Anthem Discussion Questions

Ayn Rand
Chapter One

• Describe the society in which Anthem is set. Consider the political structure, degree of technology, social relationships, quality of life, and education.

• Speculate on why it is very unusual for the men to reach the age of 45 in this society.

• Compare and contrast Equality 7-2521’s physical qualities and character traits from those of his fellow men.

• When does the novel take place – in the past, the present, or the future? How do you know?

• Why does the Council of Vocation assign Equality the job of street sweeper? Explain.
Chapter Two

• Read again more closely the account of Liberty 5-3000 on pg 38. What character traits are revealed in this brief description?

• Of the whole range of feelings possible to man (joy, excitement, anger, etc.) what is the most prevalent emotion in this society and why?

• What word is Equality struggling to recapture on pg 49? Why is mentioning this word the only crime punishable by death in this society?
Chapter Three

• What does Equality discover in this chapter?
• How important is this discovery? Describe 4 or 5 ways in which it would help society, and make life easier or more enjoyable.
Chapter Four and Five

• Discuss the appropriateness of Equality’s new name “Unconquered.”

• Equality understands that his invention will benefit mankind greatly; however, this was not his main motivation, and it is not the primary source of the great joy he experiences. Discuss.

• In your opinion, why is Equality so interested in seeing his own image at this point in the novel? What emotion is he feeling?
Chapter Six and Seven

• The old locks and lack of guards in the Palace of Corrective Detention indicate that prisoners never try to escape. Why not?
• Outline four of the Council’s reasons for rejecting Equality’s invention.
• What does Equality mean when he says at the start of this chapter, “We are old now, but we were young this morning: pg 68
Chapter Eight

• What is Equality experiencing for the first time in this chapter, and what does he feel as a result?

• Explain why Equality laughs when he remembers that he is “the Damned.”

• What does the Unchartered Forest symbolize in Anthem?
Chapter Nine and Ten

• On pages 82-83, Liberty contrasts Equality to his fellow men. Paraphrase this passage.

• In this chapter, Equality questions the morality of his former society. Contrast what he was previously taught about solitude, good, evil, and joy to what he now believes.

• Describe the house and contents in your own words, and explain why Liberty and Equality find it so strange and unique.
Group Work for Anthem

• Get back in your groups and discuss the following questions. You will be expected to turn in a written response to the questions (as a group) by the next class.
Chapter Eleven and Twelve

• What great discovery does Equality make in this chapter?

• Explain the following quotes in your own words, and discuss how they can be applied to your life:
  – “Whatever road I take, the guiding star is within me.”
  – “For the word ‘We’ must never be spoken, save by one’s choice and as a second thought.”

• What does Equality now realize is the proper goal and purpose of his life?

• Why do the main characters take the names Prometheus and Gaea?

• Prometheus reaches the important realization that “To be free, a man must be free of his brothers.” Discuss the meaning of this statement.