

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ P: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty"

Author: James Thurber

Page #:

Genre: Short Story

Big Question: Can truth change?

**Literary Analysis:**

- Character-
- Round Character-
- Flat Character-
- Dynamic Character-
- Static Character-

**Reading Strategy:**

- Author's Purpose –
- Point of View –

**Vocabulary:**

- Distaught
- Insolent
- Insinuatingly
- Pandemonium
- Derisive
- Inscrutable

**Notes:** The events in James Thurber's story "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" follow a pattern. Something triggers Mitty's daydream and becomes a part of it. The daydream proceeds until something interrupts it. The daydream also tells the reader something about Walter Mitty's character. Use the column to write what character trait is revealed from each daydream. Use the graphic organizer below to find the details that create the story's pattern.

Cause	Daydream	Character Trait Revealed	Interruption
The sound of the car engine reminds him of a ship's engine.	Navy hydroplane Commander		
	Famous doctor performing surgery		
	On the stand in the courtroom		
	Air Force pilot		
	firing squad		None

1) How does Walter's behavior differ in his daydreams and his real life?

- Daydreams-
- Real Life-

2) Explain the difference between the way people treat Mitty in his real life and the way they treat him in his daydreams.

- Daydreams-
- Real Life-

The Literary Analysis on your notes sheet wants you to focus on Point of View and Round and Flat Characters.

3) What is the point of view of this story? Why is the POV important to this story?

4) Is Walter Mitty a round or flat character? How do you know?

**Directions:** For each numbered item, write a sentence telling what character trait or traits the passage reveals.

1. **Mrs. Mitty:** “We’ve been all through that,” she said, getting out of the car. “You’re not a young man any longer.” He raced the engine a little. “Why don’t you wear your gloves? Have you lost your gloves?”

Character traits of Mrs. Mitty: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. **Walter Mitty:** Once he had tried to take his chains off [the tires], outside New Milford, and he had got them wound around the axles. A man had to come out in a wrecking care and unwind them, a young, grinning garageman. Since then Mrs. Mitty always made him drive to a garage to have the chains taken off. The next time, he thought, I’ll wear my right arm in a sling; they won’t grin at me then.

Character traits of Walter Mitty: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. **Walter Mitty:** A woman’s scream rose above the bedlam and suddenly a lovely, dark-haired girl was in Walter Mitty’s arms. The District Attorney struck at her savagely. Without rising from his chair, Mitty let the man have it on the point of the chin. “You miserable cur!”...

Character traits of Walter Mitty: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. **Mrs. Mitty and Walter Mitty:** “Did you get the what’s-its-name? The puppy biscuit? What’s in that box?” “Overshoes,” said Mitty. “Couldn’t you have put them on in the store?” “I was thinking,” said Walter Mitty. “Does it ever occur to you that I am sometimes thinking?” She looked at him. “I’m going to take your temperature when I get you home,” she said.

Character traits of Mrs. Mitty and Walter Mitty: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Write one or two sentences telling why, in your opinion, James Thurber might have included each of the following details or events in “The Secret Life of Walter Mitty.”

1. Mrs. Mitty scolds her husband for driving too fast and for not wearing his gloves. He does what she tells him to do.

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2. Walter Mitty daydreams, imagining that he is an important surgeon who repairs a piece of medical equipment and saves a patient’s life.

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3. Walter Mitty tells his wife that he does not need overshoes, but his wife insists that he does. He buys the overshoes.

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4. Walter Mitty daydreams, imagining that he is a heroic air force captain about to fly a two-man bomber into heavy combat by himself.

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5. Walter Mitty daydreams, imagining himself heroically facing a firing squad – “proud and disdainful, Walter Mitty the Undefeated, inscrutable to the last.”

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