

Below are some essential questions, themes and topics that will guide our class discussions and activities, so it is important for you to be familiar with them and able to participate in discussions.

Themes for *The Secret Life of Bees* and *The Help*:

Women

Home Life

Oppression

Social Injustice

Challenging the Rules or Expectations

1. Connections: text to text, text to self, text to the world. Compare and contrast your book to others you've read, to situations or people in your own life, to events in history or the news.

2. Characters: Do you like the main characters or not? Why?

3. Social Questions: Look for race, gender, or class inequalities and injustices. Who has the power in the story and how is it used? What do you think? Does it make you think or feel differently about those of another race or gender than your own?

INCOMING JUNIORS AND SENIORS:

Questions to think about while reading *The Help*

Why was it important to Skeeter's friends to find her a boyfriend?

Who are the real heroes in *The Help*?

Are there any characters in *The Help* that you find totally offensive?

Who were the "good" employers in *The Help*? How were they "good"?

Which female character was easily manipulated and was actually bullied herself in her marriage?

What other prejudice is evident in the help?

What are your thoughts on Mini's revenge?

Racism is rampant in the help. Can you be racist and still care for someone? Does a person become racist by their upbringing and family values or from their society and surroundings?

If you could write a sequel, how would you continue the story for Mini, Aibileen, Celia, Skeeter, Elizabeth and Hilly?