Inferno Study Questions

Directions: Answer each question with a complete sentence. 12 pt. Times New Roman, typed, double spaced.

Canto I

1. How old is Dante when he begins his journey?
2. Where does Dante find himself when he awakes?
3. How does he arrive there?
4. Of what are the dark wood and the straight road symbolic?
5. How does he describe the wood?
6. What similes or metaphors does Dante use?
7. What does Dante’s attempt to climb the hill represent?
8. What is the first creature Dante encounters in the wood? How is it described?
9. At dawn, in which constellation is the sun found?
10. What is the second creature that Dante encounters in the wood? How is it described?
11. What is the third creature Dante discovers in the wood? How is it described?
12. What appears to Dante on the discolored air?
13. What is the figure he sees?
14. Why might he be hoarse?
15. How does Virgil make a good guide for Dante?
16. What question does Virgil ask Dante on lines 74-76?
17. How does Dante address Virgil?
18. What does Dante ask Virgil to do for him?
19. How does Virgil respond to Dante’s request?
20. What does the prediction about the she-wolf and the greyhound tell you about Dante’s purpose in writing Inferno? Is he more concerned with spiritual problems or temporal problems?
21. How does Virgil suggest Dante pass by the she-wolf?
22. According to Virgil what will Dante see on his journey?
23. Why are the people climbing on the burning mountain content in fire?
24. Who will guide Dante on the last part of the journey?
25. Why isn’t Virgil allowed to take Dante through the third part of his journey?
26. How does Dante respond to Virgil’s offer to guide him through Hell to heaven?

Canto II

1. To which muse does Dante appeal?
2. What does Dante doubt?
3. Who asked Virgil to help Dante?
4. What motivates her plea?
5. According to Virgil, who are the three blessed women in Heaven?

Canto III

1. What does the sign cut into the stone above the gates of hell read?
2. How long has hell existed?
3. What moved or inspired the architect who built Hell?
4. What advice does Virgil give as they enter Hell?
5. What does Virgil say the fallen people have lost?
6. What does Dante hear as he enters Hell?
7. According to Virgil, who are the people that Dante first sees in Hell?
8. How have these souls been both rejected by Heaven and Hell? Why does Hell reject them as well?
9. What does Virgil advise Dante to do when he sees these tortured souls?
10. How are these souls punished?
11. Why is the despicable corps of Angels in Hell?
12. The sign outside of Hell states: “sacred justice moved my architect.” How is the punishment of these souls just and how does it fit their sins?
13. Based on what you know of Dante’s life, why might he harbor a special repugnance toward the indecisive?
14. Who refuses to ferry Dante across the River Acheron into Hell?
15. Why does he refuse to do this?
16. How does Virgil convince Charon to ferry Dante across the river?
17. What simile does Dante use to describe the souls crossing the River Acheron into Hell?

Canto IV

1. What sound does Dante hear as he descends into the first circle?
2. What are the souls there guilty of?
3. Who are the four giant shades that Dante and Virgil meet?
4. What sort of building do they all come upon?
5. Which two philosophers does Dante recognize and name?

Canto V

1. What happens to Hell’s circles as Dante and Virgil descend deeper?
2. What does Dante hear as he descends deeper into Hell?
3. How does he describe Minos?
4. What is Minos’ job in Hell?
5. Why are the damned eager to confess their sins?
6. In what way does Minos signal the damned’s punishment?
7. What advice does Minos offer Dante?
8. How does Virgil shut Minos up?
9. What analogy does Dante use to describe the sounds of hell?
10. Who is punished in this circle?
11. Why is it appropriate to have them pushed around by the wind?
12. Which famous people does Dante see in torture in this circle of Hell?
13. With what tortured souls does Dante speak in this canto?
14. How does Dante feel toward the two lovers?
15. What awaits for him who took Paolo and Francesca’s lives?
16. What does Francesca mean when she says “the double grief of a lost bliss is to recall its happy hour in pain”?
17. What caused Francesca to have an affair with Paolo?
18. What does she fail to mention in her story to Dante?
19. What happens to Dante at the end of this canto?

Canto VI

1. What creature guards the entrance to the third circle?
2. Who is the spirit that Dante speaks with there?
3. What sin are the souls in the third circle guilty of?
4. What’s the weather like in the third circle?
5. Where are the other spirits that Dante enquires after?

Canto VII

1. What is the name of the demon that Dante and Virgil encounter in the fourth circle?
2. What is the torment of the souls in the fourth circle?
3. What sins have these souls committed?
4. What is the name of the swamp that Dante and Virgil come to?
5. What do they see under the waters of the swamp?

Canto VIII

1. What kind of building do Dante and Virgil find in the fifth circle?
2. What is the name of the boatman they encounter here?
3. What is the name of the city that they come to?
4. What is the reaction of the crowd when they arrive?
5. What is the result of Virgil’s conference with the crowd?
Canto IX
1. What is the name of the monstrous women Dante and Virgil encounter?
2. Whom do they threaten to call?
3. Why does Virgil turn Dante away and cover his eyes as the Medusa approaches?
4. Why is he so afraid of her?
5. Who opens the gate for Dante and Virgil?
6. How does he open the gate?
7. How does the Angelic messenger react to the air in Hell as he breathes?
8. What is the sin of people that Dante sees in the flaming sepulchers?

Canto X
1. Who is the spirit that first addresses Dante?
2. What question does the spirit first ask Dante?
3. What was the spirit's relationship in life to Dante's ancestors?
4. What city did the spirit try to protect while alive?
5. What does Dante reveal about the second spirit's son?

Canto XI
1. What is so unpleasant about the abyss Dante and Virgil encounter?
2. Which Pope’s tomb do they find?
3. What three categories are the souls who have committed violence divided into?
4. Under what category does Virgil lump the sins of all the souls kept outside the walls of Dis?
5. What sin does Virgil say "scorns both nature... and art"?

Canto XII
1. Who do Dante and Virgil encounter upon entering the seventh circle?
2. Those who do violence to others boil in what kind of a stream?
3. What sort of creatures race through the ditch below?
4. Who is the only creature Virgil will speak with?
5. How do the sinners know that Dante is still alive?

Canto XIII
1. Who guides Virgil and Dante across the stream of blood?
2. What sort of creatures dwell in the forest on the other side of the stream?
3. What did the trees and bushes used to be?
4. What is chasing the two spirits through the wood?
5. What happens to the spirit that is caught?

Canto XIV
1. Describe the landscape of the third ring of the seventh circle.
2. What is falling from the sky?
3. Who is the giant that Dante and Virgil encounter?
4. What is the name of the pool that they come to?
5. What three rivers run into the pool?

Canto XV
1. Who is the spirit that Dante encounters here?
2. What was his relationship to Dante?
3. What wish does Dante confess to the spirit?
4. How does Dante treat the spirit's words?
5. Dante thinks this spirit resembles a runner from what city?

Canto XVI
1. Who does Jacopo Rusticucci blame for his ruin?
2. What does Dante have in common with the three spirits he encounters?
3. How does Dante describe Florence to them?
4. What natural landmark do Dante and Virgil come across?
5. What does Virgil cast into the ravine?

Canto XVII
1. Who is Geryon?
2. What is hung about the necks of the souls kept here?
3. Who convinces Geryon to give them a ride?
4. Where is the spirit that Dante talks to from?
5. Describe this spirit's coat of arms.

Canto XIII
1. What is the eighth circle known as?
2. What are the demons doing to the souls trapped here?
3. What spirit seems not to feel the pain of the demons' torment?
4. Whom did Jason abandon in life?
5. Which spirit, covered in excrement, does Dante recognize?

Canto XIX
1. What is sticking out of the holes in the rock here?
2. What body part of the spirits is on fire?
3. How is the spirit that Dante speaks with trapped?
4. Who does the spirit confuse Dante for?
5. What does is Virgil's reaction to Dante telling off this spirit?

Canto XX
1. How are the spirits of this level punished?
2. What is Dante's reaction to this sight?
3. What does Virgil say about Dante's reaction?
4. What town's origin does Virgil recount?
5. What are the women that Virgil points out guilty of in life?

Canto XXI
1. What substance is boiling here?
2. What is the spirits' punishment?
3. How are the demons here armed?
4. Which demon speaks with Virgil?
5. Who escorts Dante and Virgil out?

Canto XXII
1. How do the spirits react when the demons come near?
2. Where is the sinner who gets caught by the demons from?
3. What animal feature does Ciriatto the demon possess?
4. What eventually happens to the caught sinner?
5. Which two demons fight each other after the sinner's escape?

Canto XXIII
1. Which of Aesop's fables does the demon fight remind Dante of?
2. What family member does Dante use to describe Virgil's protectiveness?
3. What family member does Dante see himself as?
4. What is the punishment of the sinners of this level?
5. Where do Dante and Virgil see the crucified spirit?

Canto XXIV
1. Why does Dante rest?
2. What is in the moat?
3. What is the punishment of the sinners there?
4. Dante compares the sinners' regeneration to what creature?
5. What is the name of the sinner they speak with?

Canto XXV
1. Who is Caucus?
2. Who killed Caucus?
3. Who is the spirit that is transformed by a serpent?
4. What happens to the serpent?
5. Which of the three spirits is left unchanged?
Canto XXVI
1. Whose chariot does Dante mention?
2. What two spirits are punished in the same flame?
3. Who speaks to them and why?
4. How many cycles of the moon did Ulysses' trip take?
5. What sunk Ulysses' ship?

Canto XXVII
1. What kind of bull does Dante compare the second spirit to?
2. Who speaks to this spirit?
3. What did this spirit do in real life?
4. What animal does the spirit compare himself to?
5. What profession did the spirit switch to?

Canto XXVIII
1. What are these next sprits guilty of?
2. What is their punishment?
3. Who is the spirit that Dante first speaks with?
4. Who is the final spirit Dante hears from?
5. What wounds does he suffer from?

Canto XXIX
1. Who is the spirit that threatens Dante?
2. In which direction do Dante and Virgil always descend?
3. What is the punishment of the spirits here?
4. To what does Dante compare the two sinners propped up against each other?
5. What sin are they guilty of?

Canto XXX
1. What animals do the two "pale and naked" shades who are running berserk remind Dante of?
2. Which spirit bites Capocchio?
3. What is Myrrha guilty of?
4. What does the spirit Master Adam want?
5. What spirit does Master Adam argue with?

Canto XXXI
1. What sound does Dante hear?
2. What does Dante mistake for towers?
3. Who first speaks to Dante and Virgil here?
4. What kind of language does he speak?
5. Whom does Dante wish to see?

Canto XXXII
1. What does Dante have to step carefully around?
2. Whom does Dante accidentally kick?
3. What is his reaction to Dante?
4. How does Dante try to persuade him to speak?
5. When Dante sees the two spirits frozen together in one hole, what is one doing to the other?

Canto XXXIII
1. Who is the spirit that is biting another sinner's head?
2. Who is being bitten?
3. How did Ugolino and his sons die in Pisa?
4. Why is the Count angry?
5. What, according to Fra Alberigo, happens to the soul of a traitor?
6. What does he ask Dante to do?
7. What does Dante promise to Friar Alberigo in hell?

Canto XXXIV
1. Who does Dante see “at the core of the frozen shell”?
2. How are the souls of the last class tortured?
3. How does Dante react to seeing Satan face to face?
4. What physically happens to Dante in the sight of such evil?
5. How is Satan described?
6. Which details make Satan particularly repulsive?
7. Who is the soul that suffers most?
8. Who is chewed in the black face on the left?
9. Who is checked in Satan’s final mouth?
10. Why are the figures in Satan’s mouth considered traitors?
11. How do Dante and Virgil pass Satan and make their way out of Hell?
12. Why does Virgil have to carry Dante out of Hell?
13. How has Lucifer’s position changed as Virgil and Dante climb out of the opening of the central rock?
14. Why is Dante so excited to finally see the stars at night?