Waiting for Godot

Act 1 Vocabulary

pubis—the forward portion of the hip bone

privation—lack of the basic necessities of life

insidious—intended to entrap

wheedling—persuading by flattery

voluptuously—suggesting unrestrained pleasure

pugilist—one who fights with his fists

mandrakes—plants believed to have magical powers

prerogatives—exclusive rights held by a person

vacuously—stupidly

proffers—offers

peremptory—commanding

magnanimous—generous in forgiving

voraciously—greedy in eating

effeminate—feminine

cretin—one who is mentally and physically challenged

goiter—a swelling of the neck

impertinent—inattentive

affectation—a false display

vehemently—in a forceful manner

ostentatiously—the act of making a showy display

grampus—a whale

mollify—to placate or calm

knook—a knucklehead

dudeen—a short stemmed clay pipe

Kapp and Peterson—a brand of pipe

effulgence—brilliant radiance

tray bong—slang for French phrase “tres bien” meaning very good

indignantly—angrily

aesthete—an admirer of beauty

consternation—surprise; panic

fob—a small pocket in the front of a vest, used especially to hold a watch

Act One Questions

1. Describe the scenery of the play.

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2. Contrast Estragon and Vladimir by considering what each is concerned with, who is

more realistic, and who is more idealistic and why.

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3. What point does Vladimir make with his story of the two thieves who are crucified at

the same time as Christ? What is Estragon’s reaction?

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4. Considering the juxtaposition of the story of the two thieves and the mention of Godot,

what is the significance of Godot?

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5. What do Estragon and Vladimir do to pass the time?

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6. Estragon says, “There are times when I wonder if it wouldn’t be better for us to part.”

Why do they not part? Give details to prove your points.

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7. How are they like a married couple?

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8. In your opinion, why do Estragon and Vladimir consider suicide? Do you believe they

really want to commit suicide? Explain your opinions.

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9. Estragon is concerned that they have lost their rights. Why does he feel this way?

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10. Although Estragon is concerned with being tied to Godot, he seems at least equally

concerned about what else? What is Beckett’s point?

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11. Describe the relationship between Pozzo and Lucky.

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12. Characterize Pozzo. Support your ideas about him with examples from the text.

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13. Why does Pozzo stop his “journey”?

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14. How do Vladimir and Estragon react to Lucky?

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15. Why is Vladimir shocked? What, according to Vladimir, is so scandalous?

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16. Pozzo considers leaving or staying and smoking another pipe. Explain all the silences in

his speech.

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17. When Vladimir wants to leave Pozzo, why does Estragon not want to leave? What

difference between Estragon and Vladimir is being emphasized? Why does Vladimir stay?

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18. Pozzo patronizes Estragon and Vladimir with his remarks about how even Estragon and

Vladimir make him “more conscious of one’s blessings.” How do Estragon and Vladimir

patronize Pozzo?

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19. According to Pozzo, why does Lucky always hold the bags and not make himself

comfortable? What is Pozzo’s attitude toward Lucky’s crying?

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20. How do Estragon and Vladimir show compassion for Lucky? What is the result?

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21. Explain Pozzo’s remark: “Do I look like a man that can be made to suffer? Frankly?”

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22. Some critics have pointed out that the characters in this play are like clowns. At some

point in the play, a direct reference is made to the circus. Quote these lines and describe

what the characters do that makes them seem like clowns.

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23. Explain the following:

Vladimir: Time has stopped.

Pozzo: Don’t you believe it....

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24. What is your reaction to Pozzo’s speech about approaching night? Why is there a long

silence after he finishes?

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25. Pozzo suggests that he owes Estragon and Vladimir something for their civility. Then

Pozzo says that Lucky can sing and dance to entertain them. Explain how Estragon and

Vladimir’s responses reinforce the idea that Estragon is realistic and Vladimir is idealistic.

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26. What is significant about the action with the hats?

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27. What meaning do you get from Lucky’s speech?

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28. What stops Lucky in his thinking?

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29. What is comical about Pozzo? What is tragic?

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30. After Pozzo and Lucky leave, what do Estragon and Vladimir do?

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31. What news does the messenger bring?

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32. To whom does Estragon compare himself, and Why?

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33. What do Estragon and Vladimir consider again?

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