

How to approach this summer reading assignment: Before each section of Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers*, preview the questions so that you know what to look for as you read. Then, answer the questions as you read. (NOTE: questions for each section *may* be out of order.) While credit will not be given for answering these questions, you will be able to use this guide and your answers on the test.

Introduction, The Roseto Mystery

1. Of what were the people of Roseto dying?
2. In what US state did the Rosetans settle?
3. Why was Roseto considered an outlier?
4. How did the investigators explain their excellent health?
5. What does Gladwell say is his main purpose for his book—the over-arching idea?

Ch 1 “The Matthew Effect”

1. What discovery is made about the majority of the most successful hockey players?
2. What does Gladwell suggest doing in order to combat arbitrary cut-off dates for elementary and middle schools?
3. According to Gladwell, why don't we (as a culture) change this arbitrary eligibility cut-off system for schools, sports, and other areas?
4. What is meritocracy?
5. FIB: “It's not enough to ask what successful people are like...It is only by asking _____ (four words) that we can unravel the logic behind who succeeds and who doesn't.”
6. Gladwell appears to be arguing that the self-made man is a myth. Name at least three advantages you think you have that are a result of circumstances rather than personal action or choice.

Ch 2 “The 10,000 Hour Rule”

1. According to Gladwell, which of the following seems to play the biggest influence in the careers of the gifted?
2. Researchers believe that it takes 10,000 hours of practice to obtain what?
3. Who was Bill Joy and how does his story exemplify the 10,000-hour rule?
4. What was so significant about The Beatles playing in Hamburg that led to their future success?
5. “What truly distinguishes” the histories of Bill Gates, Bill Joy, and The Beatles “is not their extraordinary talent but their extraordinary _____.”
6. How was being born in the 1830s an extraordinary opportunity for people like Rockefeller, Carnegie, and J.P. Morgan, who became some of America's wealthiest men?

Ch 3 “The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 1”

1. What common theory is debunked in this chapter?
2. What analogy does Gladwell use to illustrate the concept that there is a threshold for intelligence, that there is a point where people are “smart enough”?
3. What was Terman's misconception in his original theory concerning IQ?

Ch 4 “The Trouble with Geniuses, Part 2”

1. For what act did Robert Oppenheimer receive probation?
2. Even though they were both geniuses, why was Oppenheimer more successful than Chris Langan?
3. List three facets of “practical intelligence.”
4. Where do the attitudes and skills that develop “practical intelligence” come from?
5. Sociologist Annette Lareau claims that “middle-class children learn a sense of _____,” while working-class and poor children learn more of a sense of _____.

Ch 5 “The Three Lessons of Joe Flom”

1. Explain Gladwell's statement as it relates to Joe Flom: “Buried in that set back was a golden opportunity.”

2. What are the components of “satisfying work”?
3. According to Gladwell, “Success is not _____.”
4. Consider the following quote: “Hard work is a prison sentence only if it does not have meaning.” Explain how this quote relates to chapter 5.
5. What is the point Gladwell is making about the Jewish immigrants and their descendants?
6. Why were the “Termites” who were born in 1903-1911 “demographically unlucky” compared to those “Termites” born in 1912-1917?

Ch 6 “Harlan Kentucky”

1. Describe the “culture of honor” that exists in the Appalachian Mountains.
2. Why were the feuds happening?
3. The 1990s study at the University of Michigan revealed that “the deciding factor” in how the male participants reacted to an insult was _____.
4. What question is Gladwell trying to answer in part two of *Outliers*?

Ch 7 “The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes”

1. What is Gladwell’s purpose for illustrating the story of Korea Air’s transformation “from the worst kind of outlier into one of the world’s best airlines”?
2. Describe the significance of the “willingness to change” as it relates to Korean Air.
3. What is mitigated speech and how can it be problematic?
4. In many _____ cultures it is the responsibility of the listener to make sense of the conversation; conversely, in _____ culture it is up to the speaker to make the message clear.
5. What is Gladwell explaining about the importance of communication?

Ch 8 “Rice Paddies and Math Tests”

1. The number system in English is highly _____.
2. What built-in advantage do Asians have for math?
3. According to Gladwell, being good at math is more about _____ than _____.
4. Describe the connection between the “10,000-Hour Rule” and the wet-rice farmers in Asia.
5. After reading this section of *Outliers*, have your opinions changed about math classes and math ability? Explain why or why not.

Ch 9 “Marita’s Bargain”

1. According to sociologist Karl Alexander’s research, which of the following is true about why disadvantaged children score near the low end of the achievement gap?
2. “America doesn’t have a school problem. It has a/an _____ problem.”
3. According to Gladwell, what can make math more meaningful?
4. Gladwell states, “success follows a predictable course.” How does this assertion apply to Marita?

Epilogue “A Jamaican Story”

1. One of Gladwell’s main arguments in the book is that “to build a better world we need ...a society that _____.”
2. What does Gladwell mean when he says, “The outlier in the end is not an outlier at all”?