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Close Reading Organizer - Section 6 **Sample** **Answers**

Directions: Read each summary entry and think about which themes listed in the Themes Key apply to it, then color in those themes in the Theme Tracker. Next, write a few sentences of Analysis to explain how the themes you chose apply to each summary section.

Note: There is not always a definitive set of “correct” answers for which themes should appear in the Theme Tracker. Answers that differ from the ones we propose below should therefore not automatically be treated as incorrect, and in fact can serve as great discussion starters.

Themes Key

1	Privacy, Loneliness, and Communication
2	Social Criticism
3	Time
4	Psychology and Perception
5	Death

Summary	Theme Tracker					Your Analysis
Peter feels awful all over again at this memory, but he is comforted by the progression of time and how people can “get over things.” Peter watches a little girl named Elise Mitchell run into a lady’s legs, and he laughs out loud.	1	2	3	4	5	Time is frightening to Peter as a reminder of old age and death, but it comforts him in his emotional pain. Although he clearly hasn’t “gotten over” Clarissa yet.
The lady is Lucrezia Smith , who is thinking that she cannot deal with Septimus ’s behavior anymore, as he is no longer himself. Lucrezia helps Elise Mitchell up and dusts her off, and then she is overcome by self-pity, wondering why she of	1	2	3	4	5	Woolf creates more threads between her characters and draws a distinct connection between Peter and Rezia. Rezia is filled with a self-pity similar to Peter’s, but hers seems far more justified. She is a unique character in that she is not only lonely in her soul (like everyone

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all people should have been chosen to suffer like this. She is about to take Septimus to see a famous doctor, Sir William Bradshaw .						else), but also lonely as a foreigner in England.
Lucrezia wonders angrily why Septimus has been acting so strangely and seeing his dead friend Evans , as lots of other men fought and lost friends in the war but didn't go insane. She remembers one day she and Septimus stood by a river and Septimus suddenly suggested that they kill themselves. On their way home he said that he understood everyone, and knew the meaning of the world, and when they got home he said he saw flames and faces and made Lucrezia write down his revelations.	1	2	3	4	5	There is another possible undercurrent of repressed homosexual romantic feelings between Septimus and Evans, though these are not fleshed out like Clarissa's relationship with Sally. Lucrezia is concerned about Septimus but also hyperaware of the judgmental eyes of others, who are ready to criticize anything out of the ordinary.
Lucrezia walks back to Septimus and takes his hand. He notices that she isn't wearing her wedding ring (it doesn't fit anymore because she has gotten so thin), and he feels that their marriage is over. The voices he hears tell him that he must reveal his secrets to the Prime Minister . Then he sees a dog that seems to turn into a man, and Septimus feels that he is splayed out alone on a rock, with the sun growing hotter.	1	2	3	4	5	The disconnect between Septimus's inner life and outer reality is the greatest of any character, as he shifts between moments of ecstasy and horror, while from the outside just seems to be muttering to himself. The "hot sun" is probably a reference to the quote from <i>Cymbeline</i> - one of the discomforts shed in death.

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<p>Septimus grows ecstatic over the beauty everywhere, and then Lucrezia tells him it is time to go see the doctor. When she says “time,” Septimus sees Evans come out from behind a tree. Lucrezia says that she is very unhappy, and the clock strikes eleven forty-five. The man Septimus thought was Evans is actually Peter Walsh, who watches the couple and wonders what their trouble is.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Septimus experiences (to a heightened extent) Clarissa’s joy and wonder over the beauty in daily life. Woolf’s portrayal of Septimus’s mental illness was innovative, as she makes us sympathetic to Septimus’s point of view while simultaneously painting an accurate psychological portrait of a victim of PTSD.</p>
<p>To Peter, Septimus and Lucrezia’s quarrel is just a part of the bustle and beauty of London. Peter wonders that so much has changed in the five years of his absence. Women wear more makeup and the newspapers can write about touchier subjects. Peter thinks of Sally Seton, and remembers that she ended up marrying a rich man and moving to Manchester.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Peter sees that the Smiths are having trouble, but he chooses to muse about it mentally instead of actually offering to help or communicate with them. We find out that even the radical Sally has become a “perfect hostess” now and conformed to the expectations for her gender.</p>
<p>Peter remembers Sally in her wild younger days and how she hated Hugh Whitbread. Clarissa and her other friends all admired Hugh for his charm and respectability, but Sally once told him that he “represented all that was most detestable in British middle-class life” because of his views on women’s rights. Sally had</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Peter shares Sally’s view of people like Hugh, which seems closer to Woolf’s own opinions. Normally the “admirable,” respectable Hugh would never try to kiss someone like Sally, but we see that even Hugh has something underneath his artificiality – though we never find out whether it is oppressive womanizing or dissatisfaction with his own</p>

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a special grudge against Hugh, and claimed he once tried to kiss her in the smoking room. No one would believe this of the admirable Hugh, but she stuck to her story.						conventional self.
Later in life Hugh had married Evelyn , and now he had great wealth and a collection of tasteful objects. Peter still hates Hugh, but envies his money and success. Peter finds Richard Dalloway a “thorough good sort,” but a bit dull, the kind of man who should live in the country with dogs instead of being in politics.	1	2	3	4	5	Richard is boring and traditional, but even Peter admits that he is a good man with kindness in his heart, unlike Hugh, who brushes only the surfaces of things. Peter recognizes that he has failed to have the monetary success of Richard and Hugh, so he lashes out at them in his thoughts.
Peter does object to Richard ’s views on poetry though, and he wonders how Clarissa can stand them. Richard says that decent people should not read Shakespeare’s sonnets because “it was like listening at keyholes.” Peter had bonded with Sally in the old days over this. Together they would complain about Hugh and Richard, and worry that those two would stifle Clarissa’s soul.	1	2	3	4	5	We already know how important Shakespeare’s work is to Clarissa, so it seems especially poignant that she submits to Richard’s conservative opinions about the writer. Richard’s views seem obtuse. It’s worth noting that those views come from an opinion similar to Clarissa’s own – that the privacy of the soul is holy – though art and poetry seem like they should be the bridges between such solitary states, and that Richard is denying art that function.
Peter thinks of Clarissa as having a special gift of being, that wherever she is “there she was.” He must immediately remind	1	2	3	4	5	Peter will often remind himself that he doesn’t love Clarissa anymore, and the frequency of these occasions undercuts the

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himself that he isn't in love with her anymore. He reflects on her love of rank and tradition, and he feels it is a tragedy that she married Richard , as she is twice as smart as he is but now must parrot his conservative, traditional views.						validity of his words. "There she was" will be the last words of the novel, a vague description of the kind of real life and existence that can only truly occur beyond the page.
Peter thinks that Clarissa has a special genius for bringing people together, especially intellectuals and artists. He knows that she is a skeptical person at heart, and wonders if she gained insight from Huxley and Tyndall, the philosophers she used to read as a girl. He imagines her thinking that all life is inevitably doomed, so we may as well enjoy ourselves while we can. This phase of thought came after Clarissa saw a tree fall on her sister Sylvia and kill her.	1	2	3	4	5	This is all we hear of Sylvia, but the nature of her accidental death sheds light on Clarissa's own sentiments: that joy is never far from death, and that hopefulness comes with the foreboding of something awful. Even Peter admits that Clarissa's parties might serve some greater purpose, in bringing people together and furthering real communication.
Clarissa was at first angry at God for this tragedy, but later she became an atheist and so had no one to blame. She did not become bitter after her sister's death, but continued to enjoy life and nearly everything in it. Peter praises her cleverness to himself, but laments that she is always throwing parties and "blunting the edge of her mind."	1	2	3	4	5	Clarissa did not grow depressed (or get PTSD like Septimus) after witnessing her sister's death, but she was still clearly affected by it, as death lingers always just beneath the surface of her thoughts. Peter associates Clarissa's parties with her marriage to Richard.

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<p>Peter realizes that he will never suffer for love again in the way that Clarissa made him suffer, and he wonders if he is really in love with Daisy, as she doesn't torture him and he hasn't thought of her for days. The difference is perhaps that Daisy loves him back, or else that Peter's love is mostly jealousy – he can't stand to see Daisy married to anyone else. Peter is again ashamed that he wept in front of Clarissa, but he reassures himself that Clarissa is cold and passionless.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Peter is intelligent enough to see his own flaws, but he still succumbs to them. He recognizes that he has a weakness for women and is very jealous and emotionally needy, but seeing these flaws drives him to anger at Clarissa – instead of criticizing his own self-indulgent melodrama and possessive passion, he can criticize Clarissa for being “cold.”</p>
<p>Peter's thoughts are interrupted by singing coming from opposite the Regent's Park Tube Station. The voice is like “an ancient spring spouting from the earth,” and it is coming from a decrepit old woman singing as she begs for change. She seems ageless and sexless, and the song she sings consists of meaningless syllables, love, and death, including the line “and if some one should see, what matter they?” Peter pities her and gives her a coin.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>The old woman is another link between Peter and Rezia, as they both notice her but have different reactions. The woman is described as something almost primeval, and the subject of her song is deep and ageless, but for Peter she is just an interruption to his inner dialogue. Once again he avoids having a moment of true communication, pitying the woman instead of engaging with her.</p>