

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Close Reading Organizer - Section 2 **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
The noise comes from a fancy car going by in the street. Passersby wonder if the car contains the Queen or the Prime Minister behind its curtains. Septimus Warren Smith , a young veteran of World War I, also hears the car backfire. The narrative slips into Septimus’s thoughts and it is clear that he suffers from “shell shock” or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) from the war. Septimus feels that he is the one responsible for the traffic jam that the passing car creates.	1	2	3	4	5	Septimus and Clarissa never actually meet, but they often act as doubles in the novel, or two ways of dealing with the world as Woolf sees it. With Septimus, Woolf also adds another level of social criticism, showing how poorly England has handled the war and its aftermath. The country’s victory was Pyrrhic and devastating, and now it has no capacity for dealing with its traumatized soldiers.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

<p>Lucrezia Smith, Septimus's young Italian wife, is embarrassed and frightened by Septimus's recent strangeness. He has recently threatened to kill himself, and Lucrezia wants someone to help her but is also afraid of showing her "failure" to anyone. She left Italy for Septimus's sake when they were married, and she remembers their past happiness before he started acting strangely. She leads Septimus on to Regent's Park.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>The walls and windows between people – divisions of privacy and communication – affect all of Woolf's characters, as we see their inner dialogue and then their (usually ineffective) outer speech and actions. Lucrezia is a foreigner in England, but she too can see how there is no space for mental illness in the conservative, repressive English worldview of the time.</p>
<p>Other people on the street reflect on the "royal" car and feel patriotic, as they feel they have been "within speaking distance of the majesty of England." Clarissa thinks that it is probably the Queen in the car, and she conflates the Queen with her bazaar-opening idol, Lady Bexborough. Clarissa associates this regal car with Hugh Whitbread and his like, and she feels slightly guilty that she is fulfilling Peter's old insult – throwing a party and waiting at the top of the stairs.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Woolf often emphasizes the hollowness and ineffectiveness of "royalty" and contrasts it with the comfort people gain from ritual, hierarchy, and the façade of order. Everyone stops to stare at the car, though the important person never actually appears or has any real effect on any of the onlookers' lives. Clarissa is already aware of how she will disappoint Peter.</p>
<p>The tiny vibration of the car's passing makes more people on the street think of "the dead; of the flag; of Empire." A crowd has gathered at the gates of the nearby Buckingham</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Woolf shows how her society is constructed of a series of lofty ideas – the royal hierarchy, tradition, and the extensive British Empire – but these ideas are hollow at their center</p>

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Palace, and the narrative flits among the thoughts of people in the crowd. The car prepares to enter the palace's gates, but suddenly everyone is distracted from watching it when they hear an airplane flying "ominously" overhead.						and contain no real meaning for people's daily lives. It is significant that the onlookers choose to look at the plane – representing the modern, industrial age, but also a reminder of the horrors of war – over the royal-looking car.
The airplane starts to spell out an advertisement in sky writing, and everyone looks up in amazement. Big Ben tolls that it is eleven o' clock, and everyone is too busy looking at the plane's advertisement (which seems to be for "TOFFEE") to notice the royal car passing through the palace gates.	1	2	3	4	5	The scene zooms out here to encompass several motifs at once – the disappearing royal car (symbol of tradition and hierarchy), the skywriting plane (representing the future of technology, capitalism, and war), and Big Ben tolling as a reminder of the unstoppable march of time.
Lucrezia , who is sitting beside Septimus in the park, tries to distract her husband with the sight of the airplane. His doctor, Dr. Holmes , apparently said that Septimus "had nothing whatever seriously the matter with him but was a little out of sorts." Meanwhile Septimus starts to weep at the "exquisite beauty" in the sky. He is overcome by every minute sensation, including a woman's voice as she reads out the advertisement's letters, and he feels that the sky writing is a coded signal just for him.	1	2	3	4	5	Woolf had a great distrust of doctors concerning psychology, as she herself suffered from mental illness and dealt firsthand with doctors who could not understand her. Holmes is like the royal car, a reassurance that everything is okay, there is nothing really the matter, and order has prevailed – when in reality nothing is okay. Septimus also experiences the kind of joy in life that Clarissa does, though enhanced by his mental illness.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

<p>Septimus's thoughts grow wilder, and he thinks about being connected with trees. Lucrezia is distraught at seeing her husband staring and talking to himself, so she walks to a fountain and leaves him on the bench. She clings to Dr. Holmes' words and starts to get angry at Septimus for being "selfish," as there is "nothing the matter with him." She feels that for him to threaten suicide is cowardly, as the real Septimus is a brave man who fought in the war.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Septimus's character is the book's most tragic example of the loneliness of the soul. We see the world from his perspective, and then see how drastically different this is from how the world perceives Septimus. Rezia is a sympathetic character, but there is now a huge divide between her husband and herself.</p>
<p>Lucrezia feels all alone, as she knows no one else in England. Meanwhile Septimus is taking note of the revelations he is having, including "Men must not cut down trees" and "There is a God." Septimus suddenly feels that Evans, his dead friend from the war, is hiding behind the park railings.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>The structure of the novel recalls the infinite branching of trees and their roots, as characters' thoughts and actions overlap and brush against each other, while there is another world hidden in the privacy underground. Rezia and Septimus are physically close, but inside both are totally alone and cut off from each other.</p>
<p>Lucrezia interrupts Septimus's visions and tries to distract him by pointing out a group of boys playing cricket. Septimus feels that he is "the greatest of mankind... lately taken from life to death, the Lord who had come to renew society." A young woman, Maisie Johnson, asks the couple for directions, and as she</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Septimus is haunted by Evans and death in a similar (but more sinister) way to how Clarissa is haunted by Bourton and death. Megalomaniacal hallucinations like those Septimus has can occur in schizophrenia and extreme cases of PTSD. The science of psychology was very young in Woolf's time, and her portrayal of PTSD was</p>

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

walks away she thinks of how odd the couple (and all of London is). She now wishes she had stayed at home in Edinburgh.						especially innovative.
Meanwhile Mrs. Dempster , an older woman, watches Maisie and thinks about her own youth. She thinks about the airplane and wishes she had explored more foreign places when she was young. As the airplane keeps progressing on, still writing about "TOFFEE," a man stops by the gates of a nearby cathedral and decides to go in.	1	2	3	4	5	Woolf briefly flits in and out of passing people's minds, zooming out to create a larger scene. These passages show the gulf between each person's thoughts, but they also build up a web of individual souls that are all connected in some way. Woolf's vision of the world is one of simultaneous separation and connection.