

Name _____
AP English Literature & Composition – Coach Peralta

THE METAMORPHOSIS Part 3 Discussion Questions

FYI: Many critics believe that the commanding figure of Mr. Samsa is the literary personification of the real-life figure who dominated Franz Kafka's life—his father, Hermann Kafka. Hermann Kafka was in many ways the exact opposite of his slender, shy, and thoughtful son: large, authoritarian, forceful, gruff, obsessed with his clothing business, and emotionally distant. The father also scoffed at his son's interest in literature and helped end his engagement to a woman from a socially inferior family. In a famous letter to his father, written in 1919 but never delivered, Franz Kafka discusses their relationship. He claims that he felt as though he could not possibly live up to his father's expectations of him. As you reflect back on this section of the novella, think about how the relationship between Kafka and his father might have influenced Kafka's portrayal of the father and son in *The Metamorphosis*.

1. Why, do you think, has Grete's attitude toward Gregor changed?
2. Who comes to live with the Samsas? What might be the significance of these new characters? Why did Kafka not give them names or other individual characteristics?
3. How does Gregor respond to his sister's violin playing? What might Kafka be implying about Gregor by describing this reaction?
4. The narrator strongly implies that Gregor starved himself to death. What other forces might have led to Gregor's death?
5. What effect does Gregor's metamorphosis ultimately have on his family? What does this effect suggest about his relationship with his family?
6. Many critics have pointed out that *The Metamorphosis* has elements of a parable, a story that illustrates a moral lesson. Review the novella and discuss what moral lesson(s) the story might illustrate.
7. In what sense has Gregor been a figurative insect long before he becomes one physically?
8. What evidence do we see that as Gregor becomes more externally (physically) bug-like, he becomes more internally human?

9. In what way do we treat people who are different? Do we treat people who are different the way Gregor is treated (after his transformation)?
10. Expanding on your answer to #9, explain how Gregor's metamorphosis can be seen as a symbol of the alienation of humans in the modern world.
11. Gregor says sadly, "I'm hungry enough, but not for that kind of food." What **is** Gregor hungry for?
12. Gregor Samsa becomes a giant bug. If you were to wake up one morning and discover that you had morphed into a creature **symbolic of your life and personality**, what would you be? Why? (This question isn't asking you what you'd *like* to be!)