Selection Review #1

The Pinballs

Chapters 1–5

1. Explain why each of the children was sent to the foster home. Harvey’s father has a drinking problem and ran over Harvey’s legs with a car. Thomas J was abandoned as a baby and cared for by elderly twin sisters, who are now in the hospital. Carlie cannot get along with her stepfather who has been giving her beatings.

2. Ask your partner to draw a graphic organizer like the one below. At the end of each line, he or she should write a word or phrase to describe the character indicated in the oval. Then your partner should tell you at least one fact from the novel to support his or her choices. Possible answers are provided below.

3. Why doesn’t Carlie get along easily with other people? Carlie has not had a stable home life. She is rude and impolite to others. She is suspicious and distrustful of other people.

4. Why does Harvey tell everyone that he broke his legs playing football? Harvey is ashamed to tell other people that his father ran over his legs with a car. People might admire a person who breaks his legs playing football, so he decides to tell this story instead.

5. Do you think Mrs. Mason will be a good foster parent to the children? Explain your answer. Mrs. Mason seems like someone who would be a good foster parent. She is a generous person who has opened her home to many foster children. She speaks kindly and is patient with the children.
Selection Review #2

The Pinballs

Chapters 6 – 10

1. **What kind of writing does Harvey do? Why does he do it?** Harvey writes lists because there is no one to whom he can write a letter. He likes writing lists about the events in his life because this helps him feel there is some order in it.

2. **According to Carlie, how are she, Harvey, and Thomas J like pinballs?** Pinballs don’t have any control over what happens to them. They are just things that bounce from place to place with no purpose or direction. Carlie says that she and the boys have no control over what happens to themselves or anybody else.

3. **What is Harvey’s problem, and why does Mrs. Mason believe that Carlie can help him?** Harvey is depressed. He is unhappy because his mother is gone and his father has not taken good care of him. He is uncomfortable because of his broken legs and is ashamed to talk about how he got them. Mrs. Mason thinks that Carlie’s strong, outgoing personality can help Harvey out of his depression.

4. **What made Mrs. Mason decide to become a foster parent?** Mrs. Mason was unable to have her own children. Instead of adopting, she decided to become a foster parent.

5. **Describe Thomas J’s feelings when he visits the Bensons in the hospital.** Thomas J feels awkward and sad. He is sad to see the twins sick. He feels awkward because he holds the twins’ hands for the first time. He doesn’t know what to talk about. He is afraid he may not get another chance to talk to them, and that he will never learn more about who left him with them or why.
Selection Review #3

*The Pinballs*

Chapters 11 – 15

1. **Why is the day that the Benson twins found Thomas J so important to him?** The day that the Bensons found Thomas J is like the beginning of his life, because he has never known his parents and doesn’t know anything about his first two years. He’d like to imagine the Benson sisters hugging him when they found him. Thomas J needs physical affection, something he has not received from the Bensons.

2. **How can you tell that Carlie has become Harvey’s friend?** Carlie works hard at trying to cheer Harvey up. On their trip to the library, she and Harvey share things about their families that are hard to talk about. Carlie tries to keep Harvey occupied in conversation as he waits for his father. She promises Harvey that she will fight hard for him if he needs it.

3. **Why does Harvey want to go to the library?** Harvey wants to find a magazine that contains an article about his mom. He thinks that if he writes to her, she will come and take him to live with her.

4. **Why does Carlie decide that life is unfair?** Carlie observes that there are people like Mrs. Mason who want children, but never have them. On the other hand, there are people who have children but don’t want them, like her parents, and Thomas J and Harvey’s parents.

5. **How does Harvey feel as he waits for his father to arrive?** Harvey is very anxious. He is not able to relax.
Selection Review #4

The Pinballs

Chapters 16 – 20

1. **Describe Harvey’s meeting with his father.** Harvey and his father both feel awkward and do not speak honestly with one another. Harvey becomes more depressed when he finds out that his mother has never tried to contact him since he left.

2. **What are some ways Carlie tries to help Harvey?** Carlie promises Harvey that he will make it through his problems even though he doesn’t think he will. She tries to cheer him up by playing a guessing game with his birthday present and by urging him to run away with her.

3. **Why does Thomas J like talking with Mr. Mason?** Thomas J learns from what Mr. Mason shares about his experiences as a boy. Thomas J believes he can learn about life from Mr. Mason.

4. **What does Carlie do for Thomas J?** Carlie gives Thomas J a date for his birthday, since he has never had one.

5. **What changes in Harvey show that his depression is getting worse?** Harvey won’t eat his favorite Kentucky Fried Chicken dinner. He doesn’t talk much, but sits expressionless, staring out of a window. He doesn’t care that he has developed an infection.
Selection Review #5

*The Pinballs*

Chapters 21 – 26

1. **How does Harvey respond to Carlie and Thomas J’s first visit to the hospital?** Harvey is very depressed and barely speaks to Carlie and Thomas J.

2. **What plan do Carlie and Thomas J have to help cheer up Harvey?** Carlie and Thomas J get a puppy for Harvey and sneak it into the hospital to show him.

3. **How does Thomas J think the Masons can help him?** Thomas J knows Mrs. Mason can help him learn to express his feelings. He is comforted by Mr. Mason’s stories about his boyhood.

4. **Why does Carlie decide that she is not a pinball?** Pinballs have no control over what happens to them. Carlie has seen Harvey change as a result of the care that she, Thomas J, and the Masons have given him. Carlie believes that as long as she tries to accomplish something in her life, she is no longer a pinball.

5. **How has each of the children been helped in the story?** The Masons have helped Thomas J face the Benson twins’ deaths. Thomas J knows that Mr. and Mrs. Mason can help him learn about life and mature as a person. Carlie knows that she is not a pinball, but has some control over her life. Harvey has come out of his depression. The friendships that the children have developed with one another encourage them.
Literature Test #1

The Pinballs

Chapters 1 - 5

1. What qualities does Mrs. Mason have that make her a good foster parent?

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

2. Why is Harvey unhappy?

   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________
   __________________________________________

continued...
3. Why doesn’t Carlie get along easily with other people?

4. Describe the way Thomas J has been raised.
1. Why does Harvey write lists?

2. Explain Thomas J's feelings when he goes to the hospital.
3. Why does Carlie call herself a pinball?

4. Why does Mrs. Mason believe that Carlie can help Harvey?
Literature Test #3

*The Pinballs*

Chapters 11 - 15

1. Why does Thomas J want to know as much as possible about the day the Bensons found him?

2. How does Harvey think the article about his mom will help him?

continued...
3. Explain how you can tell that Carlie and Harvey are becoming friends.

4. What does Carlie decide about life when she sees kids being born into families that don’t want them, while some people who want kids can’t have them?
Literature Test #4

The Pinballs

Chapters 16 -20

1. How does Thomas J’s conversation with Mr. Mason help him?

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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2. What happens during Harvey’s meeting with his dad?

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________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
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________________________________________________________________________

continued...
3. How does Carlie try to help Harvey?

4. How can you tell that Harvey is getting more depressed?

5. How does Thomas J get a birthday?
1. What is Harvey like when he is taken to the hospital?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

2. How do Carlie and Thomas J bring Harvey out of his depression?

__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
3. What does Thomas J want to learn from the Masons?

4. How and why has Carlie changed her view of life?

5. How has each of the children changed since the beginning of the story?
Vocabulary Test #1

The Pinballs

Chapters 1 - 5

WRITE SENTENCES FOR THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

permanent  technique  hesitant

suspicious  clenched

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
Vocabulary Test #2

The Pinballs

Chapters 6 - 10

WRITE SENTENCES FOR THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

- insult
- pester
- dread
- succeeded
- misery
Vocabulary Test #3

The Pinballs

Chapters 11 - 15

WRITE SENTENCES FOR THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

abandoned
reaction

sulked
criticized

suitable

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____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________

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____________________________________________________

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____________________________________________________

____________________________________________________
Vocabulary Test #4

*The Pinballs*

Chapters 16 - 20

WRITE SENTENCES FOR THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dull</th>
<th>earnestly</th>
<th>comical</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>feeble</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vocabulary Test #5

The Pinballs

Chapters 21 - 26

WRITE SENTENCES FOR THE FOLLOWING WORDS:

- protested
- admiration
- startled
- bulge
- snubbed