***One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* Questions**

*Directions*: For each of the following chapters, answer the questions using complete sentences on a separate piece of paper. Remember to put your name on your questions.

**Chapter 1** (16 marks)

1. Name and describe the narrator of the novel. **(2)**
2. What is your first impression of the “Big Nurse” (Nurse Ratched)? Be specific. **(2)**
3. If you could give the first chapter a name, what would you call it? Why? **(2)**
4. Identify and describe the symbolism of the following items. What do you think they represent? **(8, 2 each)**
5. Keys
6. Wicker Bag
7. Combine
8. Fog Machine
9. The Chief says, “I been silent so long now it’s going to roar out of me like floodwaters, and you think the guy telling this is ranting and raving—it’s too horrible to have really happened…It’s the truth even if it didn’t happen.” What do you think he means by this? **(2)**

**Chapter 2** (8 marks)

1. In the beginning of the chapter, how does Chief Bromden feel? Why? **(2)**
2. Who is McMurphy? How is McMurphy different from most of the patients that come to the ward? Why is he there? **(2)**
3. How is McMurphy developed? Provide specific examples to support this characterization. **(2)**
4. Identify and describe the initial setting of the novel (both the hospital as well as the time of the year). **(2)**

**Chapter 3** (20 marks)

1. Who are the “Acutes” in the ward? What do they do to one another? How are they rewarded? **(3)**
2. Who are the Chronics, and how are they further divided into categories? **(2)**
3. Who is Ellis? What happened to him, and why is this significant? **(3)**
4. Who is Ruckly, and what happened to him? What does Chief think about calling these cases like Ruckly a “success”? **(3)**
5. What is the real reason why the “Actures” and the “Chronics” do not mix with one another? **(1)**
6. Analyze the atmosphere on the mental hospital when McMurphy arrives. How does he react to this atmosphere? How does he try to change things on the ward? **(3)**
7. What is Chief’s first meeting with McMurphy like? What does he react to this atmosphere? How does he try to change things on the ward? **(3)**
8. What is Chief’s first meeting with McMurphy like? What does McMurphy say to Nurse Ratched when she tells him he’s been difficult about taking his shower? **(2)**

**Chapter 4** (14 marks)

1. How does Nurse Ratched explain McMurphy’s reason for being at the ward? **(1)**
2. How does Chief Bromden explain the way Nurse Ratched runs the ward? Be specific. **(2)**
3. Characterize the “black boys.” Be as detailed as possible. **(2)**
4. Explain the morning routine. Why does the Nurse create this rigid schedule? **(2)**
5. What does Mr. Taber question? What happens to him as a result of his questioning? **(2)**
6. Who is “Public Relations”? In what way does Chief Bromden describe “Public Relations”? **(2)**
7. Analyze the following quote: “The ward is a factory for the Combine. It is for fixing mistakes made in the neighbourhoods and in the schools and in the churches…” What does Chief mean, and how “true” is his statement? **(3)**

**Chapter 5** (29 marks)

1. What is revealed about McMurphy during the meeting? **(1)**
2. What possible reason does the doctor give for McMurphy faking insanity? **(1)**
3. What happens at the meeting when the doctor brings up going over “past history”? **(1)**
4. “Something strange is going on here.” What does McMurphy find especially strange about the ward? **(1)**
5. What is the theory of the Therapeutic Community? What does the doctor suggest they must do in order to “probe into the secrets of the subconscious”? **(2)**
6. What does McMurphy ask the men to bet on? How do they respond? **(2)**
7. Describe Pete’s outburst. What does he mean by: “I had so many insults I was born dead… I’m tired… I been dead fifty-five years.” What is Chief’s explanation for why the black boys can’t control him? How does Nurse Ratched eventually subdue him? **(4)**
8. After the men humiliate Harding for not pleasing his wife, McMurphy claims that the “Group Meeting” is like a “bunch of chickens at a peckin’ party”. In what ways is this description accurate? How does Harding respond at first? **(3)**
9. Define the word emasculate. In what way does this word correspond with the way Nurse Ratched treats the patients? Cite two examples that show Nurse Ratched emasculating the men. **(4)**
10. What is the tone of Harding’s speech about Nurse Ratched? What has McMurphy succeeded in doing? **(2)**
11. What is a matriarchy? What does the analogy of the rabbit and the world have to do with Harding’s point? **(2)**
12. What is the Shock Shop, and what can it do to you? How does this explain why the men all behave like obedient little rabbits? **(3)**
13. What does McMurphy ask the men to bet on? How do they respond? Who would you bet on? **(3)**

**Chapter 6** (10 marks)

1. Analyse the first three paragraphs and explain what happens to the man that came to the ward on Christmas. Why does Chief Bromden include this information? **(3)**
2. Chief Bromden states, “They haven’t really fogged the place full force all day today, not since McMurphy came in. I bet he’d yell like a bull if they fogged it.” Why hasn’t the fog returned since McMurphy’s come to the ward? **(1)**
3. McMurphy becomes extremely frustrated by the music that is playing. Why? What purpose does the music serve? Why don’t the men on the ward notice the music? **(3)**
4. Explain Dale Harding’s role in the novel. **(2)**
5. At the end of the chapter, how does McMurphy discover Chief Bromden’s secret? **(1)**

**Chapter 7** (6 marks)

1. During the night, what happens to Chief Bromden? How does this event symbolize the way Bromden sees the world? **(2)**
2. Who is Mr. Turkle? How is he characterized? **(2)**
3. What role does machinery play in this chapter? What does it mean to Chief? **(2)**

**Chapter 8** (6 marks)

1. What surprises everybody in the ward about McMurphy’s behaviour on the morning of his second day? Why? **(2)**
2. What rule does McMurphy dispute? Why? How does Nurse Ratched react to McMurphy’s behaviour? Who “wins”? **(4)**

**Chapter 9** (5 marks)

1. Summarize and evaluate the conflict between Nurse Ratched and McMurphy about the music. **(2)**
2. How does McMurphy appeal to the doctor? What does this tell you about McMurphy’s character? Evaluate Dr. Spivey’s proposal and McMurphy’s actions. **(3)**

**Chapter 10** (6 marks)

1. The dialogue of the novel changes in chapter 10. Who is speaking through the Monopoly game? Explain. **(2)**
2. Evaluate the effect McMurphy has on Cheswick. **(2)**
3. How is the Monopoly game better therapy than the Group Meetings? Specifically, what does the game do for the patients? **(2)**

**Chapter 11** (7 marks)

1. In the beginning of chapter 11, Chief Bromden explains that McMurphy “loses control and shows he’s mad…because of the patients, and something they *didn’t* do.” What didn’t they do and why does this upset him? **(2)**
2. What does Billy try to explain to McMurphy after the meeting? What is revealed about Billy? **(2)**
3. Analyze the following statement from McMurphy: “But I tried, though…Goddammit, I sure as hell did that much, now, didn’t I?” **(2)**
4. What purpose does the control panel incident serve? **(1)**

**Chapter 12** (4 marks)

1. Evaluate the significance of the following quotation: “A man that would want to run away from a place as nice as this,” says fat-faced Public Relation, “why, there’d be something wrong with him”. **(2)**
2. How does this Chief enter his hallucination? Why? **(2)**

**Chapter 13** (2 marks)

1. According to the Chief, what is McMurphy trying so hard to do? Why? **(2)**

**Chapter 14** (2 marks)

1. What happens to Old Rawler? Why is this significant? **(2)**

**Chapter 15** (8 marks)

1. Identify and evaluate the Chief’s first experience with the fog. **(2)**
2. What information is revealed about Billy Bibbit in this chapter? Be specific. **(2)**
3. What do the patients vote on in the group meeting at the end of the chapter? How do they vote? Why? Evaluate the significance of this event. **(4)**

**Chapter 16** (11 marks)

1. Explain the meaning and significance of the following quotation: “There is no more fog anymore.” **(2)**
2. Discuss the aftermath of the patients silent protest. **(2)**
3. Evaluate the staff meeting regarding McMurphy and analyze his diagnosis. What is Nurse Ratched’s diagnosis? What does Nurse Ratched suggest? Why? What does this tell us about her character? **(6)**
4. What does Nurse Ratched realize for the first time after McMurphy wins his battle? **(1)**

**Chapter 17** (5 marks)

1. Identify the cleaning duty that McMurphy is assigned. How does he approach this task? **(2)**
2. What does the Chief find fascinating about McMurphy? **(1)**
3. What season is it? Typically, what does this season symbolize in literature? **(2)**

**Chapter 18** (8 marks)

1. How does this institution keep people insane? How does McMurphy help people to become sane? **(2)**
2. Who is the lifeguard? Why is he at the institution? **(2)**
3. What does McMurphy realize after talking with the lifeguard? How does this realization change McMurphy? (**2)**
4. Explain and evaluate what happens to Cheswick at the end of this section. **(2)**

**Chapter 19** (8 marks)

1. Explain the Selfet incident. How does this incident set an example for the men on the ward? Why? **(3)**
2. Explain the irony surrounding the medication of patients with seizure disorders. **(2)**
3. How does the nurse start to regain power? Identify and evaluate her methods. **(3)**

**Chapter 20** (4 marks)

1. What is the present state of affairs? Was it all in vain? **(2)**
2. How is this chapter symbolic? Explain. **(2)**

**Chapter 21** (3 marks)

1. Characterize Vera Harding. **(1)**
2. Summarize and examine her visit to the ward. **(2)**

**Chapter 22** (5 marks)

1. How much time has passed since the television vote? **(1)**
2. Identify the meaning and significance of the following quotation: “You got to swallow your pride sometimes and keep an eye out for old Number One.” **(2)**
3. What puzzles McMurphy so much? Why? **(2)**

**Chapter 23** (6 marks)

1. Based on the information revealed in chapter 22, why don’t the patients just leave the ward? **(1)**
2. What does Chief Bromden want to do when he sees that McMurphy is depressed? Why? **(2)**
3. What does Nurse Ratched say about the punishment she has to give out? Why must she do it? **(2)**
4. How does McMurphy respond to the punishment? **(1)**

**Chapter 24** (10 marks)

1. Why is McMurphy’s first request for an Accompanied Pass denied? **(1)**
2. How does Nurse Ratched try to outwit McMurphy after he succeeds in getting an Accompanied Pass? **(1)**
3. Explain the meaning and significance of the following statement: “I had to keep on acting deaf if I wanted to hear at all.” **(2)**
4. Why does Bromden laugh? What are Bromden’s first words since coming to the institution? How does McMurphy respond to these words? **(3)**
5. Why does Bromden disapprove of McMurphy’s breaking the window? **(1)**
6. What do we learn about Bromden’s perception of size in this chapter? Provide specific examples from the text to support. **(2)**

**Chapter 25** (13 marks)

1. What happens with Bromden and his broom? Why does he do this? **(2)**
2. How does McMurphy convince “Rub-a-Dub George” to attend the trip? **(1)**
3. What “small defeat” does Nurse Ratched ask McMurphy to accept? What is the result? **(2)**
4. What does the doctor lie about? How does this make Chief Bromden and the other men feel? Why? **(3)**
5. Evaluate the fishing trip overall. Is it therapeutic? Why or why not. **(3)**
6. What does Bromden notice about McMurphy as they are on their way back from the trip? Why/how is this significant? **(2)**

**Chapter 26** (4 marks)

1. What happens when McMurphy takes a long-distance phone call? **(1)**
2. How does Nurse Ratched’s revelation affect the men? **(1)**
3. What does Chief Bromden do that shows McMurphy his strength? **(1)**
4. At the end of the chapter, what causes Bromden and McMurphy to get sent to Disturbed? **(1)**

**End of Novel** (18 marks)

1. How is McMurphy impacted by the shock treatment? **(1)**
2. How does the way the men treat Bromden change when he returns to the ward? **(1)**
3. Explain why Bromden’s statement “McMurphy was growing bigger than ever while he was upstairs”? **(1)**
4. Describe Billy’s relationship with his mother? Why don’t the other men tease him? **(2)**
5. Why doesn’t McMurphy escape when he has a second chance? **(1)**
6. What does Bromden realize about what drives McMurphy? **(1)**
7. How has Billy changed when Nurse Ratched discovers him? **(1)**
8. What is Billy’s final act? Regarding this event, what is ironic about what the Nurse says to McMurphy? **(2)**
9. What kind of sound does McMurphy make as he begins to assault the nurse? How does this action make the men question his sanity? **(2)**
10. How has the Nurse changed when she comes back from the medical ward? **(1)**
11. Explain what happens to McMurphy. How do the patients react? **(2)**
12. What action does Bromden take during that night? Why does he do it? **(2)**
13. What is the significance of McMurphy’s hat? **(1)**