Viewing Guide
_Dead Poets Society_ (Part 2)

1. The following lines are shared by Mr. McAllister and Mr. Keating after McAllister sees Keating’s students ripping pages out of their books:

   “Show me the heart unfettered by foolish dreams and I’ll show you a happy man.”
   —Tennyson (spoken by Mr. McAllister)

   “But only in their dreams can men be truly free It was always thus and always thus will be.”
   —Keating

   Based on these lines, how do these men feel about education?

   McAllister:___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________

   Keating:____________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________

   Which view do you prefer? Why?

   Preference:_________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________________

2. What was the Dead Poets Society? What did they do? Where do you think the name comes from?

3. What is the symbolism in the scene where the boys go to the cave?
4. How does Mr. Keating get the boys to look at life differently?

5. Identify three scenes that show changes in Todd Anderson and explain what development is suggested.
   a. ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   b. ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   c. ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________

6. What do we learn Neil wants to do with his life? What is the name of the play that Neil wants to try out for?

7. When Knox goes to see Kris at her public school, what do you notice about the differences between public and private education that are depicted in the film?

   Public:
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   Vs.

   Private:
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
   ________________________________________________________________________
8. What does Mr. Keating have the boys do while kicking a ball outside? Why does he do this? What is the point of this activity?

9. How does Mr. Keating get Todd to come “out of his shell”?

10. What is Mr. Keating’s method of teaching the dangers of conformity?

11. What type of article has Charlie anonymously written and added to the school newspaper? What happens as a result of this article?

12. Why does Nolan meet with Mr. Keating?

13. Explain Keating’s statement, “Sucking all the marrow out of life doesn’t mean choking on the bone.”

14. When Neil talks to Keating about his conversation with his father, what advice does Keating give (what are his options)?
15. The following lines are spoken by Neil (as Puck) in *A Midsummer's Night's Dream*:

“If we shadows have offended, Think but this — and all is mended— That you have but slumber’d here While these visions did appear. And this weak and idle theme, No more yielding but a dream, Gentles, do not reprehend; If you pardon, we will mend. And, as I am an honest Puck, If we have unearned luck Now to escape the serpent’s tongue, We will make amends ere long; Else the Puck a liar call: So, good night unto you all, Give me your hand, if we be friends, And Robin shall restore amends.”

What does this mean? Why is it ironic that Neil is saying this line at the end of the play?

16. Explain Neil’s father’s reaction to Neil being in the play?

17. Do you agree or disagree with Neil’s final action in the film? Why or why not? What other choices could he have made?

18. In what ways is Neil a “Christ figure?” (A Christ figure is a literary technique that the author uses to draw allusions between their characters and the biblical Jesus Christ.) Was Neil a martyr (a person who is put to death or endures great suffering on behalf of any belief, principle, or cause)? Who really was to blame for Neil’s death?

19. What does the snow symbolize? What does the vomit in the snow symbolize?

20. Which character do you identify with most? Why?