1. The **minor character** of Frank Bennett is developed in this section.
   (a) How is the character of Frank Bennett established? Is he a sympathetic character? Why or why not?
   (b) Compare and contrast the relationship Frank has with his father with the relationship he has with his mother. What is the same about these relationships? What is different? Is there anything unexpected or surprising in this comparison?
   (c) Compare and contrast the way people in town view Frank with the way the old man in the bar views Frank. What is the same about these views? What is different? Which of these two views do you think is most accurate?
   (d) Do you think Frank is a good husband to Ruth? Why do you think Ruth married Frank in the first place?

2. Significant **plot development**: Ruth’s escape from Frank.
   (a) Who helped Ruth escape from Frank? Which of these characters do you think was most important to the success of the escape?
   (b) Do you think Ruth’s escape was necessary, or was Idgie overreacting? How did Idgie know that it was time to help Ruth escape?
   (c) How did Frank react when he heard that Ruth was going to escape their marriage? What lies did Frank tell the neighbors after Ruth escaped? Do you think the neighbors believed Frank? Why or why not? What happened when Frank came looking for Ruth after her escape? Were you expecting this turn of events? Why or why not?
   (d) How was race in integral part of Ruth's escape from Frank? Do you think the escape would have been successful had Big George, a black man, not been part of the plan? Why or why not?

3. Frank's disappearance and the investigation
   (a) Were Frank’s motives honourable when he arrived at the cafe (for the second time)? Why or why not?
   (b) Do you think Idgie knows what happened to Frank? Do you think Frank will resurface, or do you think he's gone for good?
   (c) How did Ruth react when she saw Frank in Whistle Stop? Do you think Ruth had anything to do with Frank’s disappearance? Why or why not? What motivation might Ruth have to get Frank out of her life for good?
   (d) Based on Dot’s description of Frank’s disappearance in the newspaper, which character do you think had the strongest motive to get Frank out-of-town? What clues are available in the text to lead the reader to the perpetrator of the crime?
(e) Do you think the police did a thorough job with their investigation into Frank's disappearance? Do you think the police truly wanted to find Frank? Why or why not?

(f) Why did the police call off their investigation after only a few months? Do you think the police should have expanded their investigation canvas? Why or why not? Do you think the police knew the truth about what happened to Frank? Why or why not?

(g) Why is it significant that Officer Smoote is in charge of the investigation into Frank's disappearance? Do you think this case is too close to heart? Do you think Smoote can perform an ethical investigation into Frank's disappearance? Why or why not?

4. **Thematic Considerations: Aging**

(a) Create a list of things that happen to us as we age (changes to our minds and body). Which character from the novel most embodies the process of aging? How can you tell?

(b) Compare and contrast Ninny's view of aging with Evelyn's view of aging. What is the same about their views? What is different? Is there anything unexpected or surprising in this comparison?

(c) Do you think Evelyn is too old to start selling cosmetics? How does Ninny respond to Evelyn's ideas on aging?

(d) During one of their meetings, Ninny explains to Evelyn what it feels like to age. How does Ninny describe the aging process? Does this description add comfort or fear to the aging process?

5. **Thematic Considerations: Self Confidence**

(a) How is Evelyn trying to improve her self-confidence. Are any of these methods working?

(b) Focus on the Piggly Wiggly incident. How does Evelyn's self-confidence change over the course of this incident?

(c) Do you think Evelyn will ever repair her damaged self-confidence? Who do you think is responsible for Evelyn's low self-confidence?

(e) Which of the characters in the novel do you think has the highest self-confidence? What makes that character so confident? Is self-confidence something that one is born with, or something that develops? How can you tell?

(f) Why do you think Evelyn internalized the comments she receives from strangers? What is the danger in this type of rationalization? How do these comments affect Evelyn's self-confidence?