

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

Close Reading Organizer - Section 9 **Sample Answers**

Directions: Read each summary entry and think about which themes listed in the Themes Key apply to it, then color in those themes in the Theme Tracker. Next, write a few sentences of Analysis to explain how the themes you chose apply to each summary section.

Note: There is not always a definitive set of “correct” answers for which themes should appear in the Theme Tracker. Answers that differ from the ones we propose below should therefore not automatically be treated as incorrect, and in fact can serve as great discussion starters.

Themes Key

1	Privacy, Loneliness, and Communication
2	Social Criticism
3	Time
4	Psychology and Perception
5	Death

Summary	Theme Tracker					Your Analysis
Lucy and the other Dalloway servants hurry about, making last-minute preparations for the party. They hear that the Prime Minister will be there, but the cook says that this makes no difference for her work. The guests start arriving and the ladies go upstairs while the men order Imperial Tokay (a sweet wine) from the kitchen. Elizabeth worries about her dog and reminds a servant to check on it.	1	2	3	4	5	The Prime Minister is an important symbol of order and hierarchy for many English people, but he has no real affect on working-class people like the cook. The first details of Clarissa’s party seem especially indulgent after Septimus’s suicide.
Guests keep arriving and the men finally go upstairs to join the women. There are servants specially	1	2	3	4	5	It is also disturbing that the party is a gathering place for the bubble of the English upper class, those

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

<p>hired for the party, including an old woman who has been helping the family for forty years. Clarissa greets everyone with “How delightful to see you!” Peter Walsh arrives and finds her “at her worst – effusive, insincere.” He wishes he had stayed home with a book.</p>						<p>who oppress the likes of Septimus. Clarissa has given meaning to her party as an “offering” and an attempt to bring people together, but for now she is acting just as shallowly as Peter feared.</p>
<p>Clarissa sees Peter in the corner, criticizing her with his eyes, and she worries that the party will be a failure. She wonders why she invites such failure and criticism on herself, but then resolves that she would rather burn up while throwing a party than fade away like her cousin, Ellie Henderson. She gets angry at Peter for criticizing everything but never offering something of his own.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Clarissa has a similar sentiment to Septimus (though to a different degree), as her party is her idea of defying human nature and “burning up” by doing something glorious. The party is Clarissa’s offering, but Peter has no offerings of his own to put forth and risk criticism.</p>
<p>Ellie Henderson is there, admiring all the people at the party. She is poorer and less fashionable than everyone else there and gets nervous when someone talks to her, but she enjoys admiring all the interesting, influential guests. She takes mental notes to describe the event to someone named Edith later.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>We briefly see the point of view of Ellie Henderson, Clarissa’s cousin whom she tried not to invite. Ellie stands off by herself without talking. Her relationship with Edith is never explained, but they are perhaps romantic partners.</p>
<p>The wind blows a curtain out and a guest beats it back and keeps talking. Clarissa takes this as a</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>The flapping curtains at Bourton were Clarissa’s first memory introduced in the book, and they again</p>

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

sign that the party has really begun and might be successful after all. Guests keep arriving, but Clarissa isn't enjoying herself yet. She feels that she has become an unreal figure, and anyone could take her place as hostess. Lady Bruton arrives, and then the butler announces an unfamiliar name - Lady Rosseter - who turns out to be Sally Seton .						connect to the idea of windows as borders between private souls. The guest beating back the curtain then shows that he is engaged in true communication, and willing to push past the windows between himself and the other person.
Sally hasn't seen Clarissa in years, but she happened to be in London and heard about the party. Clarissa immediately sees that the "the lustre had gone out of" Sally, and she is now "older, happier, less lovely," but she still greets her joyfully. With a touch of her old bravado, Sally boasts that she has "five enormous boys."	1	2	3	4	5	We have only seen Sally in Clarissa's memory before now, and that past Sally seems more real somehow than this conventional lady. Clarissa is like Peter, still haunted by the passion and romance of the past, and now she is disappointed by the presence of the real Sally.
The Prime Minister arrives, interrupting Clarissa and Sally's reunion. In his appearance he looks ordinary and almost laughable, but everyone still feels the silent presence of "this symbol of what they all stood for, English society." He makes his rounds and then goes off with Lady Bruton . Peter watches this and criticizes the "snobbery of the English."	1	2	3	4	5	People had talked about the Prime Minister in the royal car, and he has appeared as a symbol of tradition and conventionality in Peter's insult to Clarissa, but when he finally appears in the flesh he is painfully ordinary. He tries to act as the figurehead he is, as everyone in England is desperate for symbols of order, but he still appears absurd.
Peter then sees Hugh Whitbread and mocks	1	2	3	4	5	Peter stands apart just like Ellie Henderson, but he

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

him mercilessly in his thoughts, watching Hugh patronizing and flattering other guests. Then he sees Clarissa in her “silver-green mermaid’s dress” and feels that she still has her ability “to be; to exist; to sum it all up in the moment as she passed.” Peter reminds himself that he doesn’t love her anymore.						feels himself superior to the other guests instead of watching them in awe. Clarissa still has the gift of a special kind of reality for Peter, something that cuts through his doubts and fantasies.
Clarissa shows the Prime Minister out. She feels the intoxication and pleasure of the party now, but it all seems hollow to her. She remembers Miss Kilman and revels in the sincerity and strength of the hatred she inspires. Clarissa returns to the party and talks to more of her guests, including the failed painter Sir Harry .	1	2	3	4	5	Clarissa is pleased that her party is a success, but she is almost looking at it through Peter’s eyes now, and it seems less than sincere. Her hatred for Miss Kilman is a negative emotion, but it is at least real and pure, like her old love for Sally.
Old Mrs. Hilbery tells Clarissa that she looks like her mother, and Clarissa is suddenly moved to tears. Two intellectuals are arguing about Milton, and Clarissa interrupts them to smooth things over. More younger guests arrive, and then Clarissa’s old Aunt Helena , who is over eighty now. She talks about Burma and orchids , and Clarissa sends Peter to talk to her.	1	2	3	4	5	Aunt Helena still survives as a relic of the past. The flower symbol continues here, as Helena was a former botanist and spent much of her life pressing orchids to preserve them. Such drying and preservation shows another version of “felling” the spontaneous beauty and joy of the soul.
Clarissa speaks briefly with Lady Bruton . Both	1	2	3	4	5	Lady Bruton and Clarissa are two different kinds of

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

women respect each other, but they have little to say. Lady Bruton then talks to Peter Walsh and Aunt Helena about India. The narrator describes Lady Bruton's love of the British Empire and how her Englishness is inseparable from her soul.						strong women, but they have hardly anything in common. Lady Bruton is innovative as a female "general," but traditional and conservative in her love of the Empire.
Sally catches Clarissa by the arm, but Clarissa is still busy entertaining. She asks Peter and Sally to stay, meaning that they will talk after the other guests have left. Clarissa watches Sally and Peter reuniting and thinks about her old passion for Sally. When she was young Clarissa had felt that Sally would end up a martyr of some kind, but instead Sally had married a rich man and had five boys. Clarissa thinks that her past belongs to Peter and Sally more than to anyone else.	1	2	3	4	5	With Sally and Peter's appearance the party is now a gathering place for memories of Bourton. Just as Richard couldn't tell Clarissa he loved her, so Clarissa seems to put off the moment of real, intimate communication that should occur between her and her oldest friends. She still has to deal with her image of the old Sally and how much she has changed.
The Bradshaws arrive and Clarissa is obligated to speak to them. She dislikes Sir William , though she can't pinpoint why. Sir William mentions a case of "shell shock," and then Lady Bradshaw tells Clarissa about Septimus's suicide. Clarissa is struck by the sudden arrival of death at her party, and angry at the Bradshaws for bringing it. She goes into a little room to be alone.	1	2	3	4	5	The appearance of Sir William at the party is especially sinister, as we have seen how he is partially responsible for Septimus's death. As in her first memory from Bourton, Clarissa again finds death in the midst of joy and optimism. She is a social person, but still must retreat to a "room of her own" to deal with this news.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

<p>Clarissa muses on Septimus's death and thinks of it as an act of communication and defiance, a preservation of something that she has obscured in her own life with chatter and frivolity. Clarissa remembers the time at Bourton when she went down to meet Sally and thought "If it were now to die, 'twere now to be most happy." She imagines Septimus as having a passionate soul and then being coldly overpowered by Sir William.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Clarissa's revelations here are the climax of the novel and the condensation of Woolf's themes. Clarissa recognizes that she has obscured the purity of her soul with conventionality and shallowness, and sees how Septimus – her double, though they never met – has preserved that purity through his death. Clarissa did not die at the peak of her happiness at Bourton, but (like Othello, who lived on to jealously murder his wife) has instead lived and faded like Ellie Henderson.</p>
<p>Clarissa thinks of Septimus's death as somehow "her disaster – her disgrace." She has chosen conventionality and life over "the terrace at Bourton," where she felt romantic joy and a terrible premonition. Clarissa looks out her window and sees the old woman across the way staring straight at her. The woman goes to bed and Big Ben strikes three o'clock in the morning.</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Clarissa feels that Septimus's death is her "disgrace" because she lacked his bravery, instead settling for a life of upper-class comfort and conformity with Richard. She thinks again of the window at Bourton, the place of great joy and the premonition of death, a time of pure communication – just like the window Septimus threw himself from. She then sees the old woman behind her closed windows, and sees how difficult communication has grown as she has gotten older.</p>
<p>Clarissa hears the noises of the party and knows she must go back out. She thinks again of the line from <i>Cymbeline</i>: "Fear no more the heat of the sun."</p>	1	2	3	4	5	<p>Clarissa has this moment of enlightenment and pure communion with Septimus, even though he is dead. As in Clarissa's old theory, Septimus lives on in his</p>

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

She suddenly identifies with Septimus and is glad that he killed himself, as it makes the beauty and joy of life all the more precious. She goes back to the party, looking for Peter and Sally .						effect on others. Clarissa sees his death as a positive act of communication and defiance, and it gives her a clarity and gratitude regarding her own life. She is now ready to experience intimate communication again, and to reunite with Peter and Sally.
Meanwhile Peter and Sally are reminiscing about the past and wondering where Clarissa is. They discuss their current lives and realize how they have changed so much from their younger selves, and have failed the dreams of their past in a way. Sally talks about Clarissa, and admits that she was disappointed that Clarissa married Richard .	1	2	3	4	5	We no longer see the world from Clarissa's point of view after this revelation of hers. In this brief denouement, Sally and Peter start to catch up and prepare for their reunion with Clarissa. Sally is disappointed with Clarissa just as Clarissa is disappointed with Sally.
Hugh walks by and Sally reaffirms her story that Hugh had once tried to kiss her in the smoking-room at Bourton. Sally wonders why Clarissa has never visited her in all these years, and she says that Clarissa is a bit of a snob. Soon afterward she feels a rush of affection for Clarissa though, and declares her pure of heart. She flaunts her sentimentality to Peter , saying that it is best to just say what one feels. Peter says he doesn't know what he feels.	1	2	3	4	5	Despite her conventional life situation, Sally shows that she still has her headstrong, passionate personality. Bourton starts to return even more strongly in the presence of these two characters. The clock has struck three in the morning, marking the forward march of time, but the past is still circling back to affect the present.
Peter tells Sally that his	1	2	3	4	5	Peter and Sally start to

Name: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

relationship with **Clarissa** had “spoilt his life,” as he could not be in love like that twice. Sally says that she thinks Clarissa cared for Peter more than for **Richard**, but Peter stops her. They watch **Elizabeth** cross the room and think of how different she is from Clarissa. They can see the affection between Elizabeth and Richard, and Sally goes to say goodnight to Richard, admitting that he has “improved.” Peter lingers, suddenly filled with terror and ecstasy, and then Clarissa appears.

engage in some real communication now, as Sally decides to express her true sentiments Peter follows along, finally speaking his mind about Clarissa. The final reunion that has been pointed to throughout the book – the meeting between Peter, Sally, and Clarissa – takes place off the page, in the only place where true communion can exist. This offstage scene—which can’t be depicted—begins with the sublime aspect of Clarissa’s reality, as Peter is again struck by her simple existence. She has changed since her revelation about Septimus, and now is ready for an intimate, pure reunion with her old friends.