

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS | *DRACULA* BY BRAM STOKER

1. What is the effect of the structure of the novel? Why do you think Stoker chose to construct it as a series of journal entries and letters from multiple points of view? How would the story be different if there were one traditional narrator?
2. What's the most memorable scene in the book for you? Why does it stand out?
3. What is the role of dreams in the novel? Why does Jonathan Harker assume he must have dreamed his encounter with female vampires at Count Dracula's castle? Why does Lucy's illness worsen when she is sleeping? What do Mina Harker's vivid dreams and evening lethargy indicate about her future? How and why does the novel blur the distinction between sleep and wakefulness?
4. What is the relationship between superstition and reason in the novel? Does the novel privilege one over the other? Are these seemingly opposite philosophies ever reconciled?
5. Discuss the roles of Lucy Westenra and Mina Harker in the novel. How are the two women similar? Different? What accounts for their differences? To what extent does the novel depend on both of these women to propel the narrative forward? What other depictions of women do we see in the novel, and how do they compare to Lucy and Mina?
6. All material creatures must consume life of one form or another to survive. What makes Dracula's consumption of life more terrible than our own? Renfield's consumption of life is also seen as deviant and disturbing, to the point where Dr. Seward remarks on it. Why is this?
7. Do you think *Dracula* is a religious novel? What is the significance of the role played by holy objects in warding off the vampire's damnation? Does the author mean to satirize the piety and superstition of Transylvania town folk? To uphold the power of their beliefs? Both? Neither?



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8. Why do you think *Dracula* has been such a popular story over the years, with many theatrical, film, and TV adaptations? What is the story's enduring appeal?
9. *Dracula* was published in 1897, the year when the Diamond Anniversary of Queen Victoria, Empress of India, was loudly celebrated and England congratulated itself on the most powerful and extensive empire in history. Do you think the book offers a confident portrait of England?
10. Compare all the male characters. They are depicted as intelligent heroes defending England from a fiend, but they often break down and have hysterics. Is this surprising? What, if anything, does it say about Stoker's view of manhood?
11. What did you expect before picking up this book? How were your expectations met or missed? How did your exposure to *Dracula* in pop-culture influence your expectations of this book before, during, and after your reading?