*The Metamorphosis,*Study Questions

**Introduction**

In Part 1, you will read how one man reacts when the world of dreams seems to have intruded upon the real world. Right away, *The Metamorphosis* draws readers into the nightmarish world of Gregor Samsa, a young man who has mysteriously undergone a monstrous transformation.

For many readers, Gregor’s dehumanizing metamorphosis and alienation symbolize fear and insecurity within the human condition during modern times. As you read this puzzling work, keep in mind that scholars and critics have argued for almost a century about what it means. One reason for Kafka’s immense influence and popularity is this openness to many interpretations.

After you finish reading and annotating each part, answer the following questions ***thoroughly*** and in complete sentences to help you understand the events that take place. Use text evidence to support your responses. The more you develop your answers, the better you will understand what you read.

***REMEMBER:*** Kafka is not the kind of writer who will take you by the hand and lead you into his meaning, you will need to find your way there yourself.

Part I

1. How does Gregor feel about his job? What evidence in the story reveals his feelings?
2. What is Gregor’s role in his family? Why does he have so much responsibility? How is this role about to change?
3. What happens to Gregor when he leaves his room to meet the office manager? What does this episode reveal about Gregor’s father?
4. From Gregor’s point of view, what might be some positive aspects of his metamorphosis into an insect?
5. What circumstances in Gregor’s life might have caused him to feel dehumanized, even before the metamorphosis took place?
6. In part one, Kafka portrays Gregor as a dual being, both human and insect. For example, he must figure out how his new body functions, while at the same time he has the thoughts and feelings of a human. Make a chart, with “HUMAN” vs. “INSECT”, and write down quotes or details that characterize each side from chapter 1.

Part II

1. What is one of the few past-times that makes Gregor happy in his new state? Why?
2. How does Grete’s attitude and behavior toward Gregor change in this chapter? In what ways does she try to care for him?
3. What do Grete and Mrs. Samsa do in Gregor’s room? How does Gregor react and why?
4. How does Gregor’s relationship with his father change in this part and why? What is the role of Gregor’s mother in the story?

Part III

1. How does Gregor’s outlook change during this section?
2. How does Grete’s outlook on Gregor change?
3. What does Grete’s violin playing mean for Gregor?
4. What does the charwoman’s character add to the narrative?
5. In what ways have Gregor’s actions prior to the start of the novel been detrimental to his family? Is the family at the end better or worse off than they were with Gregor (before his metamorphosis)?
6. Has Gregor really become a cockroach? What else could have happened to him? What could the cockroach be a symbol for?