

## Casablanca post viewing questions

1. This is a story of Rick's redemption. To "redeem" means to "buy back." What did Rick pay to redeem himself and what did get in return?

2. A metaphor describes something by equating it with something which, literally, it cannot be. Casablanca is an extended metaphor for something relating to the United States. Describe the contours of this metaphor. Think about the time the movie was made, 1941, and what political issues were being debated in the U.S. at that time. Here is one more hint. What was the foreign policy of the U.S. in the 1930s? Think about details from the movie.

3. Waiting is a motif in the film that recurs several times. In relationship to the concept of Rick as a metaphor for the isolationism of America before it entered WWII, how does the pattern of waiting finally play out?

4. Rick's friend and employee, Sam, who plays "As Time Goes By," is referred to as "the boy at the piano" by Ilsa. In today's culture this would be unacceptable. What has changed in the years between 1941 and now that make referring to a black man as "boy" inappropriate?

5. On two occasions early in the film, characters say they are in Casablanca where they wait and wait and wait. The repetition of “waiting” becomes a motif and points the viewers in the direction of an idea. What is everyone waiting for? In terms of the metaphor relating to American isolationism, what is the waiting all about?

6. Symbols can be seen throughout Casablanca. What symbolic statement is made when Captain Renault drops the bottle of Vichy water into the trash at the film’s end?

7. Ugarte wants Rick to hide the stolen letters of transit in Rick’s saloon. After Ugarte is arrested and Rick has done nothing to interfere with the authorities, Rick says; “I stick my neck out for nobody.” Why won’t Rick help Ugarte?

8. Although Rick seems to have disdain for others, he shows genuine concern for some individuals and tries to help them. What evidence can you find to support this characteristic?

9. What evidence can you offer to illustrate Rick’s cynicism early in the movie?

10. The scene in which the Germans begin singing the German National Anthem until Laszlo leads the orchestra in the French National Anthem, “La Marseillaise,” is a rousing bit of patriotic sentimentality. What sentiment makes this scene so powerful?

11. What can you offer as reasons that Rick changes his mind and makes sure that Laszlo and Ilsa escape together?

12. Why must Rick put both Laszlo and Ilsa on the plane to Lisbon, staying behind to risk his life fighting for the Underground?

#### SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

##### ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

1. If you were Rick, could you have sent the woman you loved to Lisbon? Why or why not?

2. If you were Ilsa, would you have left Rick in Paris with no explanation and left him again in Casablanca?

#### REDEMPTION

3. Rick had sunk pretty low. He had abandoned his principles and was just looking out for himself. Yet he did a wonderful and courageous thing. What does this say about the power of redemption?

4. Can a person ever sink so low that he cannot redeem himself? Why or why not?

#### MORAL-ETHICAL EMPHASIS (CHARACTER COUNTS)

Discussion Questions Relating to Ethical Issues will facilitate the use of this film to teach ethical principles and critical viewing. Additional questions are set out below

1. By the end of the movie, Rick does what he should have been doing all along, helping in the fight against the Nazis. What brought him to do this?

#### CARING

2. Which of Rick's actions demonstrated the ethical principle of caring for others?

#### CITIZENSHIP

3. Does the ethical value of citizenship stop at the border of one's own country?