

# Analyzing the Novel: A Separate Peace

## Chapter 1

### Identifying Facts

1. Looking at the stairs in the First Academy Building, what surprising fact does the narrator (identified in Chapter 5 as Gene Forrester) realize he had overlooked about them?
2. When Gene visits the tree, what does it resemble?
3. How does Gene feel about having seen the tree? Why?
4. To what time does the story flash back?
5. Who of the five boys is eager to jump from the tree?
6. Describe the relationship between the narrator (Gene) and Phineas (Finny).

### Interpreting Meanings

7. Why, after fifteen years, do you think Gene returned to Devon School? Why do you think he is upset that the school looks like a "museum"? Why wouldn't he want it to?
8. Gene states that the two places he wanted to see at Devon School were "fearful sites." Why does he use this term? What is fearful about marble stairs? about a tree? If they are "fearful," why do you think Gene wants to see them?
9. Gene explains that the Summer Session the boys were attending was established to keep up the pace of war. He states that the seniors were being trained for the war and were "practically soldiers." What effect might the war have on the "Upper Middlers" (the juniors) like Gene and Finny?

10. Why must Gene, against his better judgment, jump from the tree? How does this and his later "wrestling match" with Finny affect their relationship? What does this tell you about the personalities of the two?

## **Chapter 2**

### **Identifying Facts**

1. Why does Phineas decide he will wear his pink shirt?

2. What is Gene beginning to realize about Phineas? What is Gene's reaction to this realization?

3. What does Phineas wear as a belt at the traditional tea? Explain why he does this.

4. What club do Phineas and Gene form?

5. When Gene and Finny are on the tree limb together, what happens? What does Gene later realize?

### **Interpreting Meanings**

6. Gene states that one of Finny's reasons for living was "a flow of simple, unregulated friendliness" between people. What does Gene mean? Do you think this is a good "reason for living?"

7. Gene states that the faculty of the school "loosened its grip" on the boys partly because of Finny and partly because the boys reminded them of "what peace was like." Is the faculty's action believable? Why would the authority figures be likely to be more lenient than usual in this situation?