

"The Devil and Tom Walker" by Washington Irving
Reading Comprehension/Critical Analysis Questions

****Directions:** Answer each of the following with specific details/examples from the text. All responses must be given in complete sentences!

1. Where does Tom meet the Devil for the first time? Identify at least two examples of vivid imagery from Irving's description of this setting and how these details establish the mood.
2. What does the Devil offer Tom Walker? What factors contribute to Tom's initial refusal?
3. Describe Tom's marriage/relationship with his wife. Provide details from the selection that support your answer.
4. When Tom goes looking for his wife, what does he find? What do we learn about Tom based on his reaction to what happens to his wife?
5. Although Tom is desperate to obtain wealth, he refuses to participate in the slave trade. Why would Irving include this detail? What does this convey about the perspectives of people of this time period?
6. What agreement does Tom ultimately make with the Devil (be specific)?
7. Why do you think Tom begins to go to church and carry a Bible with him at all times? In what ways is Tom's approach to religion similar to his approach to financial dealings?
8. Explain/describe what happened to Tom Walker at the end of the story. Was he deserving of this fate? Why or why not?
9. Identify at least TWO specific examples of satire within the selection and analyze the ideas, groups, politics, people, etc. that Irving is targeting.
10. Identify the theme. Why would this have been an important lesson for Americans at the time it was written? Why is this an important lesson for Americans today?
11. Explain how/why this story is an effective representation based on THREE of the primary characteristics of Romantic period literature.