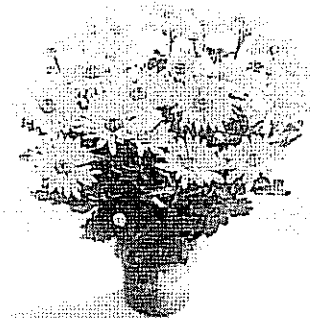


ENG2DB Short Story Analysis Questions: *The Chrysanthemums* by John Steinbeck

A FOCUS ON CHARACTER



- Please respond to the following analysis questions on a separate sheet of lined paper in complete sentences. Develop your answers thoroughly and thoughtfully!

1. As a reader, what is your initial reaction to Elisa's character? Does your impression of Elisa change as the story progresses? Explain in detail.

2. Examine the way in which the peddler's character manages to capture Elisa's attention and convince her to give him work. What can you infer about the peddler's character from this behaviour?

3. At the end of the story, why do you think Elisa first shows interest in the fights, then adamantly changes her mind?

4. What is the symbolic significance of the chrysanthemums for Elisa? Analyze this in detail.

5. Discuss what Elisa means when she says, "I've never lived as you do, but I know what you mean. When the night is dark – why the stars are sharp-pointed, and there's quiet. Why, you rise up and up! Every pointed star gets driven into your body. It's like that. Hot and sharp and – lovely." Do you think the peddler knows, or cares, what she is saying? What do you think that Elisa is revealing about herself.

6. John Steinbeck uses **juxtaposition** as a literary device in order to develop a contradictory impression of Elisa's character in the story. Note the places in the story where Elisa appears bold and confident, as well as the moments in which she seems tentative and unsure of herself. How is this **juxtaposition** related to the theme in the story? As a reader, would you describe Elisa as a predominantly strong or weak character? WHY?

7. John Steinbeck uses the third-person limited point of view in order to tell this story from Elisa's perspective. Analyze the effectiveness of this chosen narrative point of view. How does it impact **characterization** and **character development** in the story?