

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Ms. Kamrass

English 9; Tuesdays with Morrie

## I. Plot Summary

*“Tuesdays with Morrie is a true story about sportswriter Mitch Albom and his favorite college professor Morrie Schwartz. During Albom's undergraduate years at Brandeis University, when he takes every class taught by his mentor, he and Schwartz form a bond that goes beyond the typical student/teacher relationship.*

*After graduation, Albom promises to stay in touch with his professor and moves to New York City with the intention of pursuing a career as a professional musician. He spends several frustrating years working odd jobs and wondering what he is doing wrong. He loses touch with all of his college friends and with Schwartz. His musical dreams are dying a frustrating death, and he feels like a failure for the first time in his life.”*

*(plot summary excerpt from [www.bookrags.com](http://www.bookrags.com))*

## II. Literary basics

**genre:** nonfiction, biography

**setting:** West Newton, Massachusetts (a suburb of Boston); mid-1990s

**point of view:** first person

**themes deal with:** love, friendship, family, aging, forgiveness, death, grief, acceptance

**conflict:** man vs. nature, man vs. man

**style:** narrative that weaves together stories from the past and present

**tone:** emotional, contemplative, nostalgic

## III. Characters:

- Morrie Schwartz: professor at Brandeis University
- Mitch Albom:
- Charlotte: Morrie's wife
- Rob and Jon: Morrie's sons
- Janine: Mitch's wife
- Peter: Mitch's brother
- Maurie Stein: Morrie's friend
- Ted Koppel: newsman who conducts three interviews with Morrie for Nightline
- Connie: Morrie's home health care aide
- Charlie: Mitch's austere Russian immigrant father
- Eva: Mitch's kind step mother
- David: Morrie's younger brother; crippled by polio
- Al Axelrad: rabbi from Brandeis University who speaks at Morrie's funeral services

## IV. Questions

Directions: On a separate sheet of paper, answer each question in complete sentences, with CDs and CM. I will collect and grade these on each due date given on your weekly sheets. Your answers should not be too similar to those written by any others.

A. “The Curriculum – The Syllabus” (pp. 1-13)

1. Where is the hibiscus plant? What might it symbolize?
2. Examine Albom's flashback to his final day with Schwartz at graduation in 1979. What does this reveal about both of them?

3. What are both Morrie's and Charlotte's initial reaction to the diagnosis of ALS?
4. How has Morrie's teaching influenced his approach to dying?

**B. "The Student" "The Audiovisual" – "The Orientation" (pp. 14-29)**

1. How has Mitch changed after his uncle's death?
2. What other chance circumstance will alter his life?
3. Describe both Morrie's mental and physical condition during his appearance on Nightline. What are some of his philosophies at this point?
4. Analyze the personification of death, "he was not about to powder its nose" (21).
5. Describe the beginning of Mitch and Morrie's relationship in 1976. How do you know the two will become close?
6. What is Mitch ashamed of during his first visit to Morrie after learning about his illness?

**"The Classroom" "Taking Attendance" (pp. 32-47)**

1. Why is Mitch "envious" of Morrie?
2. Morrie describes himself as a "bridge." Describe what he means by that.
3. Write down one of Morrie's questions to Mitch from page 34 and answer it yourself.
4. What happens to Mitch's job?
5. What does he decide to do on the next Tuesday?

**"The First Tuesday..." "The Second Tuesday" (p. 48-59)**

1. What is Morrie's reaction to the bad news he reads about in newspapers and sees on TV? It starts when he's talking to Mitch about it.
2. What does Morrie say about love? Give a quote and interpret it (this means use other words to explain).
3. **Q** What is the last thing that Morrie says to Mitch in the non-italicized portion of the chapter?
4. 2<sup>nd</sup> Tues...

**C. "The Third Tuesday – The Professor" (pp. 62-79)**

1. Describe Morrie's discourse (explanation of sorts) on regret and Mitch's reaction.
2. How has Morrie further deteriorated by the time he is on Nightline again?
3. How has Morrie's childhood shaped his life?
4. On page 79, there is a quote from Henry Adams: "A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Explain.

**D. "The Fourth Tuesday – The Fifth Tuesday" (80-99)**

1. What is Morrie's perspective of death as explained in the first paragraph on page 80?
2. What does this metaphor mean: "He (Morrie) was a religious mutt" (82)? Are you a religious mutt too?
3. What is Morrie's philosophy about family and how does it affect Mitch?
4. Do you think Peter will allow Mitch to re-enter his life? Why do you think so?

**E. "The Sixth Tuesday – The Seventh Tuesday" (100-122)**

1. How has Morrie changed since Mitch's last visit?
2. What prompts Morrie to tell Mitch how he wants to die and what is the significance of his desire?

**F. "The Eight Tuesday – The Ninth Tuesday" (123-141)**

1. Compare the quote from Ted Turner, "I don't want my tombstone to read, 'I never owned a network,'" with what Morrie wants engraved on his tombstone, "A Teacher to the Last."
2. What does Morrie think about the value of money? What about Mitch?

3. According Morrie, people are more important than things. Do you agree? How can you reflect this in your own life?

G. "The Tenth Tuesday – The Eleventh Tuesday" (142-159)

1. Describe Janine's kindness toward Morrie. Why is it important?

H. "The Audiovisual, Part Three – The Thirteenth Tuesday" (160-180)

1. What is the importance of Morrie's final words on this appearance of Nightline?
2. "Forgive yourself before you die. Then forgive others" (164) Do you agree?

I. "The Fourteenth Tuesday – Conclusion" (181-192)

1. What are the effects of Morrie's final days on those who are involved with him?
2. Describe how Mitch and Morrie show that they love each other during Mitch's final visit.
3. Why is the chapter about Morrie's death and funeral entitled "Graduation"?

## **V. Essential Questions**

A. Why is it important to have relationships – both platonic and romantic – in our lives? What would life be like without other people? How do relationships help? How do they hurt?

B. How do you repair a broken relationship? Is forgiveness always possible? What happens with a relationship dies and is never reconstructed?

C. What is life like without family support, or what would it be like? How do people manage if they don't have family? How do people function when their families are dysfunctional?

D. What do you believe happens after death? Are there bad and good ways to die? What does death do to families and friends?