



Tuesdays with Morrie

by Mitch Albom

Teacher's Guide

Written By Mary Ellen Snodgrass

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Synopsis

The Curriculum

At a window in Morrie Schwartz's study, sports writer Mitch Albom met weekly after breakfast each Tuesday to discuss life's meaning. The result was the book, *Tuesdays With Morrie*. The unusual mentorship began in late spring 1979, when Mitch graduated from Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts. Afterward, Professor Morrie Schwartz asked that Mitch stay in touch.

The Syllabus

In summer 1994, Morrie gave up dancing. Weary and sleepless, he learned in August that the cause was terminal ALS. He quit driving and hired Tony, a theology student, to help with dressing him and taking him to the YMCA to swim. By fall, Morrie taught his final course in social psychology. The prognosis was two more years, but Morrie guessed that it was even less. He had nurse care, meditation instruction, and constant visitors. By January 1995, he used a wheelchair to get around.

The Student

Mitch, who lived in New York City and was hoping to become a jazz pianist, lost a favorite uncle to pancreatic cancer. While freelancing sports writing, Mitch moved to Florida. In Detroit, where he bought a house, he wrote for the *Detroit Free Press*. After marrying Janine, he nurtured the illusion that he controlled his own life.

The Audiovisual

In March 1995, Ted Koppel, host of *Nightline*, heard about Morrie through the *Boston Globe* and came from Washington, D. C., to West Newton, Massachusetts, to visit him. The elderly professor questioned Koppel and described him as a narcissist. During the televised interview, the men discussed the afterlife and Morrie's dread of becoming dependent. Mitch heard the broadcast. He remembered his introduction to Morrie in spring 1976, when the respected teacher asked to be his friend.

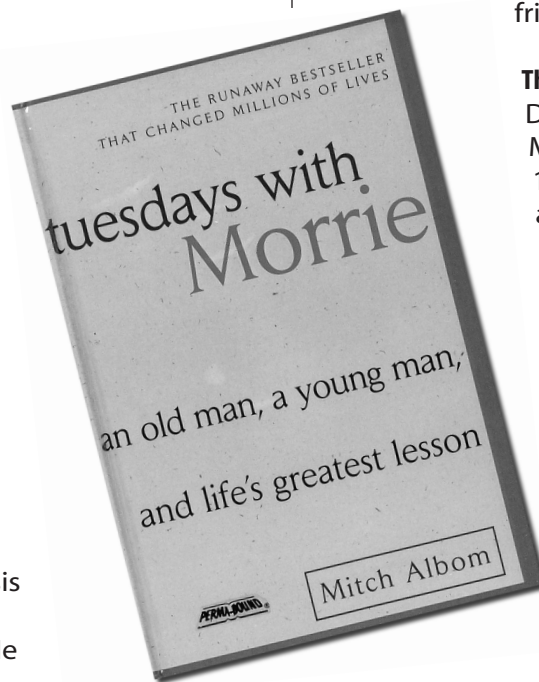
The Orientation

Despite a busy life, Mitch hurried to Morrie's home. After an absence of 16 years, he received a hug and admonished himself for having abandoned his old friend and mentor. While Mitch shared lunch, Morrie introduced the subject of dying. Mitch recalled that Morrie was older than the other faculty members. A softie, he gave A's to his male students during the Vietnam War to help them maintain student deferments from the draft.

The Classroom

After the first two hours, Morrie described himself as a bridge to help other people prepare for death. Morrie asked if Mitch had a wife, a place in the community, peace, and humanity. Mitch squirmed at the thought of the past decade in Detroit in a life dominated by computers, cell phones, and interviews with rich athletes. Morrie informed him that living with unhappiness is a reason for sadness.

After Morrie demonstrated the diminished capacity of his lungs, Mitch felt it was time to end the visit. At a campus bookstore, he bought suggested titles on human relations. Morrie warned that life is filled with tensions, but he assured Mitch that love always wins.



Taking Attendance

In London a few weeks later, Mitch covered the Wimbledon tennis match and felt that his sports writing was meaningless. He used the O. J. Simpson trial as an example of a trivial distraction. Morrie insisted that modern culture was unfulfilling. He started Project Greenhouse to bring mental health care to the poor, worked on lecture ideas, and communicated with colleagues, students, and friends.

Meanwhile, Mitch pecked at the computer, ate at his work station, and battled the paparazzi, who chased Andre Agassi and Brooke Shields. Mitch recalled that Morrie reminded him to love others, the community, and purposeful activity. An unforeseen union strike of his newspaper put Mitch out of work. A week later, he revisited Morrie. Mitch recalled that, in his sophomore year, he took two classes with Morrie, who told him to be fully human. Morrie warned about alienation and encouraged Mitch to pursue his dream of playing the piano.

The First Tuesday: We Talk about the World

Mitch brought deli salads and bagels. Morrie asked about the strike. He worried about dependence on caregivers. He continued to watch the news about conflict in Bosnia and commiserated with those who died. He instructed Mitch to love and to let himself cry. Mitch recalled how Morrie maintained a quarter hour of silence in the classroom to illustrate how uncomfortable it makes people. Morrie compared Mitch to himself when he was young.

The Second Tuesday: We Talk about Feeling Sorry for Yourself

The following week, the strike still kept Mitch out of work. Morrie, seated in a recliner, spoke about compassion and about self-pity, which overcame him in the mornings. He focused on good things and limited tears for himself. Mitch learned to lift Morrie from the wheelchair into his recliner. Mitch thought about his junior year in 1978, when he studied group process.

The Third Tuesday: We Talk about Regrets

A week later, Mitch introduced a tape recorder so Morrie could tell his life story. Morrie spoke of examining life and looking for direction. Mitch listed the subjects he wanted to discuss in the fourth Tuesday: death, fear, aging, greed, marriage, family,

society, forgiveness, meaning. He returned in late August for the fourth discussion. He reflected on the honors thesis he wrote in his senior year on the cultural response to American football. Morrie was so pleased that he suggested that Mitch enter graduate school.

The Audiovisual, Part Two

Koppel held a follow-up interview with Morrie for *Nightline*. He compared his growing up in England with Morrie's childhood in the Bronx. Ted asked how Morrie would communicate when he became mute. Morrie described his old friend Maurie Stein, who was losing his hearing. Morrie wept as he described his mother's death when he was eight years old and the pain that he still suffered.

The Professor

Morrie received a telegram about the death of his mother, who ran a candy store. He and brother David went to a small Connecticut hotel, where they played in the rain. David contracted polio. Morrie blamed himself. He attended synagogue each morning and sold magazines in the subway to feed the family. His new stepmother, Eva Schwartz, introduced affection into his life and insisted on high grades in school. In secret, he kept the telegram announcing his mother's death.

As a teenager, Morris recoiled from the fur business, his father's trade. Morris promised himself never to take part in exploiting workers and never profiting from others' sweat. To Eva's questions about a career, he chose teaching.

The Fourth Tuesday: We Talk about Death

Before Labor Day, the strike continued. Morrie, who fed his lungs from an oxygen tank, spoke of preparing the self to accept death. A Jewish agnostic, he drew death concepts from all faiths, including Buddhism, Christianity, and Judaism. He warned about the need to focus on the essentials and to retreat from extreme ambition. He suggested that Mitch be more spiritual. To sons Rob and Jon, Morrie dictated answers to personal letters from people who had witnessed the ravages of ALS. Mitch reprised Lou Gehrig's speech to Yankees fans about feeling lucky despite the effects of creeping paralysis.

The Fifth Tuesday: We Talk about Family

The first week in September, Morrie needed physical affection. He and Mitch discussed the role of family in looking out for each other. Morrie considered children a unique experience in his life and asked about Mitch's brother and sister. Mitch recalled his brother Peter's difficulties in school, his addictive behavior, and his move to Europe. After Peter contracted pancreatic cancer, an experimental drug offered five years of remission. Mitch felt guilty that Peter didn't want him to visit. Mitch recalled a near-death experience when the two brothers were sledding in childhood.

The Sixth Tuesday: We Talk about Emotions

Charlotte Schwartz welcomed Mitch and indicated that Morrie was having a bad day. He coughed into the night and could eat only soft or liquid foods. To stabilize his emotions, he detached his thoughts from bad experiences and allowed fear to permeate him. He remained in control and willed himself to die peacefully. He surprised Mitch by wishing to come back as a gazelle.

The Professor, Part Two

In the 1960s, Morrie conducted research for years at Chestnut Lodge, a mental hospital outside Washington, D. C. He befriended patients and offered compassion. During a sit-in of black students, he negotiated with them and produced a list of their demands. His success at mediation brought droves of students back to visit. Mitch began reading about death in different cultures.

The Seventh Tuesday: We Talk about the Fear of Aging

Morrie lost his battle to modesty after caregivers began helping him in the toilet. To him, it was like being a child again and receiving unconditional love. He negated society's obsession with youth by valuing the wisdom of old age. He allowed himself to feel like every age.

The Eighth Tuesday: We Talk about Money

Morrie laughed at Ted Turner's greed for a television network. Morrie warned about the brainwashing of materialism—that ownership and money are positive experiences. He explained that material objects are poor substitutes for love. He valued gifts of time, concern, storytelling, and volunteering.

The Ninth Tuesday: We Talk about How Love Goes On

As fall set in, Mitch tried to call Peter in Spain. Morrie pondered another television interview, but feared he was losing ground too fast. He did not fear being forgotten by people who recalled his voice and valued him as a teacher. He modeled paying attention to each visitor. He recalled the death of his father, Charlie Schwartz, who died of heart attack after two muggers took his wallet. He spoke of the Desana Indians of South America, who believed that deaths and births must balance the world's energy supply.

The Tenth Tuesday: We Talk about Marriage

Mitch brought Janine to visit. Morrie told her that he taught in Detroit in the late 1940s. He recalled a surgeon who invited him to witness an operation. The blood caused Morrie to feel faint. Janine, a professional singer, performed "The Very Thought of You." Mitch recalled waiting seven years to marry her. Morrie, who had been married for 44 years, respected his wife and shared her values. In a discussion of Job, Morrie joked that God overtested the Old Testament victim.

The Eleventh Tuesday: We Talk about Our Culture

Mitch learned to pound Morrie's back to prevent pneumonia. Early in October, as Mitch held Morrie's hand, the professor spoke of human goodness and about inventing a personal culture. The O. J. Simpson verdict was announced that afternoon. Mitch relived a Brandeis basketball game in 1979, when Morrie informed yelling students that being number two is okay.

The Audiovisual, Part Three

At the next *Nightline* interview, six months after the first one, Koppel asked about the progress of the disease. Morrie was less afraid and more prone to letting go. He showed his emotions freely and wanted to die serenely. He asked viewers to be compassionate and to take responsibility for other people. To Koppel, Morrie vowed to maintain his spirit.

The Twelfth Tuesday: We Talk about Forgiveness

A few days later, Morrie reminded Mitch to forgive himself and others. Mitch massaged Morrie's ankles. Morrie regretted pride and vanity in his life. He examined a sculpture that his friend Norman made of Morrie thirty years earlier. Norman avoided Morrie when Charlotte was ill; Morrie did not

forgive him. Norman died of cancer, leaving the two men unreconciled. Morrie considered Mitch like one of his sons. Morrie chose a shady spot on a nearby hill as a burial spot. Mitch promised to visit and to discuss personal problems.

The Thirteenth Tuesday: We Talk about the Perfect Day
Morrie chose to be cremated and to have Rabbi Al Axelrad from Brandeis conduct his funeral. Coughing frightened Morrie at night, but he felt prepared for death. Completely transformed by ALS, he realized that his memories and loved ones would keep him alive. He described as his day of perfect health a fantasy of friends, walking in the outdoors, dining on duck, dancing, and sleeping comfortably.

Morrie advised Mitch to reconnect with Peter, who commuted to a hospital in Amsterdam. Mitch despaired that Peter didn't want a visit from his brother. Morrie believed that the two brothers would negotiate a meeting. He expressed the oneness of humanity with a story about a wave that feared crashing to shore.

The Fourteenth Tuesday: We Say Good-bye
On Monday, Charlotte reported that Morrie was withdrawn and sleeping more from doses of morphine to ease his breathing. In the presence of the hospice nurse, Morrie lay in bed barely able to speak. He asked Mitch to hold his hand and praised him for his good soul. They expressed their love and embraced. Mitch kissed Morrie and shed tears.

Graduation
Surrounded by family, Morrie went into a coma on Thursday and died on the next Saturday morning, November 4, 1995. On Tuesday, Charlotte allowed a few relatives and friends to attend the funeral. His brother David filled in the grave with dirt.

Conclusion
Mitch reflected on the change that Morrie created in Mitch's life. Shortly, Mitch talked with his brother long distance and admitted his love for him. Peter faxed back. Mitch completed the book that Morrie envisioned and named and donated the advance to defray Morrie's medical bills. Mitch treasured teachers who saw promise in their students.

Timeline

- 1917** Morris Schwartz was born in the Bronx, New York.
- 1925** Morrie's mother died.
- Later** At a small Connecticut hotel, David Schwartz contracted polio.
- ca. 1934** Morrie decided to become a teacher.
- July 4, 1939** Lou Gehrig addressed fans at Yankee Stadium.
- Late 1940s** Morrie taught in Detroit.
- 1951** Morrie married Charlotte.
- 1960s** Morrie conducted research for five years at Chestnut Lodge outside Washington, D. C., and befriended patients.
- Late 1960s** Morrie mediated the civil rights sit-ins at Brandeis University.
- Spring 1976** Professor Morrie Schwartz asked to be Mitch's friend.
- 1977** Mitch took two classes with Morrie, who instructed him to be fully human and to pursue his dream of playing the piano.
- 1978** In Morrie's class, Mitch studied group process.
- 1979** After Mitch wrote an honors thesis on the cultural response to American football, Morrie suggested he attend graduate school. At a basketball game, Morrie informed yelling students that being number two is okay.
- Spring 1979** Mitch graduated from Brandeis University in Waltham, Massachusetts, with a degree in sociology.
- Afterward** Professor Morrie Schwartz asked that Mitch stay in touch.
- 1971-1976** Morrie gave A's to students to protect them from the draft.
- 1985** Mitch began writing for the *Detroit Free Press*.
- Summer 1994** Morrie gave up dancing.
- August** Morrie was diagnosed with terminal ALS.
- Fall** He taught his final course in social psychology.
- January 1995** Morrie began using a wheelchair to get around.
- February 25** Ted Koppel, host of *Nightline*, interviewed Morrie.

March 17 Mitch heard a broadcast of the interview.

Later Mitch visited Morrie, who perceived his former student's discontent with life.

That Day At a campus bookstore, Mitch bought suggested titles on human relations.

Early April The O. J. Simpson trial continued. Mitch covered the Wimbledon tennis match.

April 9 The paparazzi chased Andre Agassi and Brooke Shields.

May 26 Ted Koppel taped his second interview with Morrie.

July 13 An unforeseen union strike of the *Detroit Free Press* put Mitch Albom out of work.

July 14 Bosnians scrambled for free loaves of bread.

July 18 Mitch revisited Morrie, who worried about dependence on caregivers, but continued to watch the news.

July 25 Morrie, seated in a recliner, spoke about compassion and about self-pity.

August 1 Mitch introduced a tape recorder so Morrie could tell his life story.

August 22 Morrie and Mitch had their fourth discussion.

August 29 On the fifth Tuesday, Morrie and Mitch discussed preparing for death. Mitch regretted that Peter didn't want his brother to visit him.

September 5 During the sixth Tuesday, Morrie detached his thoughts from fear.

September 12 Morrie required help in going to the toilet, a model of unconditional love.

September 19 On the eighth Tuesday, Morrie declared materialism a poor substitute for love.

Fall Mitch tried to call Peter in Spain.

September 26 O. J. Simpson was found not guilty of murder. At the ninth Tuesday meeting, Morrie reflected on the world view of the Desana Indians of South America.

October 3 On the tenth Tuesday, Janine sang "The Very Thought of You" for Morrie.

October 10 Mitch learned how to pound Morrie's back to relieve congestion.

October 17 On the twelfth Tuesday, Morrie instructed Mitch to forgive himself

and others. Mitch promised to visit Morrie's burial place and to discuss personal problems. Ted Koppel taped his third interview with Morrie, who advocated that viewers be compassionate and take responsibility for other people.

October 31 On the thirteenth Tuesday meeting, Morrie felt prepared for death and pressed Mitch to reconnect with Peter.

October 30 Charlotte reported that Morrie was withdrawn and sleeping more from doses of morphine.

October 31 At the last meeting, Morrie asked Mitch to hold his hand and praised him for his good soul. Mitch kissed Morrie and shed tears.

November 2 Morrie went into a coma.

November 4 Morrie died.

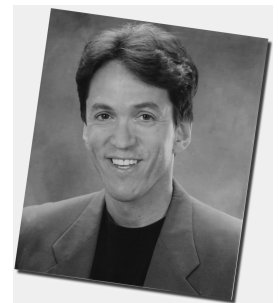
November 7 On a Tuesday, Morrie's brother David filled in the grave with dirt.

Shortly Mitch talked with his brother long distance and stated his love for him. Peter faxed back.

September 1997 Mitch completed the book that Morrie envisioned and named.

Author Sketch

A multi-award-winning sportscaster and song writer, Mitchell "Mitch" Albom is an ABC radio personality on the nation's first talk sports program, "The Mitch Albom Show on the Weekend" for WJR-AM in Detroit, broadcasting to 125 stations and Canada. In addition to being a nationally-syndicated newspaper columnist for the *Detroit Free Press* since 1985 and a panelist on ESPN's Sports Reporters, he has published in *GEO*, *GQ*, *New York Times*, *Sport*, *Sports Illustrated*, *TV Guide*, and *USA Today*. He made a separate career as author of eight books, including two biographies and a popular stage comedy, *Duck Hunter Shoots Angel* (2003).



Born on May 23, 1958, in Passaic, New Jersey, to Ira and Rhoda Albom, the author was reared in Philadelphia. He learned storytelling from his family, who treasured history and memories of personal and world events. The rhythms of family conversa-

tion formed his concept of narrative: "Those stories made me feel part of something, gave me stories of my own, as if my elders' tales, through their telling, could become my tales, too."

Albom's wide range of interests are obvious from his college and post graduate degrees. Intent on writing business news, he earned a B. A. in sociology from Brandeis University and an M. A. in journalism and business administration from Columbia University. At age 23, he began writing sports for the *Queens Tribune* in Flushing, New York, and followed with stints for *Sport*, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Fort Lauderdale News*, and *Sun Sentinel*. He also flourished in public speaking, stand-up comedy, nightclub singing, and amateur boxing. In addition, from his home in Franklin, Michigan, he and his life-long sweetheart, Janine Sabino, have supported charities for underprivileged children, hospitals, and the homeless, as well as Hospice, Forgotten Harvest, Meals on Wheels, and Habitat for Humanity.

At age 37, Albom reconnected with Professor Morris "Coach" Schwartz, an expert on the care of mental patients. He was dying of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis or Lou Gehrig's disease. The spark of their reunion was a life-shaping experience for Mitch, who stayed close to Morrie until his death at age 78 on November 4, 1995, in his bedroom in West Newton, Massachusetts. The author concluded, "It really demonstrates the power of a simple relationship and the lessons we learn from our older teachers about how to create a meaningful life." Five years after the initial success of *Tuesdays With Morrie*, Mitch and Jeffrey Hatcher adapted the work for the stage. From the concepts of death and dying came a spin-off bestseller, *The Five People You Meet In Heaven* (2003), which evolved from Mitch's Uncle Eddie, a cab driver and World War II veteran, and his memories of a near-death experience.

Critic's Corner

Of his multi-faceted career, Albom explained in simple terms: "I tell stories. For a while I told stories through music and then I told stories in newspapers and later I told stories in books." He reached bestselling author status with *Tuesdays with Morrie*, which he derived from seeing Morrie Schwartz on *Nightline* and from visiting him over a span of 14 weeks. The book, which Mitch intended to defray Schwartz's final expenses, sold five million copies

and remained a bestseller for four years. Rave reviews appeared in *Life*, *People*, *Redbook*, and *TV Guide*; live interviews featured Mitch on the *CBS Early Show*, *Larry King Live*, *NBC's Today*, the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, the *Rosie O'Donnell Show*, and the *Tom Snyder Show*.

The text is available in 31 languages and has sold well in 36 countries, reaching bestselling status in Australia, Brazil, England, and Japan. On December 6, 1999, Oprah Winfrey's teleplay *Tuesdays With Morrie* debuted on ABC. The presentation won four Emmys, including Jack Lemmon's starring role as Morrie and Hank Azaria as Mitch. In 1999, the National Hospice Organization named Albom their Man of the Year.

Other Works By The Author

Live Mitch I (1988)
Bo (1989)
Live Mitch II (1990)
Live Mitch III (1992)
Fab Five (1992)
Live Mitch IV (1995)
Tuesdays With Morrie (1997)
Night Storm (1998)
Flashing Before My Eyes (2001)
The Five People You Meet In Heaven (2003)
Duck Hunter Shoots Angel (2004)
For One More Day (2006)

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Cross-Curricular Sources

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- Tuesdays With Morrie*, Brilliance Audio, 2002
Tuesdays With Morrie, Nova, 1997
Tuesdays With Morrie, Random House Audio, 2004

Audio CD

- Tuesdays With Morrie*, Random House Audio, 2004

Download

- Tuesdays With Morrie*, Audible.com

DVD

- Tuesdays With Morrie*, Buena Vista, 2003

Large Print

- Tuesdays With Morrie*, Large Print Press, 1999
Tuesdays With Morrie, Wheeler, 1998

Related Reading

- Richard Adams, *Watership Down*
 Isabel Allende, *The House of the Spirits*
 Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*
 Olive Ann Burns, *Cold Sassy Tree*
 Walter Van Tilburg Clark, *The Ox-Bow Incident*
 Bill Cleaver and Vera Cleaver, *Where the Lilies Bloom*
 Lois Duncan, *Killing Mr. Griffin and Who Killed My Daughter?*
 Laura Esquivel, *Like Water for Chocolate*
 William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*
 Judith Guest, *Ordinary People*
 John Gunther, *Death Be Not Proud*
 John Hersey, *Hiroshima*
 John Irving, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*
 Thomas Keneally, *Schindler's List*
 Theodora Kroeber, *Ishi*
 Tony Kushner, *Angels in America*
 Walter Lord, *A Night to Remember*
 Lois Lowry, *The Giver*
 Arthur Miller, *Death of a Salesman*
 Timothy O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*
 Michael Ondaatje, *The English Patient*
 Robert Newton Peck, *A Day No Pigs Would Die*
 Wilson Rawls, *Where the Red Fern Grows*
 Cynthia Rylant, *Missing May*
 Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Stranger*
 John Steinbeck, *The Pearl*
 Cynthia Voigt, *Homecoming*
 Kurt Vonnegut, *Slaughterhouse Five*
 Thornton Wilder, *Our Town*

General Objectives

1. To experience and read aloud examples of humanistic wisdom
2. To identify and explain examples of dialogue, fable, flashback, and epilogue
3. To picture events in chronological order
4. To envision gradual paralysis and suffocation
5. To enumerate significant relationships
6. To explain the roles of caregivers to the dying
7. To set the events in their social and political context
8. To comprehend loss and death as motivators
9. To evaluate everyday compromises
10. To discuss the use of limited setting as a commentary on the action

Specific Objectives

1. To determine why Morrie loves Mitch like a son
2. To analyze the moments of self-pity that Morrie allows himself
3. To explain the purpose of a living funeral
4. To account for Tony and Connie's roles in Morrie's illness
5. To discuss Morrie's views on materialism
6. To analyze Mitch's failure to find happiness
7. To summarize references to Peter, Eva, Maurie Stern, Mitch's favorite uncle, David, Charlotte, Norman, Janine, and Morrie's parents
8. To contrast Morrie's teaching style with standard lecture method
9. To justify Janine's choice of a song to perform for Morrie
10. To predict the effect of losing Morrie on his friends, family, and Brandeis University

Literary Terms And Applications

For a better understanding of Albom's style, present the following terms and applications to the book:

Dilemma: a plot that depicts human characters in dire predicaments which they must resolve by making some sacrifice. The gradual paralysis that accompanies Morrie's last months forces him to compromise his active life by limiting himself to visits with friends and family, letter-writing, telephone calls, photographs, and a televised interview with Ted Koppel for *Nightline*. Ironically, Morrie reaches more people through television than he did in the classroom. His acceptance of the approach of death is graceful, marked by unseen weepy mornings when he allows himself brief periods of self-pity. As his muscles shrivel, he emerges from his dilemma by embracing death as a significant part of his humanity.

Foil: a character whose presence in a literary work offsets or enhances the contrasting traits of another character. Morrie and Mitch are natural foils in terms of age, experience, and personal philosophy. By meeting regularly with Mitch, Morrie confers some of his wisdom and confesses his own misgivings about his parents' deaths, his guilt about David's infection with polio, Morrie's inability to

enjoy activity, the loss of privacy, and the terror of choking in the night. By absorbing and applying Morrie's humanity, Mitch accepts as a gift his former teacher's grace and brilliance. The lessons enable Mitch to correct his workaholicism, the breakdown in communication with Peter, and an inability to weep.

The Importance of Setting

To describe his visits with Morrie Schwartz, Mitch Albom uses a limited setting to characterize the invalid's decreasing range of influence. In contrast to Mitch's journey to London and his regular flights from Detroit to Newton, Massachusetts, Morrie moves slowly about his home as atrophy weakens his muscles. After giving up dancing and teaching courses at Brandeis University, he spends more time at his study window watching the changes in the leaves as the seasons of his final year pass in sequence. When Mitch arrives, the two share deli salads in the kitchen until Morrie can no longer manage solid foods.

Rapidly, the size of Morrie's world decreases with the progress of the disease. From slow trips to the bathroom and assisted use of the toilet, Morrie declines to catheterization. He breathes with the help of a small oxygen tank. For comfort, he gives up his wheelchair and lies on pillows in a recliner. He speaks candidly to Mitch about tossing and turning in his bed and about the terror of choking to death.

On Mitch's final visit, Morrie has reached his stopping place—his bed under the supervision of a hospice nurse. Barely able to speak, he accepts Mitch's embrace and kiss and asks for his old friend to hold his hand. The confinement parallels Morrie's death, cremation, and burial in a shaded spot on a hill. When the scene shifts to David's filling of his brother's grave, the author focuses on the resting place for Morrie's ashes without giving a wider view of the whole cemetery.

Cross-Curricular Sources

For related reading and more information about the Desana, aging, ALS, hospice, Florence Wald, death and dying, loss, grief, counseling, and sociology, consult these sources:

Article

Booth, Cathy, "Taking Care of Our Aging Parents," *Time*, August 30, 1999, pp. 4-51.
 "A Weapon Against Lou Gehrig's Disease?" *Newsweek*, March 22, 1999, p. 65.

Audiocassette

Ordinary People, Recorded Books

Internet

The Desana People,
http://www.archaeolink.com/desana_indians_south_american_in.htm.
 Doctor's Guide to ALS Information and Resources,
<http://www.pslgroup.com/ALS.htm>.
 Interview with Florence Wald,
<http://www.npha.org/intjwald.html>, April 22, 1998.

Plays

Angels in America, Tony Kushner
Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller
Our Town, Thornton Wilder

Poems

Because I Could Not Stop for Death, Emily Dickinson
Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night, Dylan Thomas
Richard Cory, Edgar Arlington Robinson
Song, Christina Rossetti

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 Siebold, Cathy. *The Hospice Movement: Easing Death's Pains*.
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Video

Cold Sassy Tree
Death of a Salesman
Ishi: Last of His Kind
Morrie: Lessons on Living, ABC News
Ordinary People
Schindler's List
Where the Lilies Bloom
Wuthering Heights

Themes And Motifs

A study of the central issues and situations in Mitch Albom's *Tuesdays with Morrie* should include these aspects:

Themes

- humanism
- disease
- weakness
- loss
- memory
- mentoring
- regret
- death
- teaching
- candor

Motifs

- accepting and preparing for death
- reuniting with an old friend
- physical disintegration
- developing values
- living a meaningful life

Meaning Study

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the book. Explain each in context. Chapter names and page numbers pinpoint each entry so that you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. The lab report came back suggesting a neurological problem. ("The Syllabus," p. 7)
(Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis is a degenerative nerve disorder that causes muscles to shrivel, producing gradual paralysis and respiratory failure. In Mitch's words, "ALS is like a lit candle: it melts your nerves and leaves your body a pile of wax." The disease strikes more males than females and usually after age forty. Symptoms include fatigue and weakness, falls, gasping for breath, difficulty swallowing, and persistent spasms. There is no cure.)
2. My friends, I assume you are all here for the Social Psychology class. ("The Syllabus," p. 9)
(Morris Schwartz teaches a course detailing human behavior in cultural and social settings. The study began in the United States in the late 1920s and spread from laboratory observation and hypothesis to industry, business, advertising, the media, child care facilities, and psychiatric treatment centers.)

3. I was part of the media thunderstorm that now soaks our country. I was in demand. ("The Student," p. 16)
(A journalist and freelance sports writer, Mitch Albom took part in the burgeoning of TV, radio, online, and print news to meet the demands of consumers. He disliked the cult of personality that turned the trivial acts and love lives of actors and sports stars into daily news.)
4. After a while, he had more than fifty of these "aphorisms," which he shared with his friends. ("The Audiovisual," p. 18)
(For packaging significant truths, Morrie uses the aphorism, a concise, often witty truism or principle stated in a brief phrase or sentence to serve as an insightful observation, moral precept, or form of instruction. Chief of his advice is that "love always wins.")
5. He quoted a passage from Marcus Aurelius, something he felt strongly about. ("The Audiovisual," p. 20)
(Ted Koppel, former host of Nightline, is fond of the stoic ethics of Marcus Aurelius, a revered Roman philosopher-emperor (161-180 A. D.). To guide his unruly son Commodus into the hereditary office of emperor, Aurelius compiled bits of wisdom. His most famous is "Live each day as though it were your last.")
6. I thought you were a narcissist. ("The Audiovisual," p. 21)
(Narcissism is a personality fault that manifests itself in disarmingly wide smiles, extreme rage, extravagant posturing and gestures, vanity and exhibitionist clothing, verbal aggression, ignoring of rules and standards, and dominance of social gatherings.)
7. One year, they say, during the Vietnam War, Morrie gave all his male students A's to help them keep their student deferments. ("The Orientation," p. 30)
(To protect students from the draft, Morrie enabled them to raise their college averages by giving them top grades for his social psychology classes. The author implies that Morrie disapproved of both the draft and the Vietnam War.)
8. Their top headline of the day was written on a small chalkboard that leaned against the latest stack of papers, and usually read something like DIANA IN ROW WITH CHARLES! or GAZZA TO TEAM: GIVE ME MILLIONS. ("Taking Attendance," p. 41)
(Mitch was acutely aware of the frivolities in the media, partic-

ularly public obsession with personalities like Princess Diana, tennis great Andre Agassi, actress Brooke Shields, football hero O. J. Simpson, protest leaders Abbie Hoffman and Jerry Rubin, revolutionary writer Angela Davis, singer Madonna, publisher John F. Kennedy, Jr., and soccer super-star Paul "Gazza" Gascoigne. The absurdity of egotism in the media forced Mitch to reevaluate his professional interest in sports writing.)

9. I seemed to slip into a time warp when I visited Morrie, and I liked myself better when I was there. ("The Second Tuesday," p. 55)
(Mitch was able to shuck off time constraints when he visited Morrie, whose limited life span was much more serious than a journalist's daily schedule. Because of Mitch's immersion in Morrie's teachings, mentoring took precedent over career.)
10. America had become a Persian bazaar of self-help. ("The Third Tuesday," p. 65)
(Mitch was aware that the era was awash in personal searches for easy counseling and advice for people who lacked a clear slate of values.)

Comprehension Study

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important. Be ready to defend your answers by referring to passages in the book.

Plot

1. Why did Mitch reunite with Morrie in 1995?
(With a degree in sociology, Mitch Albom departed from Brandeis University at graduation in 1979 after promising Professor Morrie Schwartz to keep in touch. For 16 years, Mitch poured himself into freelance writing and reporting, which required constant travel. After Ted Koppel featured Morrie on Nightline on February 25, 1995, Mitch realized that his old professor was dying of ALS and flew directly to Newton, Massachusetts. Their reunion enabled Morrie to enjoy fellowship with a favorite student and eased Mitch's guilt that he had neglected Morrie. The first visit allowed the two men to catch up on the past and for Morrie to express his views on a slow death from paralysis and suffocation.)

Theme

2. Why is candor a focal theme?
(After the diagnoses of ALS, Morrie had little time in which to finish off the loose ends of his life. To Ted Koppel, Morrie remarked on the nearness of death when he asked the interviewer to express his personal faith. When Mitch returned to Morrie's life, their friendship and Morrie's mentoring emerged

from frank discussion of life, death, suffering, marriage, family, money, career, forgiveness, and contentment. Mitch felt obligated to explain why he and Peter drifted apart. Morrie divulged the hardships of losing his mother at age eight and of tolerating his father's refusal to discuss her. Both Mitch and Morrie spoke openly about unpleasant subjects, including Morrie's fear of becoming helpless and Mitch's discontent with a busy career in sports reporting. Through honest exchanges, the two men helped each other conquer their worst fears and misgivings.)

Symbolism

3. What symbols identify obsessions in characters?
(Albom sprinkled symbols throughout the text as he recalled his *Tuesdays with Morrie*. For the old professor, the view from the window and the hibiscus on the window sill were elements of life that allowed Morrie to participate in nature, even though he was confined to a recliner in his home. For Mitch, interviews, travel, and cell phones defined his imprisonment in workaholicism. The bell that Morrie used to summon help typified his reliance on others for the simplest movements and needs. At his burial, the description of the shade tree on the hill reprised the classes at Brandeis where Morrie made students comfortable while expounding on social psychological principles. For Mitch, it was significant that Morrie was buried on a Tuesday, their regular meeting day.)

Conflict

4. Why did Mitch think of Morrie as "Coach"?
(The concerns of getting a degree in sociology, writing an honors paper on American responses to football, and choosing a career caused some emotional disturbance in Mitch. To smooth the way, he was willing to accept Morrie as mentor and coach as though Mitch were a player in a competitive game. Morrie was honest with Mitch about the difficulties of becoming a jazz pianist, but he encouraged Mitch to choose the path, then find a way to follow it. When Mitch returned to Morrie, the need for coaching was apparent in Mitch's lack of fulfillment at his career in sports writing. Once more, Morrie willingly assumed the role of coach to guide Mitch in his thinking about finding meaning in his life.)

Character

5. Why did Peter withdraw from the Albom family?
(Unlike Mitch, who succeeded at academics and advanced directly toward career goals, Peter was a jolly, fun-loving brother who involved himself in addictive behaviors in his late teens. In Mitch's words, "I was the good student, he was the bad; I was obedient, he broke the rules; I stayed away from drugs and alcohol, he tried everything you could ingest." To avoid familial and social disapproval and legal hassles, Peter felt more at

home in Europe and settled in Spain. The loss caused by his disconnection from his brother worsened after Mitch learned that Peter was being treated for pancreatic cancer and was commuting to Amsterdam for treatment.)

Motivation

6. Why did Mitch become a workaholic?
(After pondering his concern for a favorite uncle's death from catastrophic illness, Mitch anticipated facing a similar fate. He was devastated to learn that Peter was the one suffering from a rare pancreatic cancer. Because Peter rejected intimacy with his brother, Mitch suffered through months without word from his brother. To combat guilt at his brother's illness and anger that Peter rejected his concern, Mitch plunged into work. He explained that work was an antidote to anguish because "I could control it." Like a pragmatic, sensible adult, Mitch embraced career as a normal human response to challenge.)

Character Responses

7. How did Mitch react to Morrie's death?
(After bidding farewell to Morrie, Mitch accepted that Morrie had taken to his bed because he was prepared for death. On a chilly morning, Mitch joined the select few who attended the interment and listened to Rabbi Al Axelrad read poems over the grave. Following David's filling of the raw spot in the earth, Morrie examined the hill and surroundings and acknowledged that Morrie was wise in his selection of a burial place. By imagining an ongoing conversation with Morrie in his head, Mitch found that "imagined conversation feels almost natural." To follow Morrie's advice to end the long separation with Peter, Mitch pursued his brother in Spain and talked long distance with him. He later dedicated *Tuesdays with Morrie* to Peter.)

Interpretation

8. Why did this book become a bestseller?
(Mitch Albom's book is filled with the reassurance of humanism, a belief in the worth of each individual. He wrote honestly about his own shortcomings. His candid method allows readers to identify with Mitch and Morrie and their human faults. Because Morrie remained humble and open to wisdom, he turned each day into a learning experience. His gentle words flowed with an appreciation for other people and a willingness to share his wisdom with any who need comfort. The reading public can absorb Morrie's brief aphorisms about love, values, loss, and personal relationships that adapt to most human settings.)

Comparative Literature

9. How does *Tuesdays with Morrie* compare with other books about death?
(The distinguishing factor in *Tuesdays with Morrie* is an

I-thou intimacy between Morrie and Mitch. Unlike John Hersey's Hiroshima, a journalistic reconnection with survivors of the first A-bomb attack, or Walter Lord's A Night to Remember, a recounting of the sinking of the Titanic, Morrie's straightforward commentary on gradual paralysis and approaching death seems more normal, less like cataclysm. His evaluation of his life as a teacher, philosopher, and friend contrasts the external commentary in Arthur Miller's tragedy Death of a Salesman and the wartime confusion in Michael Ondaatje's The English Patient or Thomas Keneally's Schindler's List. In the overview, Morrie shaped his thoughts on death without rush or terror. Serene to the last, he managed to control panic and struggle and to depart from family and friends without drama.)

Structure

10. Why did Mitch Albom conclude his text with commentary about teachers?
(The importance of the teaching profession in shaping learners and directing them toward satisfying careers and lives became Mitch Albom's parting thought. The author tapped a possibility in most human lives that someone "saw you as a raw but precious thing, a jewel that, with wisdom, could be polished to a proud shine." He advised readers to realize that "if you are lucky enough to find your way to such teachers, you will always find your way back." By pointing the way for others to reunite with sources of wisdom, Mitch honored both Morrie and the teaching profession.)

How Language Works

Much of *Tuesdays with Morrie* takes the form of aphorism, a short statement of wisdom. For example:

1. In evaluating life in "bite-sized philosophies," Morrie urged, "Don't assume that it's too late to get involved."
2. Of Mitch's troubled life, Morrie reminded him: "Dying is only one thing to be sad over, Mitch. Living unhappily is something else."
3. Mitch recalled that, in his sophomore year at Brandeis University, Morrie had counseled him on ambition: "If you really want it, then you'll make your dream happen."
4. Of human frailty, Mitch observed, "We all need teachers in our lives."
5. On giving up, Morrie quipped, "When you're in bed, you're dead."
6. In the end, Mitch remarked on the endless

possibility of change in human life: "The teaching goes on."

Across The Curriculum

Research

1. Take notes on the cause of muscular atrophy that accompanies amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a disease that can be inherited. Explain why Morrie fears choking to death. How does pounding on the back ease his breathing?
2. Outline the creation of hospice in England by Florence Wald and the spread of the concept to nursing homes, retirement centers, and prisons. Explain the concept of human palliative care.
3. Summarize Martin Buber's descriptions of the I-thou relationship. Explain why an intimate conversation between old friends is beneficial to both Morrie and Mitch.

Journalism

1. Dramatize an interview with Charlotte Schwartz. List questions to ask her about Morrie's work, dancing, publications, and relationships with his sons Rob and Jon and with students and colleagues.

Math and Economics

1. Post a bulletin board diagram explaining the high cost of home care for an invalid like Morrie, who requires physical therapy, meditation, exercise, medication, massage, and round-the-clock assistance with basic physical functions.

Social Studies

1. Using map software, generate a map covering places mentioned in the book: London, Spain, Amsterdam, Newton, Massachusetts, Detroit, Harvard Square, Manhattan's Lower East Side, and Washington, D. C.
2. List topics that might accompany a graduate course on death and dying, including diagnosis, prognosis, symptom management, palliative medicine and pain management, invalid diet, massage, physical therapy and exercise, meditation, autonomy, family and religious support, and hospice care. Include commentary from Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross' best-selling treatise *On Death and Dying* (1969).

Law

1. Outline the legal implications of euthanasia. Note the creation and function of the Hemlock Society and the response of Dr. Jack Kevorkian and religious leaders to issues concerning assisted suicide.

Psychology

1. With a panel, contrast Morrie’s teaching methods and thoughts on contentment with the stress and unhappiness in Mitch’s life. Propose ways for Mitch to enjoy the kind of life that Morrie envisions for him, for example, by limiting hours of work and balancing them with leisure pursuits—travel, reading, family outings, and hobbies.
2. In a paragraph, contrast the roles of Charlotte, Connie, and Janine in Morrie’s last days. Explain why Mitch considers Janine more naturally equipped to deal with invalidism than he is.

Cinema

1. Make a list of dramatic scenes from the book that would require intense use of lighting, costume, makeup, music, props, and advance preparation, particularly Ted Koppel’s interviews, Mitch’s communications with Peter, David’s filling of the grave, flashbacks to Morrie ballroom dancing and receiving the telegram, the tennis tournament at Wimbledon, Morrie’s introduction to fur manufacture, David playing in the rain near the small hotel in Connecticut, Morrie’s public fall, and Mitch’s farewell to Morrie.
2. Describe aspects of the book that are more suited to radio, film, and tableau than to stage, for example, burial under a shade tree, Mitch’s memories of graduating from Brandeis University, interviews with star athletes, a telecast of Ted Koppel’s first interview with Morrie, and classes under the trees. Explain why Albom includes toilet use, polio, a hibiscus plant, the gift of a briefcase, a small oxygen tank, a fax from Spain, a sledding mishap, Eva’s love for Morrie and David, and food from the deli among serious philosophical conversations.

Science and Health

1. Explain the harm that Mitch suffers from materialism, boredom, work stress, and guilt that he has neglected Morrie. Suggest methods of spiritual relief, such as listening to Janine sing, visiting with friends, writing personal letters, transcribing the tapes of Tuesdays with Morrie, and reviving a relationship with Peter.
2. Write a short report on the importance of massage to cases of muscular atrophy. Illustrate your work with a chart showing how Mitch’s gentle attention to Morrie’s feet and legs relaxed and soothed him while allowing Mitch to feel useful to his old friend’s treatment.

Language

1. Choose a series of lines from the Tuesday discussions that impress on Mitch his teacher’s skill and wisdom, for example, “We put our values in the wrong things,” “Tell me something close to your heart,” “There is no foundation, no secure ground, upon which people may stand today if it isn’t the family,” and “The most important thing in life is to learn how to give out love, and to let it come in.”
2. Discuss Mitch’s misgivings about stating his innermost thoughts and fears. Propose a dialogue between Mitch and Janine by which he admits his shortcomings and engages her help in simplifying his life.
3. Roleplay two significant admissions from Morrie—that he would like to have Mitch for a son and that Morrie’s youth resembled that of Mitch.

Art, Costume Design, and Music

1. Use desktop publishing, plaster of paris, masks, puppets, collage, fabric banners, or other artistic forms to create a gallery dramatizing the character and emotional involvement of Charlotte, Connie, Eva, Janine, David, Peter, Al Axelrad, Tony, Maurie Stein, Charlie, Mitch’s favorite uncle, Norman, and Ted Koppel.

Drama and Speech

1. Corroborate Morrie’s most dramatic statements with Mitch’s private thoughts about love, learning, terminal illness, pain, death, God, family, money, and fame. Explain aloud to a small group how Morrie shares his experiences as a teaching method to help Mitch enjoy life.
2. Project a reunion of Mitch with Morrie’s former pupils. Compose a welcome and speech in which Mitch enlarges on the effect of Morrie’s Tuesday conversations on Mitch’s life and career. List questions to ask of the attendees, such as their memories of Morrie’s teaching methods and of his example of humility, kindness, and concern for the welfare of others.

Composition

1. Write a diary entry describing the progress of ALS. Explain how the breath test predicted the speed of Morrie’s decline and why he dreaded needing help in the toilet. Include his beliefs about returning to infancy and accepting unconditional love. Although he was 78 years old, how did he relive all ages?
2. Compose a scene in which Al Axelrad counsels Morrie on spirituality and the afterlife. Include Jewish beliefs about agnosticism, cremation, and a secular burial ritual.
3. Define humor as it applies to Morrie’s jokes about invalidism and dying. Use as an example his quip about cremation: “Make sure they don’t overcook me.”
4. Compose a story of a perfect day in which you do all the everyday things you love best, including family, friends, food, hobbies, and solitude.

Literature

1. Discuss the nature and purpose of fables, particularly those of Aesop and Joel Chandler Harris. Explain how the story of the fearful little wave approaching the shore helped Morrie understand his part in all humanity.

2. Read aloud from other works significant passages about the acceptance of invalidism, death, or dying, for instance, Theodora Kroeber’s *Ishi*, Timothy O’Brien’s *The Things They Carried*, Lois Lowry’s *The Giver*, Thornton Wilder’s *Our Town*, Olive Ann Burns’ *Cold Sassy Tree*, Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America*, John Gunther’s *Death Be Not Proud*, Richard Adams’ *Watership Down*, Bill Cleaver and Vera Cleaver’s *Where the Lilies Bloom*, Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*, Wilson Rawls’ *Where the Red Fern Grows*, John Steinbeck’s *The Pearl*, Laura Esquivel’s *Like Water for Chocolate*, Kurt Vonnegut’s *Slaughterhouse Five*, Lois Duncan’s *Killing Mr. Griffin and Who Killed My Daughter?*, Robert Newton Peck’s *A Day No Pigs Would Die*, William Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*, Cynthia Voigt’s *Homecoming*, Walter Van Tilburg Clark’s *The Ox-Bow Incident*, Isabel Allende’s *The House of the Spirits*, Thomas Keneally’s *Schindler’s List*, Cynthia Rylant’s *Missing May*, John Hersey’s *Hiroshima*, Jean-Paul Sartre’s *The Stranger*, Judith Guest’s *Ordinary People*, Michael Ondaatje’s *The English Patient*, Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, Walter Lord’s *A Night to Remember*, and John Irving’s *A Prayer for Owen Meany*.
3. Select poems to be read over Morrie’s grave. Consider Psalm 23, “Because I Could Not Stop for Death,” “Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night,” and Christina Rossetti’s “Song.”

Education

1. Compose an introduction to sociology from Morrie’s point of view, including the theories of Martin Buber, Erik Erikson, Erich Fromm, and Steven Levine. Explain why Morrie was successful with despairing mental patients and how his insights affected students entering a variety of professions, including law, medicine, and journalism.

Alternate Assessment

1. List in chronological order and describe significant events connected with Morrie’s life. Mention sitting by the study window, falling in public, greeting Al Axelrad, completing a Ph. D. at the University of Chicago, talking to Janine on the phone, holding class on the lawn, receiving hospice care, going into psychological research, ringing the bell for Connie, viewing a corpse at the city morgue, sipping meals through a straw, dancing the

tango, marrying Charlotte, appearing on Nightline, abandoning the wheelchair, teaching in Detroit, lying on the floor at Chestnut Lodge, posing for a sculpture, refusing to work in the fur industry, and proclaiming Mitch as dear as a son.

2. List events from the book that express strong attitudes toward kinship, contentment, death, memories, education, nostalgia, regret, money, parents, agnosticism, and forgiveness. Indicate Morrie's apparent philosophy on each subject.
3. Compose brief definitions of fable, aphorism, and humor as they apply to Tuesdays with Morrie. What changes in the story would reduce the amount of humor in favor of philosophy? advice? nostalgia? self-pity?
4. Summarize scenes that depict conflict, particularly Charlie's refusal to mention his dead wife, Mitch's boredom with glitzy personalities, Morrie's fear of choking, Norman's failure to comfort Morrie during Charlotte's illness, Morrie's guilt at David's crippling with polio, Peter's decision to move to Europe, and Morrie's belief that Ted Koppel is a narcissist.

Teacher's Notes

Vocabulary

Part A: Underline synonyms for each word in boldface.

1. **oblivion**
unmindfulness, recollection, nostalgia, heedlessness, retentiveness, recollection, rote, forgetfulness, recall, commemoration
2. **siren**
tempter, seducer, enticer, charmer, fascinator, tantalizer, lure, entrapper, bewitcher, flirt, inveigler, inducer, teaser, coquette, crone
3. **antidote**
counteraction, refutation, contradiction, interference, dissent, nullification, neutralization, goad, thwarting, retort, foil, defense
4. **ingest**
regurgitate, drain, release, consume, spew, expel, swallow, oust, discharge, jettison, disgorge, gobble, purge, voice, eliminate, spout
5. **clarity**
obfuscation, inanity, readability, distinctness, murk, cant, decipherability, ambiguity, incoherence, lucidity, intricacy, garbling, enigma
6. **intrusive**
needful, invasive, welcome, interfering, gratifying, beneficial, meddlesome, acceptable, presumptuous, desirable, salutary
7. **defer**
respect, execrate, impose, esteem, slight, deride, disparage, regard, gibe, value, inflict, revere, venerate, honor, affront, flout, rebuff
8. **insidious**
wily, riskless, commodious, warranted, sound, sly, inventive, hazardous, subtle, salubrious, deleterious, prophylactic, beneficial
9. **remission**
caesura, sustenance, interim, interlude, resumption, suspension, abeyance, perseverance, protraction, lull, lapse, relinquishment
10. **atrophy**
erode, ameliorate, rally, amend, emaciate, shrivel, wither, diminish, desiccate, wizen, lapse, subside, enhance, deteriorate, incapacitate

Part B: Correctly use each boldface word from Part A in a sentence.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

Comprehension Test A

Part I: Identification (20 points)

Identify the following characters.

- _____ 1. ran a candy store
- _____ 2. massaged Morrie's feet
- _____ 3. commuted to Amsterdam
- _____ 4. limped to the gravesite
- _____ 5. read poems to mourners
- _____ 6. sang "The Very Thought of You"
- _____ 7. challenged the importance of first place
- _____ 8. refused his sons affection
- _____ 9. liked the words of Marcus Aurelius
- _____ 10. wrote an honors paper

Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- _____ 1. Morrie came to love Mitch like a son.
- _____ 2. Charlotte feared that Morrie was too weak for the last visit.
- _____ 3. Morrie regretted the rift in his friendship with Maurie Stern.
- _____ 4. Peter was too weak to fax his brother.
- _____ 5. Mitch waited 16 years before visiting his old professor.
- _____ 6. Morrie considered friendship more valuable than marriage.
- _____ 7. An experimental drug came on the market too late to help Morrie.
- _____ 8. Morrie warned Mitch that piano playing may be a difficult career.
- _____ 9. Mitch was pleased with Morrie's choice of burial sites.
- _____ 10. Janine was shy about her telephone conversation with Morrie.

Comprehension Test A (Page 2)

Part III: Quotation Identification (20 points)

Name the character who speaks each of these lines. On the lines below, explain the significance of each citation.

1. You have a special boy here.

2. A teacher affects eternity.

3. So you're one of them, too.

4. None of us can undo what we've done, or relive a life already recorded.

5. I have heartburn and diahrea at the moment.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Account for Morrie's living funeral.
2. Defend Mitch's decision to introduce Janine to Morrie.
3. Compare Tony, Connie, Charlotte, and Mitch as caregivers.
4. Express Mitch's attitude toward stress.
5. Describe the circumstances that cause Mitch to reunite with Morrie.

Comprehension Test B

Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

Choose the answer that best completes each statement below. Place the letter of your response in the blank at left.

- _____ 1. Morrie is best known as a
 A. social psychologist.
 B. teacher.
 C. writer.
 D. counselor to mental patients.
- _____ 2. Charlie lied to
 A. David about the identity of his mother.
 B. his sons about Morrie's mother's health.
 C. the fur manufacturer about Morrie's interests.
 D. Eva about the telegram.
- _____ 3. Mitch was out of work because of
 A. Tuesdays with Morrie.
 B. his disinterest in sports personalities.
 C. his brother's treatment for pancreatic cancer.
 D. a labor strike at the Detroit Free Press.
- _____ 4. Morrie classified Ted Koppel as
 A. a news specialist.
 B. a caregiver.
 C. a narcissist.
 D. a favorite former student.
- _____ 5. ALS causes victims to
 A. sleep more deeply.
 B. think of suicide.
 C. die of suffocation.
 D. sink into self-pity.
- _____ 6. Levine believed that
 A. love is the only rational act.
 B. teachers impact the future.
 C. a funeral is the last graduation.
 D. being number one is not important.
- _____ 7. Norman invited Morrie to Cambridge
 A. to meet his wife.
 B. to pose for a sculpture.
 C. for outdoor sessions with students.
 D. to help despondent mental patients.
- _____ 8. The little wave
 A. fears dying alone.
 B. doesn't expect to vanish.
 C. values the advice of bigger waves.
 D. learns that it is part of the ocean.
- _____ 9. Morrie described cars, property, and toys as
 A. distractions from learning.
 B. rewards for hard work.
 C. valuable goals for mental patients.
 D. substitutes for love.
- _____ 10. The robbers
 A. invaded Eva's candy store.
 B. found nothing of value in the Schwartz home.
 C. precipitated Charlie's death.
 D. are examples of the era's materialism.
- _____ 11. Mitch was surprised that Morrie
 A. asked if he preferred to be called Mitchell.
 B. met students on the lawn.
 C. interrupted a basketball game.
 D. taught for a year in Detroit.
- _____ 12. Morrie could laugh at
 A. difficulty going to the toilet at the YMCA.
 B. Ted Turner's greed.
 C. the outcome of the O. J. Simpson trial.
 D. the need for a hospice nurse.
- _____ 13. Morrie valued
 A. a fifty-year marriage.
 B. Mitch like a son.
 C. David's role at the funeral.
 D. Al Axelrad's choice of poems.
- _____ 14. At Chestnut Lodge,
 A. Morrie completed his Ph. D.
 B. Peter faxed Mitch about his physical condition.
 C. patients yearned for compassion.
 D. a snarling woman lay on the floor at mealtime.
- _____ 15. Morrie tested student response to
 A. incarceration in an asylum.
 B. their own deaths.
 C. morphine.
 D. silence.

Comprehension Test B (Page 2)

Part II: Matching (20 points)

Match these descriptions with one of the places listed below.

Amsterdam	city morgue	London	Tibet
Boston Globe	Connecticut	Paris	University of Chicago
Brandeis University	Detroit	Russian army	Washington, D. C.,
the Bronx	fur factory	Spain	Wimbledon
Cambridge	group process class	stadium	YMCA
Chestnut Lodge	Harvard Square,	a theater	

- _____ 1. Mitch worked in _____ for a decade.
- _____ 2. Peter commuted to _____ for treatment.
- _____ 3. While in _____, David contracted polio.
- _____ 4. Morrie saw Charlie for the last time at the _____.
- _____ 5. In _____, Morrie played stickball.
- _____ 6. Mitch presented the brief case on his last day at _____.
- _____ 7. Morrie and Tony ignored stares at the _____.
- _____ 8. Charlie escaped from the _____.
- _____ 9. In _____, a girl closed her eyes before falling.
- _____ 10. At the _____, Lou Gehrig, proclaimed himself a lucky man.

Part III: Fill-in (20 points)

Fill-in the word that completes the blanks in each statement below.

1. Mitch, who lived in New York City while becoming a _____ pianist, lost a favorite _____ to pancreatic cancer.
2. While freelancing _____ writing, Mitch moved to Florida, then to Detroit, where he bought a _____ and married Janine.
3. In March 1995, Ted Koppel, host of Nightline, heard about Morrie through the _____ and came from Washington, D. C., to West Newton, _____, to visit him.
4. During the televised interview, the men discussed the _____ and Morrie's dread of becoming _____.
5. A softie, Morrie gave _____ to his male students during the _____.

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain why Mitch was finally able to weep.
2. Discuss why the author admires teachers.
3. Contrast Mitch before and after he reunited with Morrie.
4. Describe Morrie in his prime.
5. Account for the popularity of *Nightline* and *Tuesdays with Morrie*.

Answer Key

VOCABULARY

Part A

- unmindfulness, heedlessness, forgetfulness
- tempter, seducer, enticer, charmer, fascinator, tantalizer, lure, entrapper, bewitcher, flirt, inveigler, inducer, teaser, coquette
- counteraction, refutation, contradiction, interference, dissent, nullification, neutralization, thwarting, retort, foil, defense
- consume, swallow, gobble
- readability, distinctness, decipherability, lucidity
- invasive, interfering, meddlesome, presumptuous
- respect, esteem, regard, value, revere, venerate, honor
- wily, sly, inventive, hazardous, subtle, deleterious
- caesura, interim, interlude, suspension, abeyance, lull, lapse, relinquishment
- erode, emaciate, shrivel, wither, diminish, desiccate, wizen, lapse, subside, deteriorate, incapacitate

Part B

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST A

Part I: Identification (20 points)

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| 1. Morrie's mother | 6. Janine |
| 2. Mitch | 7. Morrie |
| 3. Peter | 8. Charlie |
| 4. David | 9. Ted Koppel |
| 5. Al Axelrad | 10. Mitch |

Part II: True/False (20 points)

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. T |
| 3. F | 8. T |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. T | 10. F |

Part III: Quotation Identification (20 points)

- Morrie
- Henry Adams
- mental patient
- Mitch
- Peter

Part IV: Essay (40 points)

Answers will vary.

COMPREHENSION TEST B

Part I: Multiple Choice (30 points)

- | | | |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. A | 11. A |
| 2. A | 7. B | 12. B |
| 3. D | 8. D | 13. B |
| 4. C | 9. D | 14. C |
| 5. C | 10. C | 15. D |

Part II: Matching (20 points)

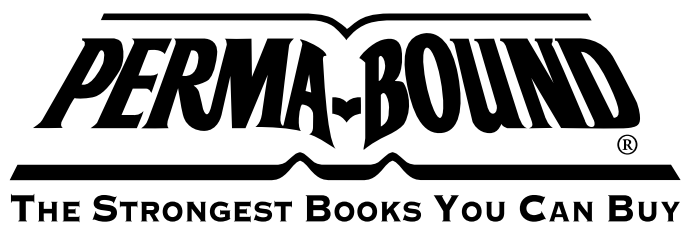
- | | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| 1. Detroit | 6. Brandeis University |
| 2. Amsterdam | 7. YMCA |
| 3. Connecticut | 8. Russian army |
| 4. city morgue | 9. group process class |
| 5. Bronx | 10. stadium |

Part III: Fill-in (20 points)

- jazz, uncle
- sports, house
- Boston Globe*, Massachusetts
- afterlife, dependent
- A's, Vietnam War

Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Answers will vary.



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