1. What further information do we learn about Artis through the episode surrounding the return of his dead brother? What is significant about Artis’ reaction? Later on in this section, we learn more about Artis (during the dogcatcher scene). Again, what further information is provided about this character? What has Artis come to symbolize in this novel?

2. How do you think the Dill Pickle Club got its name? What symbolism exists in the name? Do you think the name is right for the club? Why or why not?

3. What is the purpose of the minor character Eva Bates? Discuss her relationship with Buddy, Idgie and Stump.

4. Thematic Concerns: Inequality
   (a) Create a hierarchy of characters based on the amount of power they have in the society within the novel. Who is at the top of this list? Who is at the bottom? Do you see a level of inequality on this list? Compare the amount of power Ed has in society with the amount of power Evelyn has in society. What is the same about their power? What is different? Does the power balance seem equal to you? Why or why not?
   (b) Which inequality do you think is worse, gender inequality or racial inequality? Which of these two inequalities is given more space on the pages of this novel? Does that surprise you? Why or why not?
   (c) In what ways is there inequality in Idgie’s society based on race? Which characters in the novel do you think are most plagued with problems from inequality? What does Evelyn propose to do to eradicate gender inequality? Do you think her plan will work? Why or why not?

5. In this section, one of the most important citizens of the town of Whistle Stop, Ruth, dies. What is the impact of Ruth’s death on Idgie and Stump? Which minor character plays a major role in the death of Ruth? What is the significance of this relationship?

6. Thematic Concerns: Femininity
   (a) What kinds of characteristics might be used to describe a “feminine” woman? Do these characteristics apply to anyone in this novel? Who?
   (b) Compare and contrast Evelyn’s ideas on femininity with Idgie’s ideas of femininity. What is the same about their ideas? What is different?
   (c) Should Idgie be considered a feminine woman? Do you think Idgie considers herself feminine? Why or why not?
   (d) According to Evelyn, what does it mean to be a woman in the 1980’s? Does Evelyn consider herself feminine? How can you tell? What does Evelyn think is the best way to battle gender inequality in society? Do you agree with her? Why or why not?

7. Thematic Concerns: Marriage
   (a) List the marriages (traditional and non-traditional) we’ve encountered in this novel. Which of these pairs seems to have the strongest marriage? How can you tell?
   (b) Does marriage seem to be an important social element in Whistle Stop? What statement do you think Idgie was trying to make with her woman less wedding ceremony? Why is this significant in parallel to Stump’s marriage ceremony?

8. Near the end of this section, we rejoin the lives of the Peavey family, and in turn this forces us to confront some of the issues around racism contained in the novel.
   (a) How might you describe the various members of the Peavey family in terms of their skin colour and its relation to where they “sit” within their society. What message is reinforced by some of the episodes that display this?
   (b) How does race affect the way Naughty Bird views herself? Why does Naughty Bird’s view of herself and her race change when Le Roy dies?
   (c) Compare and contrast the life Jasper Peavey created for himself with the life Artis Peavey created for himself. What is the same about these lives? What is different?
   (d) In what ways did Jasper Peavey work to make life better for his children than it was for him? What types of jobs did Jasper Peavey work while employed with the railroad company? Do you think Jasper Peavey is proud of the life he created for himself? Why or why not?
   (e) When Jasper is out, he is often abused by white folks in town. Why do you think this is? Why does Jasper choose to ignore the abuse rather than fight back? What does this docility tell the reader about Jasper’s character?
   (f) Do you think Jasper Peavey should be embarrassed by the way he lived his life, as his grandson suggests? Divide the class into two groups for a classroom debate. After 15 minutes, add another complication: Why is Jasper Peavey’s grandson embarrassed to be seen in public with him? Do you agree with the grandson? Why or why not?