

The War of the Worlds **Study Guide**

Book One

Chapters 1 – 3

1. What are some of the facts known about Mars in the late 1800's? What are some of the assumptions about Mars?
2. What do the astronomers see, and what do they conclude from these discoveries?
3. Discuss the "falling star": Where does it land, what does Ogilvy observe?
4. What is the people's reaction to the cylinder? How would people today react to a similar discovery? What is the fastest means of communication in the late 19th century?

Chapters 4 – 6

5. Describe the creature that emerges from the cylinder and discuss the events following its appearance.
6. The narrator is a nameless, average citizen. Why would Wells tell the story from his point of view? What effect does not naming the character have on reader? What is his reaction to the attack?
7. Discuss the "heat-ray" that the Martians use. What does the description of this "ray" most closely resemble today?

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Chapters 7 – 9

8. Discuss the effect of the events on the narrator and compare the “world” at Maybury, with what he just experienced two miles away at the Martian landing site.
9. Analyze the newspaper’s failure to report the message sent by Henderson. Compare with a similar situation you might think would occur today.
10. Contrast the reactions of the citizens with those of the military authorities.
11. Discuss the events of Saturday involving the Martians and the human’s response.

Chapters 10 – 11

12. Why does the narrator want to return to Maybury? Is this typical of normal human behavior? Give real life examples.
13. Discuss the imagery of the storm and correlate with the gathering war storm. What different *connotations* could the image of a “storm” have in this book?
14. Describe the Martian “machines”. What effect does the night’s events have on the narrator?
15. What does the narrator observe after the passing of the thunderstorm? Compare this to pictures you have seen of similar destruction (from war, etc.).
16. Describe the soldier’s report and his observations.

War of the Worlds – Study Guide Questions

Chapters 12 – 13

17. What does the narrator decide to do? Why does he make this decision?
18. Discuss the death of the Martian.
19. What are the circumstances that lead to the narrator's union with the curate. Who is the curate? What does he think of the Martian's destruction of London?
20. Discuss the nature of religion, as it is discussed here in this book. What is Wells trying to say?

Chapters 14 – 15

21. Discuss the change in narrative. Why would Wells change narrators at this point in the story? Is this change effective?
22. What are some of the changes in the atmosphere in London? How have Londoners changed?
23. Discuss how the Martian's use of gas (vapors) were viewed as being more prophetic than the more fantastic "heat-rays". Think about the significant events of the early 1900's. Why might gas be a particularly effective weapon?

Chapters 16 – 17

24. Discuss the "roaring wave of fear" that sweeps London. How is human nature described in this chapter (as people are trying to escape). Give examples of how civilized behavior has disappeared.
25. What is the "Thunder Child"? Describe the events surrounding the brother's escape, and the "Thunder Child's" encounter with the Martians.

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Book Two

Chapters 1 – 2

26. What are the activities and relationship of the narrator and the curate?

27. Describe the Martian fighting machines and their occupants.

28. How do the Martians feed? Compare the Martians to how Wells describe our own carnivorous habits.

Chapters 3 – 6

29. What are the narrator's feelings towards the curate? Analyze the universality of how close proximity with another person reveals personality flaws and often leads to open conflict. Give real life examples.

30. Describe the events surrounding the curate's death.

31. Describe the narrator's escape from the house. What does he observe?

Chapters 7 – 8

32. What are the three things that struggle for possession of the narrator's mind? What are the possible resolutions to each?

33. What does the narrator learn from the soldier? What is the soldier's mental state? What are his plans? Why does the narrator eventually leave him?

34. What is the "red weed"?

35. Describe what the narrator sees in London. What is making the wailing sound? What monumental discovery does the narrator make? Give examples from real life on where this phenomenon has been seen before.

Chapters 9 – 10

36. Discuss the reaction to the fall of the Martians. Compare the World's response to England's needs to today's worldwide response to disasters.

37. What does the narrator learn about Leatherhead when he returns? What does he find there?

38. Discuss what happens in the Epilogue. How does the narrator now view his world?