

NAME _____
INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE ENGLISH

DATE _____
QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

The Glass Castle by Jeannette Walls

Directions: As you read, consider the following questions. Prepare written responses for two of the questions. Your responses should be about a page each; these will be collected. We will use these questions to begin discussion on the book, so make sure you have considered all of them.

1. Jeannette and her siblings live in a world of contrasts—absolute squalor and poverty mixed with a “natural” education that was broad and deep. Her parents taught her about the natural world, art and literature, yet they went hungry most days. Comment on this upbringing. What turns out to be important about rearing a child, meeting basic needs of comfort and safety or stimulating their intellectual curiosity?
2. Discuss why you think the Wells’ parents were unwilling to go on welfare or food stamps. Rosemary says, “Once you go on welfare, it changes you. Even if you get off welfare, you never escape the stigma that you were a charity case. You’re scarred for life” (188). Why do you think she feels this way? Does it make any sense, given her circumstances? Is keeping the children “unscarred” more important than food?
3. Describe Rosemary. Think critically about all her aspects. Consider her art, her teaching, and her dreams for the future. In the end, is she a positive or negative influence on her children?
4. Describe Rex. Think critically about all his aspects. Consider his intellectual ability, his drinking, his dreams and his gifts. In the end, is he a positive or negative influence on his children?

