

Study Guide
***In Cold Blood*, Truman**
Capote

Included:
All Vocabulary
Who's Who
Study Questions

***In Cold Blood*, Truman Capote**

Study and Comprehension

Questions pages 1-41

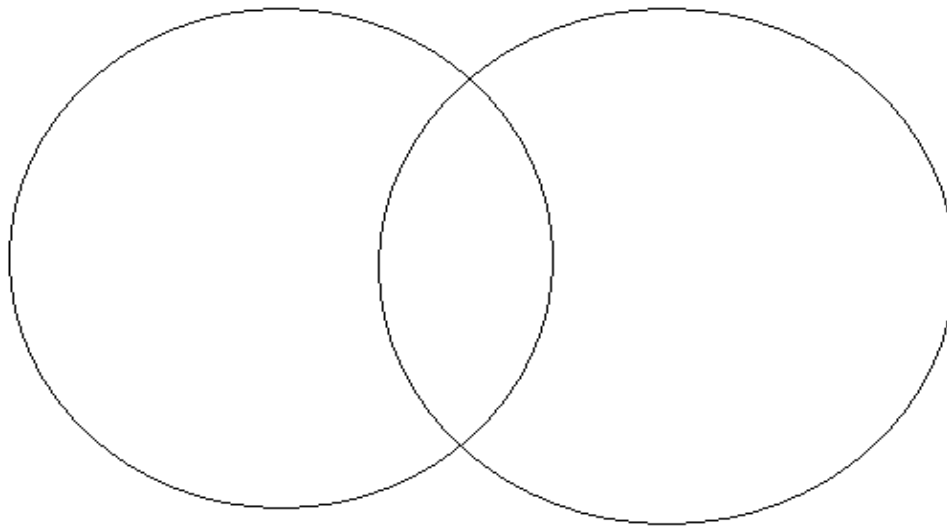
I-The Last to See Them Alive (Part 1)

Reading Comprehension-Preview the following questions, then answer the questions as you read. Respond in complete sentences and provide textual evidence. Use separate paper unless otherwise directed.

- 1. Describe the village of Holcomb.**
- 2. During which year and what time of year does the novel take place?**
- 3. Identify Mrs. Clutter's health problem. How does her ailing health affect the other members of the Clutter family?**
- 4. Herb Clutter had an inflexible attitude/policy toward what habit? Why?**
- 5. How was Herb Clutter viewed by other members of the Holcomb community?**
- 6. How did Herb Clutter feel about Bobby Rupp, Nancy's boyfriend?**
- 7. Outline the details of "the score" as it is conceived by Dick and Perry.**
- 8. How was Nancy Clutter viewed by other members of the Holcomb community?**
- 9. Why didn't Dick's parents approve of his association with Perry? What was the lie Dick told to his parents?**
- 10. Describe Kenyon Clutter.**
- 11. Create a compare-and-contrast chart with Dick and Perry. You may use either chart on the following page. Submit the chart along with the answers to your questions.**

Dick (Richard Hickocks)

Perry Smith



Dick		Perry
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto; padding: 10px; min-height: 80px;">Similarities</div>		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 60%; margin: 0 auto; padding: 5px;">Points of Contrast</div>		
<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 80%; margin: 0 auto; height: 100px;"></div>		

Who's Who in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*

As you read, complete the chart below filling in the required information for each new person introduced.

Name	Description (Physical/Personal Traits)	Relevance (role, important actions, words etc.)
Bobby Rupp		
Vic Irsik		
Gerald Van Vleet		
Bob Jones		
Paul Helm		
Mrs.Helm		
Susan Kidwell		
Mrs. Hideo Ashida		
Bob Johnson		
Alfred Stoecklein		
Mother Truitt		

Who's Who in Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*

Name	Description (Physical/Personal Traits)	Relevance (role, important actions, words etc.)
Mrs. Myrt Clare		
Alvin Adams Dewey (80)		
Harold Nye (85)		
Floyd Wells (91)		
Willie Jay		
Cookie		
Marie, Paul and Alvin Adams Dewey Jr.		
Mrs. Archibald William Warren Brown		
Otto		

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Study and Comprehension

Questions pages 41-74

I-The Last to See Them Alive (Part 2)

- 1. Who was Willie-Jay and why did he take to Perry? What did he have in common with Perry? What did Willie-Jay have to do with Perry's acceptance of "the score?"**
- 2. Name one of the habits Herb Clutter was known for. How is this pertinent to the crime?**
- 3. Herb and Bob Johnson make a business deal on the very same day that Herb is killed. How does this deal provide a potential motive for the murder of the Clutters?**
- 4. What was the last stop made by the two travelers before they visited the Clutter household? What was the bad omen Perry perceived while they were there?**
- 5. What was it that ultimately convinced Dick that Perry would make a good partner for his plan?**
- 6. What was the last thing Nancy Clutter was known to have done before going to sleep?**
- 7. Who are the first people to find the Clutters? What was one of the first clues they spotted once inside the Clutter household?**
- 8. Provide one reason that the sheriff ruled out robbery.**
- 9. Does Mrs. Clare's attitude toward the news of the murders surprise you? Why or why not?**
- 10. What is Mr. Johnson talking about when he says legally obliged and morally obliged? What does he decide to do?**
- 11. How does Bobby find out about Nancy's murder? What is his reaction to the news?**
- 12. Where do Perry and Dick go after he murders? What do Perry and Dick do after the murders?**

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Study and Comprehension

Questions pages 77-120

II-Persons Unknown (Part 1)

- 1. Why do Andy Erhart and other friends of Herb Clutter offer to clean the house?**
- 2. Why didn't the Stocklein's hear the sounds of the guns or of screaming?**
- 3. Describe Dewey's two differing scenarios/ "concepts" of the crime.**
- 4. Describe the various leads and suspects at this time.**
- 5. What is Perry's premonition as he and Dick sit reading the paper in the diner a few days later? Describe at least one other time where Perry has had a similar feeling. What is Dick's reaction?**
- 6. What is Dick's significant admission during that same conversation?**
- 7. Describe Perry's dream.**
- 8. How did Susan Kidwell react after going "to see Nancy" at the funeral home?**
- 9. How do Dick and Perry come up with money to support themselves in the days after the murders? Explain.**
- 10. How does Dick express some small measure of regret for his method of accruing money?**
- 11. Where are Perry and Dick planning to go after they raise enough money? What are their plans once they get there? Do you find their plans plausible? Why or why not?**
- 12. What happens to each of Dewey's leads in the case?**
- 13. Which discoveries made within the Clutter household lead Dewey to reexamine the possible motivation being robbery?**
- 14. Which details within the Clutter household convince Dewey that at least one of the murders must have felt emotionally attached to the Clutters?**
- 15. At this point of the novel, describe the effect Dewey's work is having on his wife and children. What is**

- the implied answer to Marie's question about having a normal life?
16. What does Beverly Clutter decide to do just three days after the funeral of her father, mother and brother?
 17. Describe Perry's family background
 18. Before Perry and Dick murdered the Clutter family, why did Perry tell Dick the story of a time that he "fixed a guy?"
 19. What are some of Holcomb's residents (like the Ashido's) starting to do?
 20. What is the last thing Perry does before he and Dick part ways with Otto in Mexico?

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Questions pages 120-155

II-Persons Unknown (Part 2)

1. Who is Jonathan Daniel Adrian?
2. What motivates Perry's father to write "A History of My Boy's Life"? How does Tex John Smith characterize his son?
3. Briefly describe Perry's time in the Merchant Marines
4. What did Perry and his dad plan to do together when they reunited in Alaska? What was the outcome of their plan?
5. In one thorough paragraph, describe Perry's letter from his sister.
6. How does Willie-Jay interpret Barbara's letter?
7. What becomes of the Adrian lead?
8. How is Dewey handling the stress and pressure of the case?

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Questions pages 159-187

III-Answer (Part 1)

- 1. Explain the connection Floyd Wells has to the Clutter murders.**
- 2. What are the two reasons Wells is reluctant to come forward? What eventually changes his mind?**
- 3. What is Marie's reaction to the lead introduced by Floyd Wells?**
- 4. Identify at least two clues ascertained by Detective Nye after his interview with Mr. and Mrs. Hickocks. How does this evidence corroborate the Wells story?**
- 5. Why don't Perry and Dick kill Mr. Bell?**
- 6. What are some of the key pieces of evidence or information gleaned by Detective Nye while investigating Perry's activity in Las Vegas?**
- 7. What request does Mrs. Barbara Johnson make of Detective Nye? Why does she make this request?**
- 8. Describe Mrs. Barbara Johnson's trip down memory lane. What does she think of her father, her brother Jimmy, her mother and Fern? How has her view of Perry changed? What are some of the differences between Perry's upbringing and the upbringing of the other children?**

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Study and Comprehension

Questions pages 187-217

III-Answer (Part 2)

- 1. What did Perry consider a “crazy man stunt?”**
- 2. What do you think of Dewey’s philosophy, “the safer they feel the sooner we’ll catch them”?**
- 3. What prohibition is made by both Mrs. Hartman and Myrt Clare?**
- 4. What is foremost in Perry’s mind as he cleans his laundry at the Washateria?**
- 5. By this point of the book, we have learned a great deal about Dick and Perry’s criminal relationship and friendship together. Describe their relationship. How does each character seem to fulfill a need for the other character?**
- 6. Describe Inspector/Detective Dewey’s dream. Does it turn out to be accurate? Why does Dewey mistrust his own premonition?**
- 7. How does Capote’s writing develop Dick’s psychological state of mind? How does Capote help readers to understand how power functions or what might contribute to Dick’s rage?**
- 8. What little secret of Dick’s is revealed in this section? What is his primary motivation for keeping this aspect of himself a secret?**
- 9. What is Perry’s opinion of Dick’s secret? Use a quote from the book to reinforce your answer.**
- 10. What is Perry’s “tremendous fascination”? In what way has he granted in himself this wish since his actions at the Clutter household?**
- 11. How are Perry’s and Dick’s views of the future starting to diverge?**
- 12. How has Bobby Rupp fared as time has passed?**
- 13. Why does Capote bother to relate the tale of the boy and Johnny collecting cans?**
- 14. How does Dewey ruin his wife’s party? Why isn’t she angry with him?**
- 15. What was the second half of Dick’s Las Vegas plan? Why doesn’t it work?**

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Study and Comprehension

Questions pages 217-248

III-Answer (Part 3)

- 1. Describe Dick's family background. Why does he think that he and Perry have been picked up by the cops?**
- 2. How did Dick end up in jail the first time?**
- 3. Why are Perry and Dick being held separately?**
- 4. As they are being questioned, where do Dick and Perry's stories diverge?**
- 5. Identify the holes in Dick's story that allow Church and Nye to pinpoint him as one of the murderers.**
- 6. What leads to Hickock's eventual confession? What does he say when he eventually confesses?**
- 7. After news of Dick's confession spreads across the airwaves, Mrs. Myrt Clare maintains her theory is correct. How does her theory of the Clutters' murder differ from the story being told by Dick and Perry?**
- 8. Describe Perry's state of mind during the night of the killings. Trace Perry's excuses and alternatives as he tries to get out of the score entirely or change the violent nature of the crime. Begin with the inception of the crime and follow through to the execution of the crime.**
- 9. What did Nancy and Perry discuss? What did Nancy and Dick discuss? Which additional offense did Perry refuse to go along with?**
- 10. According to Perry, what was the order of killings? According to Perry, which of the Clutters did he kill? According to Perry, which of the Clutters did Dick kill?**
- 11. What did Perry think of after he and Dick had committed all four murders and were down in Mr. Clutter's office again? How is this reminiscent of**

something Dick thought of early on in his interrogation?

12. How did Perry's and Dick's versions of the crime differ?
13. What was Dewey's reaction to Perry's version of the crime? How did he feel towards Perry?
14. What was the outcome of the score, meaning what did Perry and Dick get out of robbing the Clutter household?
15. Describe the scene at the Garden City Courthouse on the day that Perry and Dick arrive.

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Questions pages 251-279

IV - The Corner (Part-1)

Reading Comprehension-Preview the following questions, then answer the questions as you read. Respond in complete sentences and provide textual evidence. Use separate paper unless otherwise directed.

1. What reason does Perry give Mrs. Josie Meier for why he can't eat?
2. What are Mrs. Meier's early impressions of Perry? How do they differ from her husband's?
3. Which part of Perry's statement is false? Why did Perry lie? Why does he feel compelled to tell the truth? What does this reveal about him?
4. Why do you suppose Dick and Perry laugh non-stop after fleeing the murder scene?
5. Why does the county attorney Duane West feel a sentence of the death penalty would be best for Smith and Hickock?
6. Why, despite Dick's betrayal, does Perry miss his companionship?

7. Despite the religious sentiment behind the letter from Don Cullivan, why do you suppose Perry is so quick in his response?
8. How does Dick's behavior in prison suggest he feels no remorse for the crime he participated in?
9. Describe the TWO plans Perry creates to avoid "climbing those thirteen steps."
10. Why does Mr. Fleming suggest Perry and Dick NOT request a change in venue for the trial?
11. Explain how the trial of Smith and Hickcock might be affected by the M'Naughten Rule.
12. Why might the timing of the Clutter estate auction impact the outcome of the trial?
13. Describe the turnout at the Clutter family auction in comparison with Hideo Ashida's auction. Why did the two differ?
14. Which details included in Smith's autobiographical statement might lend support to an insanity plea?
15. Explain how Dick tries to use his confession to Dr. Jones to help mount an insanity defense.

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Questions pages 302-317

IV - The Corner Part III

1. Why does Attorney Logan Green's final address to the jury draw a large crowd of spectators?
2. Contrast the final addresses to the jury made by the prosecution and the defense.
3. Respond personally, with a four sentence minimum, to the following quote, "He that smiteth a man, so that he die, shall be surely put to death."
4. Explain why Dick gets charged with three counts of murder in the first degree while Perry gets charged with four counts.

5. How does Perry's behavior upon exiting the court house differ from his behavior upon returning to his cell?
6. When Lowell Lee Andrews finished shooting his family he remarked he, "didn't feel anything about it. The time came, and I was doing what I had to do. That's all there was to it." How does Perry differ in regard to killing the Clutters?
7. How does the Andrews' case provide Dr. Satten with the chance to challenge the M'Naghten Rule?
8. Ultimately, why is Andrews sentenced to death rather than confinement in the State Hospital for the Criminally Insane?

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Questions pages 317-343

IV - The Corner – The End

1. Why does Perry go on a hunger strike? Does his reasoning seem rational? Explain.
2. Why does Perry resume eating again?
3. Explain why Dick and Lowell Lee Andrews disagree on the ratio of murderers on death row to murder victims.
4. How does the hanging execution of Lowell Lee Andrews demonstrate the inhumanity of the death penalty?
5. Explain how Andrews dream job, if ever paroled, is similar to Perry's dream of finding buried treasure.
6. Unlike Dick, why isn't Perry sad when Andrews leaves death row to be executed?
7. What surprising perspective does Dick have on capital punishment?
8. List the four reasons the newly appointed lawyers of Perry and Dick contend that their clients had been unjustly convicted. How many time was the Smith-Hickock case brought before the Supreme Court? Why was their final clemency appeal denied?
9. Dewey finds the setting of the execution to be disconcerting. Why?

10. Dick cracks jokes until the bitter end of his life. What does his behavior reveal about his character?
11. Why is Dewey more bothered by the death of Smith than the death of Hickock?
12. What finally brings Dewey the closure he needed in the Clutter case?



The Reflection Blog

During our study of the text *In Cold Blood* students will be required to make one post per week to an online reflection blog. Think of the blog as an opportunity to have an ongoing conversation about the text. Each week there will be new quotations from the text posted to the blog. Your task is to interpret, react, support and disagree with the ideas. You're not simply restating facts from the text but instead you are justifying your positions and reacting to the ideas of your peers. Be sure that the points you're making are clearly explained and developed; this will encourage a challenging conversation and open up the possibility for debate on various interpretations of the text. The first posting will be done in class as a group but after the first post students will be

responsible for posting on their own time unless otherwise specified.

The URL is <http://mkincoldblood.blogspot.com> and should be accessible from any computer with Internet access.

Each entry should include:

- ❑ Your first and last name
- ❑ The quote number
- ❑ The names of any students to whom you are responding.
- ❑ A page number should be included for any additional direct quotes posted to the blog.
- ❑ The date and time of your entry should be automatically recorded.

***** You will not get ANY credit without this information. *****

Quotation # 1: "I can't imagine you afraid. No matter what happened, you'd talk your way out of it" (36).

Sample Blog Response

First Student said...

To me, Quotation #1 seems like foreshadowing. Mr. Clutter is described as "fearless" by Mrs. Ashida. This quality will show up later I'm sure. Fearlessness seems like a good quality to have when a gun is pointed at your head or at the head of one of your family members.

DECEMBER 19, 2007

11:14 AM

Sample Blog Response

Second Student said...

I feel that when Mr. Asiba says that she couldn't imagine Mr. Clutter being afraid and that he is fealess. But really every father and man will come off as fearless becuae he knows everyone looks to him for support in a bad situation, which i agree with corey as being foreshadowing in the way that maybe he will be looked to for answers and he may possibly not have any in the moments before his family is murdered.

DECEMBER 20, 2007 10:15 PM