed and fearful of pregnancy. On August 26 her period starts, indicating that she is not pregnant. In September, Alice irons her hair and lets it fall straight to her shoulders. The changes in her hairstyle, dress, and attitude causes friction with her parents.

On September 10, Alice meets Chris at a boutique and accepts pep pills. The two become friends and commiserate about the "Establishment" and annoying parents. Alice feels

more popular in school since she began popping bennies and dexies and losing weight. Her behavior upsets her father.

The girls date Richie and Ted, college students who claim to be studying medicine. Richie teaches Alice to smoke marijuana and wants to introduce her to hash. She learns to smoke pot in a hookah. Out of love for him, Alice sells pot and acid to children and teens.

On October 18, Alice and Chris discover Richie and Ted are homosexuals who using them as drug pushers. The girls over-react and take an early morning bus to San Francisco. Alice sends a letter to the police telling them where Richie stashes drugs and gets a job in a lingerie store. She grows homesick.

Chris lands a terrific job. On November 22, Shelia, Chris's employer, invites the girls to a party, where the girls smoke pot. Alice decides to take birth control pills so she won't have to wonder about whether or not she conceived while stoned on drugs. On December 3, Shelia and her boy friend Rod introduce the girls to heroin and take turns raping them. The experience shocks the girls into fleeing the drug scene. They plan to use their savings of \$700 to open a boutique.

On December 6, they find a small apartment near Berkeley. They paint and make over their showroom. In addition to selling trinkets, they operate a TV lounge for local kids. The girls buy a used stereo; the music makes Alice cry and think of Christmas at home. They weary of adolescent conversation about drugs. On December 22, Alice telephones her mother; the next day, she returns home. Alice is forgiven. Her grandparents visit for the holidays. Alice shows pictures of their shop, but conceals the rough times in San Francisco.

After a joyous New Year party, Alice enrolls in school. Joe Driggs ends her euphoria by asking to buy drugs; Lane twists her arm and orders her to find him a new connection. Joe and Lane ruin her dance date with George. On January 23, she joins Chris in smoking pot. Lane is arrested and Chris's house raided. Alice's parents send her to a psychiatrist.

In early March, Alice's second major lapse begins with "copilots" passed to her in school. She travels to Denver, but is so stoned that she doesn't know how she got there. She hitchhikes to Coos Bay, Oregon, and makes friends with Doris, another user. They move on to a rally in Southern California. Alice fills her diary with a hazy list of sex acts that drive her to consider suicide or another try at kicking drugs. She calls her parents and takes stock of her physical and emotional collapse. In a ritual act, she concludes one diary and begins a second one.

On April 6, Alice undergoes a second reunion with her family and grandparents. She returns to school and finds the principal convinced that she is worthless. Neither straight stu-

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dents nor drug users believe her change of heart. On May 1, Gramps suffers a stroke; four days later he dies. She takes hope from her father, who talks to her about adult problems.

Someone puts a joint in Alice's purse. She falls in love with Joel Reems, a decent freshman she meets in the university library. While babysitting for the Larsens, she refuses to let Jan keep baby Lu Ann because Jan is stoned. Jan threatens Alice and spreads rumors about her. She fears for her safety and for that of her family.

On June 16, Gran dies. Joel consoles Alice. Summer vacation seems to distance her from her tormentors. Alice mistakenly eats LSD-tainted chocolate-covered peanuts and suffers a severe delusion that worms and maggots devour her genitals. She tears her flesh while scratching at the imaginary insects and suffers broken toes, bruises, and a concussion.

Jan and Marcie testify that Alice is a drug pusher. The false testimony results in a stay at the Youth Center of the State Mental Hospital. The prison-like atmosphere and insane inmates depress her. Dr. Miller insists that she admit she is an addict, but she believes that she has no reason for drug treatment. Alice's father gets Jan to retract her testimony and attains Alice's release.

On August 9, Alice returns home. On her sixteenth birthday, Joel gives her a friendship ring. She completes the second diary. The epilogue reveals that, three weeks later, her parents find her dead of a drug overdose.

### BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Composed by an anonymous author, *Go Ask Alice* has intrigued many readers. The title is attributed to Beatrice Mathews Sparks (January 15, 1918 - ), a former youth counselor from Goldberg, Idaho, who oversaw publication of the diary. A resident of Provo, Utah, she was educated at the University of California and Brigham Young University and worked at the Utah State Mental Hospital, the source of her experience with young drug users. While touring the country to talk with troubled teens and interested civic groups, Sparks found kids in trouble at all social and economic levels. The focus of their pain is the lack of someone to understand their isolation and hopelessness. She publishes their journals and writes books aimed at ending their despair. In addition, Sparks has contributed columns to the *California Intermountain News*, *Malibu Monitor*, and *Santa Monica Outlook*.

### CRITIC'S CORNER

The unnamed writer of *Go Ask Alice* has earned notoriety for a frank discussion of drugs, sex, and street life. Challenged repeatedly since it was first removed from school libraries in Kalamazoo, Michigan, in 1974, the book has met with assaults across the country. Complaints have ranged from offensive language and graphic sex to encouraging theft and drug use, immorality, and pornography. Despite objections to the raw side of the diarist's life, *Go Ask Alice* was named American Library Association's "Best Book for Young Adults" of 1972 and earned the Christopher Award.

### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To discuss the effect of low self-esteem
2. To list various symptoms of depression
3. To examine the role of teenage emotional conflict in drug use

4. To define victimization
5. To discuss the legal implications of drug dealing
6. To explain the need to run away
7. To chart the downward spiral of drug addiction
8. To discuss the allure of drug and sex parties
9. To contrast settings
10. To account for acts of compassion and caring

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To describe why Alice writes two diaries
2. To note overt and covert evidence of Alice's self-denigration
3. To evaluate decisions that lead Alice back to her family
4. To account for Joel's continued love and support
5. To analyze scenes in which Alice maligns the drug culture
6. To comprehend how and why users bait Alice
7. To analyze the incident that leads to Alice's hospitalization
8. To discuss Mario Mellani as a father figure
9. To evaluate Alice's vulnerability in her last months
10. To project how Babbie will survive the Youth Center
11. To list types of drugs and their effects on users
12. To explain the tie between Alice's drug use and her loss of virginity

### MEANING STUDY

Below are words, phrases, sentences, or thought units that have a particular meaning in the diary. Explain the meaning of each. Dates and page numbers pinpoint the context in which the item appears.

1. The Jewish Hebrew faith is a lot different than ours. (May 24, p. 27)  
*(Alice's intimacy with Beth Baum introduces numerous topics, including religion. Alice is curious to learn that Jews meet on Saturday and that a focus of their faith is the expectation of a Messiah or savior like the Christian Jesus. The sect that Beth's grandparents belong to are Orthodox, which requires strict adherence to Mosaic law.)*
2. Jill called at exactly 10:32. I know because I'd been sitting by the phone with my watch in my hand trying to send ESP signals to her. (July 8, p. 32)  
*(Alice's curiosity and interest in many topics bobs up in her writing at the beginning of her journal-keeping. She applies extra-sensory perception to her hopes that Jill will call. The elation of Alice's being invited to an auto-graph party demonstrates how much she longs to be a part of normal teen gatherings. The drive for inclusion is common to adolescence, a time when young people are often more group oriented.)*
3. Imagine losing my virginity four nights before seeing Roger again. The awful irony of it. (August 10, p. 45)  
*(Alice demonstrates a high level of awareness in her musings. She recognizes that a meaningless episode of casual sex with a fellow drug user has deprived her of a more significant moment—the long-awaited sexual encounter with someone she loves. The wry twist of events dismays Alice and causes her to long for a confidante with whom to discuss turns of fate.)*

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4. Anyway I seem to be doing less and less right, I'm getting so that no matter what I do I can't please the Establishment. (September 6, p. 50)  
*(In the 1970s, a common slang term for adults, government, religion, or authority figures in general was "establishment," a noun that appeared in both common and proper form in the media and conversation. To Alice, the term is a collective reference for her parents, teachers, principal, and other people in power.)*
5. Dad and Mom are constantly harping about the way I look. . . . What it amounts to is they are so ultra-conservative that they don't even know what's happening. (September 12, p. 52)  
*(Alice believes that her parents' beliefs so separates them from the drug culture so that they have no common ground for evaluating morality, dress, and behavior. This chasm between life styles cuts Alice off from honest discussion of her problems, ambitions, and fears. Chris also shares the problem of distancing from the older generation. She comments, "Mom's the 'pillar of society' in this town. . . . She holds up everybody and everything but me, and man have I been let down.")*
6. At first I took too deep a drag and almost choked to death, so Richie told me to suck in open-mouthed gulps to mix as much air in as possible. But that didn't work too well either and after a while Ted gave up and brought out a hookah pipe. (September 26, p. 55)  
*(The hookah, a decorative Oriental water pipe consists of a tank or bowl, a network of flexible tubes, and a mouthpiece. As the substance in the top—hashish, marijuana, hemp, or tobacco—is smoked, water serves as a filter and coolant.)*
7. There were only four of us, and Shelia and Rod, her current "boyfriend," introduced us to heroin. (December 3, p. 72)  
*(The use of heroin pushes Chris and Alice into such a dependent state that they swear off drug use. Both sedative and painkiller, heroin is a bitter, odorless crystalline narcotic and soporific that derives from opium. It addicts users psychologically to states of euphoria that cloud the memory of acts committed under its influence. In summary, Alice remarks, "We've had it! The garbage that goes with drugs makes the price too goddamned high for anyone to pay.")*
8. We've been spending ten hours a day looking for a place with no luck, now we've decided maybe we should start a shop over close to Berkeley. (December 5, p. 74)  
*(This attractive area on the east shore of San Francisco Bay was notorious in the 1970s as a hangout for drug dealers and addicts. The influence of thousands of students at the University of California produced rallies, demonstrations, and strong demands for political change.)*
9. Oh, damn, damn, damn, it's happened again. I don't know whether to scream with glory or cover myself with ashes and sackcloth, whatever that means. (January 24, p. 89)  
*(A biblical custom dating to Old Testament times, the display of distress, suffering, sorrow, or self-abasement requires the wearing of coarse fabric woven of camel or*

*goat hair and the sprinkling of ashes on the head to demonstrate mourning, woe, or contrition. In eastern Mediterranean societies, such a display was an outward show of inner emotional conflict or loss.)*

10. He told me to sit here till it stopped raining, then go down to some kind of Salvation Army type place. (? , p. 95)  
*(At an unidentified date in early March, Alice sits in the rain under a bush in the park in Coos Bay, Oregon. When she asks for help at a nearby church, the janitor directs her to a relief agency that Alice identifies with the Salvation Army. Begun in London's East End in 1865 by William Booth, a British evangelist, the Salvation Army offers rudimentary shelter, clothing, hot food, and Christian instruction to all who seek aid.)*

### COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages from the diary.

#### Questions 1-5 Literal Level

1. What is the time frame of Alice's downward spiral?  
*(Beginning in September, Alice wars against her dull, unsatisfactory life. Remarks contained in two diaries conclude with an epilogue briefly describing her death. In between, these events are most significant to her life and her demise:*

<i>Sept. 20</i>	<i>Alice celebrates her fifteenth birthday.</i>
<i>Jan. 6</i>	<i>Alice enters a new school.</i>
<i>July 9</i>	<i>Jill Peters hosts a drug party.</i>
<i>Aug. 6</i>	<i>Alice loses her virginity to Bill Thompson.</i>
<i>Sept. 10</i>	<i>Alice meets Chris.</i>
<i>Oct. 16</i>	<i>Alice and Chris realize that their suppliers are using them.</i>
<i>Oct. 18</i>	<i>The girls run away and settle in San Francisco.</i>
<i>Dec. 6</i>	<i>They move to Berkeley to establish a boutique.</i>
<i>Dec. 22</i>	<i>Alice telephones her mother and returns home.</i>
<i>early March</i>	<i>Alice travels to Denver while on drugs and wanders in Coos Bay, Oregon.</i>
<i>April 6</i>	<i>Alice reunites a second time with family.</i>
<i>July 7</i>	<i>Alice takes charge of Lu Ann Larsen.</i>
<i>August 9</i>	<i>Alice returns from the Youth Center.</i>
<i>Sept. 20</i>	<i>Joel gives Alice a friendship ring for her sixteenth birthday.</i>
<i>Oct. 14</i>	<i>Alice dies of an unexplained drug overdose.)</i>
2. What clues suggest that Alice is vulnerable to drugs?  
*(Although typically bored and discontent with parental restrictions and life in general, Alice is affable and intelligent and seems well-adjusted among family, consisting of loving maternal grandparents, father, mother, brother Tim, and sister Alex. At school, however, she lacks confidence with friends and complains of being overweight, having bad hair and skin, and lacking friends. Her attempts to change her appearance cause consternation in her parents, who insist that she eat more and stop*

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ironing her hair and dressing like a hippie. Friendship with casual drug users increases Alice's rebellion, sarcasm, and despair. After she adds sexual promiscuity to her list of misbehaviors, she moves quickly to illicit drug sales, pushing, and running away from home.)

3. When do Alice's parents begin to suspect that their daughter has come under the influence of drugs?

(On February 23, Alice reports a drug raid the night before at Chris's house. By acting innocent for the police, the two girls convince them and their parents that "it was our very first time and that nothing had really happened." Temporarily, Alice believes that she has successfully duped the authorities and her parents, but wonders, "how they knew we were there.")

The next day, Alice's mother hints that she is worried, but fails to put her fears into words. Instead, she takes Alice for a medical checkup. Alice continues her fakery to Dr. Langley, who treats her for insomnia. The phony innocence convinces her mother so thoroughly that she feels guilty for doubting Alice.

During a period of probation, Alice and Chris are separated. Alice's parents send her to a psychiatrist as "part of the bargain to keep me out of court." They watch her closely. However, no authority prevents Alice from receiving drugs in school. By March 5, Alice has departed home on a drug-induced flight to Denver.)

4. What incidents convince Alice to call home from Coos Bay, Oregon?

(Unattached from time and reality, Alice writes snatches of impressions as she and Doris leave Denver for a rally in Southern California. The unidentified incidents describe an abusive truck driver, the rally, drugs and alcohol, stoned drug users, and the vision of herself as "a Priestess of Satan." Hostility clouds her memories as she imagines herself a lesbian and feels nauseated. Hazy recall of sex, police, a pregnant female user, and rain end with a plea to God for help.)

During the night, more events turn Alice against drug use: a girl gives birth, another miscarries, and two unidentified boys die from overdoses. A lengthy talk with an old priest concludes with his call to Alice's parents. Meanwhile, Alice studies her face in the mirror of signs of aging and neglect. She is overjoyed to hear her family's voices on the phone and to know that they still love and accept her.)

5. What mood is Alice in before her death?

(Alice is cheerful and anticipates her sixteenth birthday party on September 20. She is overjoyed with Joel's gift of "a white enameled friendship ring with little flowers all over it and I shall wear it until I die." The ten minutes she spends alone with Joel on the porch convince her that "he likes me in a quiet, soft, gentle, permanent, lasting way.")

Alert and cheerful on September 21, Alice inscribes her final entry around five o'clock in the morning. She dreams of going back to school and takes strength from Joel and "super straight friends." She determines that she has outlived her need for a diary, which seems a part of adolescent insecurity. In future, Alice intends to discuss difficulties with other people rather than to com-

mit them to a journal. Optimistically, she signs off, "See ya.")

### Questions 6 - 8 Interpretive Level

6. How does Alice describe her tenuous emotional security?

(On December 26, Alice acknowledges the usual seasonal letdown and comments that passing from child to adult has left her unstable and sapped of enthusiasm. In a buoyant mood swing, she exclaims: "I am one of the adults! And I love it! They have accepted me as an individual, as a personality, as an entity. I belong! I am important! I am somebody!" The comment suggests that Alice is finding a comfortable niche among her elders.)

In the subsequent paragraph, Alice returns to the past to describe the insecurity of adolescence, which derives from being treated like a child but being expected to behave like an adult. To Alice, "It is a difficult, lost, vacillating time. Perhaps I have passed over the worst part." She concludes that she lacks the strength or courage to relive the past period of trial and ambivalence.)

7. What questions does the epilogue leave for the reader's consideration?

(The third-person narrator adds the fact that Alice dies three weeks after closing her second diary. The narrator proposes that Alice may have killed herself or accidentally overdosed. The questions recall the unexplained chocolate-covered peanuts at the Larsens' house, which caused severe delusions that led to physical injury. How the tainted candy appeared is never explained, but Alice hints that Jan may have set her up as a means of vengeance.)

The last two sentences refocus the diary on its greater significance. Beyond the death of Alice, the narrator implies that the book's meaning lies in the collected thoughts of only one of the thousands of drug users who died in 1971. The implications force the reader to consider an ongoing crisis filled with needless suffering and death and shattered homes, overworked hospital and police staffs, and wasted lives.)

8. Why do drug users persecute Alice at school?

(After Alice returns to school, she realizes that straight teenagers doubt her convictions and drug users consider her a turncoat and informer. Jan's name-calling of "Nancy Nice and Mary Pure" indicates that others feel insecure with a reformed user around them. They hide a joint in her purse, set her locker on fire with a burning roach, and attack and abuse her.)

Even though Alice makes no attempt to inform on Jan, Marcie, and the others, they strike out at an insider who possesses enough information to disrupt the local drug scene. Another possibility is envy of Alice's strength. If she succeeds in her commitment to go straight, they must admit to themselves that their lifestyle has trapped them and that their devotion to drugs is really addiction. To reassure themselves, they must destroy Alice.)

### Questions 9 and 10 Critical Level

9. What does the diary illustrate about Alice?

(More than a typical teen or model drug victim, Alice is a real person. She is decidedly moral, even in her most

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*destructive mode. She realizes that sexual depravity and drug selling, especially to young children, is not acceptable to her conscience. Her turmoil interweaves pangs of guilt and shame with the grief of her grandfather's illness and death. After his funeral, the outward show of loss turns into an inward fear of death, a possibility that Alice admits is part of the drug scene. The feelings of loss grow more acute with the death of her grandmother.*

*While Alice is on the road, physical discomforts and the examples of other drug users remind her that life at home is restrictive, but the price is small in comparison to living a clean life and having the respect of her family. The major rub in Alice's return is the reunion with school friends, who lack her parents' willingness to forgive past indiscretions.)*

### 10. What do readers learn from Alice?

*(From the beginning, the book illustrates a clear call for help from a misguided, insecure young woman. As Alice turns to journal entries as a method of clarifying her values, self-image, and ambitions, she realizes that she is immature and that her logic is often occluded by childish reasoning, rationalizing, and short-term methods of avoiding pain. Readers hear repeated cries for someone to confide in, someone to accept Alice's shockingly honest reflections on self, delusions, and acts that are both illegal and morally unconscionable.*

*Beyond the gutter talk that colors Alice's most depraved moments, she expresses herself well. She uses language as a method of clearing her conscience of burdens and of reestablishing her link with home and loved ones. Readers can understand her need for a male peer to satisfy a need to be loved and accepted. The picture of a young high school student who worries about gaining weight and fears that she will not find someone to share her life with fits the adolescent quandary of the outsider. Alice's life attains some nobility through her commitment to candor and her voluntary confession on paper of a hellish addiction that brings her into repeated contact with illicit, degrading behaviors, often committed under the influence of drugs. Although she sells drugs to children, her main victim is herself. Alice's failed attempt at self-preservation is a lesson worthy of study.)*

### Questions 11 and 12 Creative Level

11. Contrast various examples of runaways, rebels, and misfits from literature. In addition to the diarist, comment on Carson McCullers's *Member of the Wedding*, Conrad Richter's *The Light in the Forest*, Bette Greene's *Summer of My German Soldier*, Paul Zindel's *The Pigman*, J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*, and Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*.
12. Create a role for a social worker who will visit Alice and help her overcome the effects of drug abuse and physical and emotional trauma, suggest activities that will help develop self-esteem.

### LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of the anonymous diarist's style, present the following terms:

**first-person narrative** a story or series of actions told from the vantage point of a single observer. *Go Ask Alice* exam-

ines the daily life of an articulate white fifteen-year-old from an educated family. As a re-creation of youthful thought and action, the diary stresses slang, immaturity, and adolescent ambivalence toward the adult world. The power of narrative from the point of view of a victim reaches its high point with the epilogue, an appended third-person explanation of the abrupt end of the diary and of Alice's equally inexplicable death from a drug overdose.

**historic milieu** the setting of fictional events in a real period of history. The use of California settings during the early 1970s parallels an historical fact: teen runaways congregated in West Coast cities that were featured in the news, rock music, movies, and teen fiction. The overflow of young pushers and prostitutes produced a drug subculture and street lingo peculiar to undisciplined youth who were unprepared for the job market and incapable of making decisions about living conditions and mores. The era depicted by *Go Ask Alice* came to be known as the "drop-out" generation, a time of easy sex, flagrant drug use, tattered dress, and unstable relationships among drifters and opportunists.

**rhetorical question** a thought question generated to provoke the reader's consideration rather than to elicit a verbal answer. The rhetorical question may or may not be followed by a question mark, for example, from *Go Ask Alice*: "Isn't it weird how sometimes time goes so fast you can't even keep up with it, like it's been going the last two or three weeks." In this model, the diarist is obviously referring to herself, even though she structures the question in a chummy second person. The use of this rhetorical style injects a personal touch and implies that the questioner has no actual listener to ask.

### ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

#### Art

1. Draw contrasting murals or posters to demonstrate these paired vignettes: holidays with Gran and Gramps/street life in San Francisco, attending algebra class/coping with Babbie's problems at the Youth Center, baking Christmas rolls/Jan's court testimony, or walking across campus with Joel/learning to smoke marijuana in a hookah.
2. Create a bulletin board illustrating the changes in the boutique from the jewelry display to a lounge for teens.

#### Geography

Draw a map illustrating landmarks in the text. Include Sausalito, San Francisco, Haight-Ashbury, Chinatown, Golden Gate Park, and Berkeley in California as well as Manhattan, the Great Salt Lake, Chicago, Denver, and Coos Bay, Oregon.

#### Social Studies and Law

1. Suggest ways that the Salvation Army and other relief organizations can help people shake free of addiction and the drug culture. Mention ways that counselors can reunite families and provide support while the drug user returns to normal life. Comment on Alice's preference for group therapy.
2. Interview a judge or police or probation officer. Learn the types of punishment that youth offenders can expect for buying and using controlled substances or for pushing drugs. Ask if there are harsher penalties for selling to underage youth at elementary schools, parks, or playgrounds.

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### Computers

1. Using a word processor, compose a list of drugs and the symptoms they cause. Include first aid for vomiting, seizures, disorientation, delusions, shock, flashback, respiratory distress, and cardiac arrest.
2. Summarize chapters in psychology books that describe personality types at risk of drug involvement, particularly the isolated teen suffering low self-esteem. List methods by which families can prevent addiction to alcohol and drugs, for instance, by closer after-school supervision or increased family involvement in vacations and holidays.

### Science and Mental Health

1. Describe aloud the cause of malnutrition in drug addicts.
2. Chart the immediate and long-term effects of these substances on the body: amphetamines, barbiturates, hallucinogens, marijuana, heroin, glue, alcohol, and tobacco.
3. Explain the cause and effects of drug flashback.

### Language and Literature

1. Explain to a small group why people engaged in illicit behavior make up an underground vocabulary, such as copilots, holding, lid, bennies, dexies, hearts, downers, uppers, O.D., LSD, DMT, smack, DT, B. P., blasted, jolt, dopers, hash, stoned, meth, schizo, crashpad, and stash. Account for the rapid change in these terms and for local development of new terms.
2. Compose an extended definition of journal. Explain why a day-by-day examination of the change in Alice's personality is useful to a study of drug abusers. Cite examples of altered language and syntax as Alice's self-control disintegrates.

### History and Current Events

1. Lead a discussion of problems unique to the drug war, for example, creation of designer drugs, importation of foreign substances, search and seizure laws, home-grown marijuana, adulterated drugs, and differentiation of penalties for youth and adults.
2. Make an oral report on differing political opinions concerning maximum penalties for drug dealers and users. Comment on the victimization of poor minority youth and the availability of boot camps, work farms, work release, prisons, halfway houses, methadone treatment, group therapy, and counseling for addicts.

### STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Explain in a paragraph how you would assist a seriously ill babysitter at a neighbor's house. Discuss where you would call for help and what first aid measures you would apply to save the victim from choking, asphyxiation, seizure, or shock. List local phone numbers that supply immediate aid, for example, 911.
2. Join a discussion group to determine how parents and educators can prevent victimization of returning drug users in a school or community. Comment on the use of treatment facilities, youth centers, psychiatry, or restrictions to daily activities.
3. Draw stage settings for a dramatization of a crucial scene, such as the church janitor's assistance to Alice, opening the jewelry boutique, attending Gramps's burial,

taking the early morning bus to San Francisco, double-dating to a dirty movie with Beth, and arriving at Shelia's apartment for a party.

4. Contrast sentence type, length, and grammatical style as Alice degenerates from normal teen to addict. Account for her need to express hostility, cynicism, disillusion, and despair.
5. Explain in a short speech why censors choose *Go Ask Alice* as a work to be banned from private readers, schools, and libraries. Counter these efforts with reasons why the work is beneficial to young readers, parents, educators, ministers, and counselors.
6. Dramatize in a short skit a conversation between Alice and Joel explaining why she ran away to San Francisco, how she and Chris lived, and what types of jobs they found. Conclude with Alice's decision to call her parents and return home.
7. Explain in a theme the significance to the diary of this quotation: "Why is life so difficult? Why can't we just be ourselves and have everyone accept us the way we are? Why can't I just be me as I am now and not have to concentrate and fume and get upset about my past and my future?"
8. Write a scene in which Alice discovers that high school pushers have targeted Tim and Alex. Have Alice give advice about avoiding peer pressure to try drugs.
9. Rewrite passages of the diary from a male point of view. Indicate how living on the streets presents different challenges to male and female drifters, runaways, drug sellers, and users.
10. Draw a cause-and-effect diagram illustrating how Gramps's stroke and death affect Alice, Gran, and other members of the family. Add a segment to show how Alice's delusions about worms and maggots derives from her contemplation of Gramps's burial.

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List examples of Alice's concern over hair, skin, weight, height, clothing, manners, friends, personality, sexual promiscuity, and drug use as determiners of popularity.
2. Compile a list of scenes that reflect Alice's idealism about sex, marriage, love, and family life.
3. Compose a scene in which Babbie is released from the Youth Center and reunites with Alice.
4. Make a character list and explain the relationship of each to Alice. Include Beth Baum, Jan, George, Bill Thompson, Gerta, Alice's parents and grandparents, Tim, Alex, Lu Ann, Jill Peters, school nurse, principal, Dr. Miller, an old priest, Lane, Richie, Mrs. Larsen, the judge, Dr. Langley, Marj, Doris, Shelia and Rod, Joe Driggs, Joel, Carter, Chris, Mario Mellani, Marcie, and Dr. Langley.

### BEATRICE SPARKS'S OTHER PUBLISHED WORKS

*Key to Happiness* (1967)

*Voices* (1978)

*Jay's Journal* (1979)

*It Happened to Nancy* (1994)

## GO ASK ALICE

### RELATED READING

Judy Blume's *Tiger Eyes*  
Caroline B. Cooney's *The Face on the Milk Carton*  
Robert Cormier's *I Am the Cheese*  
Jean Craighead George's *The Talking Earth* and *Julie of the Wolves*  
Zlata Filipovich's *Zlata's Diary*  
Bette Greene's *Summer of My German Soldier*  
Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*  
John Neufeld's *Lisa, Bright and Dark*  
J. D. Salinger's *Catcher in the Rye*  
Cynthia Voigt's *Izzy, Willy-Nilly*  
Paul Zindel's *The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the-Moon Marigolds*

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### ANSWER KEY

#### VOCABULARY TEST

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. contractor    | 9. affidavit      |
| 2. matinee       | 10. compassionate |
| 3. chauffeur     | 11. humanity      |
| 4. panhandle     | 12. exotic        |
| 5. spewing       | 13. enameled      |
| 6. no-man's-land | 14. sanity        |
| 7. spontaneity   | 15. strifes       |
| 8. articulate    |                   |

#### COMPREHENSION TEST A:

##### Part I: Matching (30 points)

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. O  | 11. G |
| 2. L | 7. K  | 12. D |
| 3. C | 8. B  | 13. N |
| 4. I | 9. E  | 14. H |
| 5. A | 10. J | 15. M |

##### Part II: Fill-in (20 points)

- Beth, telephone calls
- monkeys, Alice's father
- Dr. Langley, tranquilizers
- nurse, french fries
- Joe Driggs, Lane

##### Part III: Cause and Effect (20 points)

Answers will vary.

##### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST B

##### Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. O | 6. H  | 11. N |
| 2. J | 7. C  | 12. L |
| 3. A | 8. F  | 13. D |
| 4. E | 9. K  | 14. M |
| 5. I | 10. G | 15. B |

##### Part II: Short Answer (10 points)

Answers will vary.

##### Part III: Identification (30 points)

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1.   | 6.    | 11.   |
| 2. X | 7. X  | 12. X |
| 3. X | 8. X  | 13.   |
| 4.   | 9.    | 14.   |
| 5. X | 10. X | 15. X |

##### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.

**GO ASK ALICE**

**VOCABULARY TEST**

Using the terms that follow, complete each sentence below with a synonym for the underlined words. You will have answers left over.

affidavit	detention	institution	sanity
articulate	enameled	matinee	spewing
chauffeur	exotic	no-man's-land	spontaneity
compassionate	fen	panhandle	strifes
contractor	humanity	privilege	wayward

1. Her parents were divorced when she was ten and she was sent to live with her father who's a builder \_\_\_\_\_ and who's remarried.
2. Anyway what really was going on was that Babbie had been introduced to drugs by some 32 year old man she met in an afternoon \_\_\_\_\_ movie.
3. The driver \_\_\_\_\_ took them to school and picked them up and they never saw any of the money they made.
4. When she tried to beg \_\_\_\_\_ some money to call home, no one would give her any.
5. They are like the ravings of the idiotic spouting \_\_\_\_\_ woman who is now part of my inmate family.
6. . . . they're afraid of being sent again to limbo \_\_\_\_\_, a world of wandering and being alone.
7. Babbie and I sat and talked for a while and I put up her hair, but all the joy and spirit \_\_\_\_\_ has gone out of life.
8. Tom is a handsome, likeable, extremely understandable \_\_\_\_\_ young guy.
9. Dad also said that he finally got Jan to sign a statement \_\_\_\_\_ saying that I wasn't pushing at the school.
10. He is the most warm, loving \_\_\_\_\_, forgiving, most understanding person in the world, and I can't wait for fall when we can be together again.
11. It was so jammed with people \_\_\_\_\_ that we were tangled like sauerkraut in a jar and smelled just as bad.
12. Everybody's downstairs plotting and the whole house is filled with mouth-watering fragrances fit for kings and foreign \_\_\_\_\_ princesses.
13. Joel gave me a white painted \_\_\_\_\_ friendship ring with little flowers all over it and I shall wear it until I die.
14. In fact, you saved my composure \_\_\_\_\_ a hundred, thousand, million times.
15. Don't you agree? I hope so, for you are my dearest friend and I shall thank you always for sharing my tears and heartaches and my struggles and figths \_\_\_\_\_, and my joys and happinesses.



**GO ASK ALICE**

**COMPREHENSION TEST A**

**Part I: Matching (30 points)**

Match the following descriptions with characters. Choose your answers from the list of characters below. You may use some of the answers more than once and some not at all.

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| _____ 1. likes sleeping on the floor                                 | A. Joel           |
| _____ 2. dean of political science                                   | B. Gran           |
| _____ 3. invites Alice to Sausalito                                  | C. Mario          |
| _____ 4. looks like a model  | D. Alex           |
| _____ 5. needs a scholarship   | E. Richie         |
| _____ 6. breaks a leg  | F. Tim            |
| _____ 7. fractures two toes  | G. Beth           |
| _____ 8. sells her house   | H. Babbie         |
| _____ 9. supplies Chris and Alice with drugs                         | I. Shelia         |
| _____ 10. helps Alice in a dream                                     | J. Gramps         |
| _____ 11. goes to Jewish camp  | K. Alice          |
| _____ 12. quickly makes friends with Tricia                          | L. Alice's father |
| _____ 13. takes Alex, Tim, and Alice on the train to New York        | M. Jan and Marcie |
| _____ 14. seems unlikely to escape the seaminess of the Youth Center | N. Alice's mother |
| _____ 15. stalks Alice   | O. Mrs. Larsen    |

**Part II: Fill-in (20 points)**

Fill in the paired blanks with answers that complete each statement.

1. While \_\_\_\_\_ is away at summer camp, Alice visits her grandparents and is allowed to buy a gold ring and make two \_\_\_\_\_.
2. To Alice, she and Babbie are like \_\_\_\_\_ behind bars until \_\_\_\_\_ sets her free by getting Jan to recant her testimony.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ questions Alice about the cause of her insomnia; on a second visit, he gives her \_\_\_\_\_.
4. On the first day of school in the new location, Alice goes to the \_\_\_\_\_ to complain of a headache, then gorges on chocolate malt, \_\_\_\_\_, and a Hershey bar.
5. After the New Year, \_\_\_\_\_ tries to buy drugs from Alice; \_\_\_\_\_ twists her arm and demands a new connection.

**GO ASK ALICE**

**Part III: Cause and Effect (20 points)**

Justify each of these statements

1. Mom and Dad believe Alice's story of harassment at school because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Lu Ann is safe from harm because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Beth's Jewish friend is a bad date because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Selling drugs to small children distresses Alice because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Students consider Alice a snitch because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. Opening a boutique is difficult because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. Alice does not recall going to Denver because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Alice's death is unexplained because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Friendship with Gerta is unsatisfactory because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Gramps's death dismays Alice because \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Part IV: Essay (30 points)**

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Account for Alice's desire to be liked and accepted.
2. Discuss Alice's relationship with Richie.
3. Describe Alice's first drug party.
4. Summarize significant scenes of family life.

**GO ASK ALICE**

**COMPREHENSION TEST B**

**Part I: Setting Identification (30 points)**

Identify the settings that fit the following descriptions. Select your answers from the list that follows.

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| ___ 1. Stereo music reminds Alice of home.                                  | A. Coos Bay park               |
| ___ 2. Joel gives Alice an enameled friendship ring.                        | B. principal's office          |
| ___ 3. A church janitor helps Alice find shelter from the rain.             | C. dirty movie                 |
| ___ 4. Chris and Alice realize that they have been used by their suppliers. | D. Gran's house                |
| ___ 5. Jan claims that Alice is a pusher.                                   | E. Richie and Ted's apartment  |
| ___ 6. Alice tries to shield Babbie from perverts.                          | F. university library          |
| ___ 7. Beth's choice of a date for Alice is embarrassing.                   | G. Larsens' home               |
| ___ 8. Alice meets Joel.  | H. State Mental Hospital       |
| ___ 9. Alice learns the jewelry business.                                   | I. courtroom                   |
| ___ 10. A neighbor finds Alice ill from tainted chocolate-covered peanuts.  | J. Alice's 16th birthday party |
| ___ 11. Alice loses her virginity.  | K. Mario Mellani's shop        |
| ___ 12. Alice and Chris are sexually assaulted.                             | L. Shelia's apartment          |
| ___ 13. Alice earns her family's respect for helping out in an emergency.   | M. Jill Peters's party         |
| ___ 14. Alice plays "button, button."                                       | N. Bill Thompson's house       |
| ___ 15. A member of the establishment makes Alice feel worthless.           | O. Chris and Alice's boutique  |

**Part II: Short Answer (10 points)**

Explain the significance of the following details:

1. flashback
2. enameled friendship ring
3. locker fire
4. celebrating Christmas
5. B. P.

## GO ASK ALICE

### Part III: Identification (30 points)

Place an X by statements that refer to Alice.

- 1. looks like a tall, elegant model
- 2. accepts Gerta as a second-rate friend
- 3. looks for a space to rent in Berkeley
- 4. smokes pot with George at the Christmas dance
- 5. meets Doris at a Coos Bay shelter and goes to a rally
- 6. joins an Orthodox Jewish faith
- 7. scratches at imaginary maggots
- 8. washes Lu Ann after Mrs. Larsen breaks a leg
- 9. convinces Dr. Miller that she does not need vitamins
- 10. considers committing suicide
- 11. gets a job with Marcie at a lingerie boutique
- 12. irons and writes letters while on pep pills
- 13. decides that Scott deserves a scholarship
- 14. helps Gran move to a Spanish-style home
- 15. irons her hair

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Contrast Alice's parents, educators, and ministers as sources of advice.
2. Explain the significance of the title.
3. Describe Alice's varied styles of expression.
4. Summarize the value of a stay at the Youth Center.



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