

American Literature and Composition *Einstein's Dreams* by Alan Lightman

As American Literature students studying elements of literature, our purpose in reading *Einstein's Dreams* is to study it as a work of fiction, with a focus on literary development. While you are reading the novel, you will need to draw your attention to the details that the author uses, the elements of figurative language, the tone, the mood, symbolism, and strategies the author uses to initiate his purpose. You will also look at elements of persuasion and vocabulary.

The following categories are pertinent in understanding and analyzing Lightman's choices and use of rhetoric.

Themes

Einstein's Dreams explores the effects of time and the fragility of human existence. Below are some themes that run throughout the novel:

- Time existing as simultaneous events can be seen when multiple choices are made at singular instances.
- How free will results in the lack of control humans have over their own lives.
- Humanity and its grapple with the structure of time

Chapter Abstracts

- 14 April 1905 dream- Time is looked at as though it is a circle.
- 16 April 1905 dream- Time is looked at as though it is a flow of water.
- 19 April 1905 dream- Time is looked at as if it has three-dimensions and in this world there are in infinity of worlds.
- 24 April 1905 dream- In this world, time is looked at through two ways: mechanical and bodily time.
- 26 April 1905 dream- In this world, scientists in the past found that time flows more slowly the farther from the center of the earth.
- 28 April 1905 dream- A world where time is absolute.
- 3 May 1905 dream- The world in this dream is one in which cause and effect are erratic.
- 4 May 1905 dream- Descriptions of this world show that time passes, but little happens.
- 8 May 1905 dream- This dream describes the end of the world and the phases that people pass through the closer the end gets.
- 10 May 1905 dream- This dream describes a world in which no one is happy and all are alone.
- 11 May 1905 dream- In this world, time is described as bringing about increasing order.
- In this world, time fixes everything that is out of order.
- 14 May 1905 dream- The world in this dream is described as one where time stands still.
- 15 May 1905 dream- This world time does not exist, only images.
- 20 May 1905 dream- In the world described in this dream, people have no memories.
- 22 May 1905 dream- In this dream, the world is described as one where time flows fitfully
- 29 May 1905 dream- In this world, people are fixated with slowing time and, here in this world, time passes more slowly for those in motion.
- 2 June 1905 dream- Time is discussed as flowing backwards.
- 3 June 1905 dream- Time in this world is discussed because people live for only one day.
- 5 June 1905 dream- Time in this world is described as being a sense.
- 9 June 1905 dream- People are separated into two groups of people: The Laters and the Nows. In this world, people live forever.
- 10 June 1905 dream- The narrator wants readers to suppose that time is not a quantity, but a quality.
- 11 June 1905 dream- The world described in this dream shows a world without a future.
- 15 June 1905 dream- The world in this dream is described as a visual dimension.
- 17 June 1905 dream- The world in this dream creates time as something that is not continuous.
- 18 June 1905 dream- This dream describes the pilgrimage that all people must go on to visit the Great Clock.
- 20 June 1905 dream- The world in this dream describes time as a local phenomenon where no place is set by the same "clock".
- 22 June 1905 dream- The world in this dream describes time as being fixed; where everything happens mechanically and every move is forced.
- 25 June 1905 dream- The world described in this dream describes the world as one of countless copies.
- 27 June 1905 dream- This dream describes a world of shifting pasts.
- 28 June 1905 dream- In this dream, the catching of a nightingale stops time for the only the one that captures the bird.

Symbols

Einstein's Dreams is considered to be a very symbolic novel. Below are some examples of symbols to watch for that carry through and change throughout the novel, though I'll leave their interpretations up to you:

- Birds
- Time
- Dream Figures
- Life and Death

COMPOSITION BOOK SET-UP:

- **Table of Contents**
- **Section A: Vocabulary**
- **Section B: Figurative Language Usage**
 - **Metaphors**
 - **Imagery**
 - **Similes**
 - **Foreshadowing**
 - **Mood/tone**
 - **Character development**
 - **Symbolism**
 - **Conflict**
 - **Argument**
 - **Allusions**
 - **Motifs**
 - **Irony**
 - **Point-of-views**
 - **Author's purpose**
 - **Settings**
- **Section C: Chapter Summaries**
- **Section D: Journal Entries**
- **Section E: Poem**
- **Section F: Art Work**
- **Section G: Song**
- **Bibliography/Works Cited**

Reading Response – 4 Sections

To ensure success, please follow the steps and directions:

C. Chapter Summaries Section of your Reading Response

For each chapter, you are to write a one paragraph summary about the main event(s) of that chapter. Label the top of each chapter section summary with the title of the chapter underlined. Make sure to skip lines in-between chapter summaries to easily identify the break between chapters.

D. Journal Entries Section of your Reading Response

Complete your journal entries within the composition notebook. You will have 35 journal entries to complete. Complete each log entry like the following: label the entry (Journal Entry 1, etc.), write the complete prompt and respond to each log question(s) using commentary, analysis, insight, interpretation, and cited evidence from the text. Go to a new clean page, then begin your next entry. *Each entry must be between 100 to 200 words.*

Journal Entry 1: Prologue

Describe Einstein's appearance at the patent office. How does Einstein's desk differ from the others in the patent office?

Journal Entry 2: 14 April 1905

What is the problem living life within the confines of solitary moments? Why are some people unhappy in the world where time exists as a circle?

Journal Entry 3: 16 April 1905

How can one identify people who have been transported back in time? Why is there no communication between people of the present and people from the future?

Journal Entry 4: 19 April 1905

Describe how the world is described in the 19 April 1905 dream.

Journal Entry 5: 24 April 1905

Describe the people who live by “mechanical time.” Describe the people who live by “bodily time.”

Journal Entry 6: 26 April 1905

Why do people in the 26 April 1905 dream choose to live in the mountains? At the end of the 26 April 1905 dream, what are the negative effects of living in the mountains?

Journal Entry 7: 28 April 1905

What happens every day for the townspeople of Berne? What are the benefits in which time is absolute?

Journal Entry 8: 3 May 1905

What are the benefits of living in a world in which cause and effect are erratic?

Journal Entry 9: 4 May 1905

Explain the meeting between the two couples in the 4 May 1905 dream.

Journal Entry 10: Interlude 1

According to the first interlude, why is Besso worried about Einstein? Why does Besso believe that there are problems with Einstein’s reasoning behind his creation of a theory of time?

Journal Entry 11: 8 May 1905

What happens one month before the world ends? What happens when there is only one day until the end of the world? What happens one minute before the end of the world?

Journal Entry 12: 10 May 1905

What is the tragedy of the world described in the 10 May 1905 dream?

Journal Entry 13: 11 May 1905

For the world described in the 11 May 1905 dream, describe the differences between the past and the future. What do the untidy people of the 11 May 1905 world do in life?

Journal Entry 14: 14 May 1905

What happens to travelers as they enter the world described in the 14 May 1905 dream?

Journal Entry 15: 15 May 1905

Describe the world in which there is no time. How do the people react to this world with no time?

Journal Entry 16: 20 May 1905

What is the biggest problem associated with living in the 20 May 1905 world? What options do people have when it comes to reading their Book of Life?

Journal Entry 17: 22 May 1905

In the 22 May 1905 dream, what happens for those who have seen a glimpse of their future? In the 22 May 1905 dream, what happens for those who have not seen a glimpse of their future yet?

Journal Entry 18: 29 May 1905

For the world described in the 29 May 1905 dream, why are the inhabitants constantly in motion? How did the notion of the speed effect come to be known? Why have some inhabitants of the 29 May 1905 world become frustrated and despondent?

Journal Entry 19: Interlude 2

In the second Interlude, to what does Besso compare Einstein's present health?

Journal Entry 20:2 June 1905

Describe the life of a peach in the world where time travels in reverse. What happens to the "withered woman" from the 2 June 1905 dream? Why does the man at the graveside refuse to weep for his deceased friend?

Journal Entry 21:3 June 1905

How does the narrator describe the phenomenon of people only living one day in the 3 June 1905 dream? According to the 3 June 1905 dream, describe how a person born in December exists. Why do sunset and sunrise babies become frightened when the light changes?

Journal Entry 22:5 June 1905

Describe the way that time is experienced in the 5 June 1905 dream.

Journal Entry 23:9 June 1905

Describe the life of a "Now." Describe the life of a "Later."

Journal Entry 24:10 June 1905

What is meant by "time is not a quantity, but a quality?" How is the woman affected by this way of thinking?

Journal Entry 25:11 June 1905

Describe the cafe that stands on the corner of Kramgasse and Theaterplatz. How does the narrator describe a world without a future?

Journal Entry 26:15 June 1905

What is the young woman at no. 27 Viktoriastrasse doing right before she thrusts herself into the future? What has the young woman at no. 27 Viktoriastrasse missed in her life because of the sudden thrust into the future?

Journal Entry 27:17 June 1905

Describe what happens between the baker and the woman in the 17 June 1905 dream. How does the narrator describe time in the 17 June 1905 dream?

Journal Entry 28: Interlude 3

What is the purpose of "fishing" where there are no fish? How does this continue to support Einstein's reasoning?

Journal Entry 29:18 June 1905

What do people do to pass time while waiting for their turn to pay homage to the Great Clock? What do people do once they enter the Temple of Time? Why was the creation of the Great Clock horrifying for humankind? Why do people not feel free in the 18 June 1905 dream?

Journal Entry 30:20 June 1905

What are the problems associated with living in different cities in the world described in the 20 June 1905 dream? How is pride created for inhabitants of cities in the 20 June 1905 dream world? What differences can arise because of the "locality of time?"

Journal Entry 31:22 June 1905

How does the narrator describe a world of fixed futures?

Journal Entry 32:25 June 1905

Describe the idea of time as a "light between two mirrors." How does the story of the man playing the violin in multiples connect with the idea of solitude?

Journal Entry 33:27 June 1905

What are the effects of the shifting past in the 27 June 1905 world? Why does the section end with the idea that "in time, the past never happened?"

Journal Entry 34:28 June 1905

Describe the idea that time "flutters and fidgets and hops" with the birds. Why is the image of the birds so important?

Journal Entry 35: Epilogue

Why does Einstein feel empty at the end of the book?

E. Poetry Section of the Reading Response

After you have read the book you must find one poem that relates and connects to the literature and include the author's name. (You cannot make up a poem for this section.) You must provide a copy of the poem and write a paragraph in which you explain the connections and relationships between the literature and the poem.

F. Art Work Section of the Reading Response

You must find and provide a copy of one piece of artwork that relates to *Einstein's Dreams*, and include the artists. This means actual artwork, not "clip art." You must write a paragraph that explains the relationship and connection that the artwork has with the book.

G. Song Section of the Reading Response

You must find and provide a copy of the lyrics to a song that relates to the novel. Provide the person/persons who wrote the song. Remember that just because a band recorded a song, does not necessarily mean that those band members/lead singers actually WROTE the song. You must write a paragraph that explains the relationship and connection that the song has with the book.

Final Due Date for the entire project is December 14, 2018. Late and incomplete work will not be accepted. It is your responsibility to manage your time and to make sure that due dates are upheld. This will count as a 30% grade times 2.

*****Make sure each section of the assignment is separate and identifiable.***

*****If you use outside help for analyzing, you must document your sources.***

Adapted from Lynn Felix by R. Hamilton 2017

❖ **Reading Journal (*Einstein's Dreams*)**

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Points Received</i>
<p>Table of Contents Student has included a completed table of contents that is accurate and neat. (5 points max)</p>	
<p>Section A— Margin Work-Vocab ELAGSE11RL4 Student accomplish the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining unfamiliar words • Identifying the connotative meaning of a word <p>(10 points max)</p>	
<p>Section B-- Lit Device ELAGSE11RL2 Student accomplishes the following purposes by identifying Figurative Language Usage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metaphors • Imagery • Similes • Foreshadowing • Mood/tone • Character development • Symbolism • Conflict • Argument • Allusions • Motifs • Irony • Point-of-views • Author's purpose • Settings <p>(15 points max)</p>	
<p>Section C—Chapter Summaries ELAGSE11RL2 Student accomplishes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary for each chapter of the novel • The summaries provide a brief account of the main points of each chapter <p>(5 points max)</p>	
<p>Section D— Journal Entries (35 total) (ELAGSE11W1-2) Student fully responds to all prompts and questions using commentary, analysis, insight, interpretation, etc. (30 points max)</p>	
<p>Section E—Poetry (ELAGSE11RL7) Student finds one poem that relates and connects to the literature. Student writes a paragraph in which connections and relationships between the literature and the poem are explained. (10 points max)</p>	
<p>Section F—Art Work (ELAGSE11SL2) Student provides a copy of one piece of artwork that relates to <i>The Scarlet Letter</i> and writes a paragraph that explains the relationship and connection that the artwork has with the book. (10 points max)</p>	
<p>Section G—Song (ELAGSE11SL2) Student finds and provides a copy of the lyrics to a song that relates to the novel and the writer of the song (not the singer). Student writes a paragraph that explains the relationship and connection that the song has with the book. (10 points max)</p>	
<p>Bibliography Student has included a bibliography at the end of the reading journal is used correct MLA Citation and formatting. (5 points max)</p>	
Total	_____ /100

