

The Magician's Nephew by C. S. Lewis

Essay Topics/Writing Assignments

1. Digory is by far one of the most complex and developed characters in *The Magician's Nephew*, with a blend of good and bad motives. Explain the sides of his character more fully and state why he is considered to be more of a "good" character rather than an evil one.

1. Describe some examples of his actions that come from good motives
2. Describe some examples of his actions that come from bad motives
3. Describe what action or actions he takes that make him stand out clearly as a character on the side of goodness.

2. Describe the character of Uncle Andrew. Which of the adjectives below best describes him? Give examples of his actions and words to explain your decision.

Choose one of the following: Comic, sinister, selfish, greedy, foolish,

3. Jadis is referred to as being an evil witch. Is this view of her justified? State why or why not, and give examples to back your answer.

4. The character of Aslan is often thought of as representing God in an allegorical form. What are some things that he says or does that support this interpretation? Do any of his actions or things that he says contradict this view?

5. The Cabby is chosen to be the first King of Narnia. What aspects of his character will make him a good king? In your answer, refer to some examples other than the scene in Chapter 11 where Aslan questions the Cabby.

6. Victorian London is one of several settings in *The Magician's Nephew* and is the most familiar. Describe this setting, and compare and contrast it with two of the other settings (listed below).

Part 1: Describe Victorian London as it appears in *The Magician's Nephew*.

Part 2: Compare and contrast Victorian London with one of the other settings in this book.

Part 3: Compare and contrast Victorian London with another of the settings in this book.

Choose two of the following: The Wood Between the Worlds, Charn, Narnia

7. Compare Digory's house in London at the start of the book and what it is like at the end. How has the house changed? Consider physical changes, and also symbolic changes with respect to the theme of Life versus Death.

Part 1: Describe Digory's house at the beginning of the novel.

Part 2: Describe how Digory's house changes by the end of the novel.

8. Charn is where Jadis, the personification of the powers of death and destruction comes from. Describe Charn and explain how this setting is also symbolic of death and destruction.

9. When Jadis comes to London, she has certain cultural expectations. People in London have contrasting cultural expectations. Describe some of the culture clashes that occur when Jadis spends time in London. Consider such things as law, dress, technology, magic and gender roles, plus any other cultural clashes that you find.

10. The mountain garden where Digory takes the Apple of Life from is intended to represent or be the Narnian equivalent of the Garden of Eden. Describe the mountain garden in your own words, and explain what it does and does not have in common with the mythical Garden of Eden. (Note: if appropriate, another mythological or legendary garden can be substituted for the Garden of Eden).

11. Problems and overcoming problems are very important to create plot tension. Describe one problem faced by a character in *The Magician's Nephew* and explain how this problem is overcome.

12. Which scene is the climax or point of maximum tension in *The Magician's Nephew*? Describe this scene and explain why you consider it to be the climax of the novel.

13. Uncle Andrew is a sinister character at the start of the novel, but later on, he is more of a comic figure. Explain some of the ways that Uncle Andrew is used to provide comic relief or humor in *The Magician's Nephew*.

14. Some people claim that conflict is essential to create plot tension. With whom does Digory conflict? Choose one of his conflicts, describe it and explain how this conflict is resolved.

Part 1: List the other characters with whom Digory is in conflict.

Part 2: Choose one of these conflicts and describe it.

Part 3: Explain how this conflict is resolved.

15. We are only told about two of the other worlds that can be reached using the magic rings and the pools in the Wood Between the Worlds. Create a new world of your own and describe it in detail. How is it different to the real world and how is it the same?

16. *The Magician's Nephew* has, as one of its key themes, the antithesis between life and death/destruction. Describe two or three ways that theme is illustrated in *The Magician's Nephew*. Which force is shown to predominate?

17. *The Magician's Nephew* raises the topic of animal rights and animal experimentation. What attitude does the author seem to take on this topic? Use examples from the novel to illustrate your answer.

18. In many of C.S. Lewis's works, both fictional and non-fictional, selfishness and being self-centered is associated very strongly with evil. Explain some ways that this idea is illustrated in *The Magician's Nephew*.

19. C.S. Lewis is sometimes criticized as being sexist or misogynistic (biased against women). Is this (supposed) bias apparent in *The Magician's Nephew*? Use examples to justify your answer.

20. *The Magician's Nephew* explores the theme of power, kingship and corruption. What points are raised by this text regarding this theme? Explain some ways that this theme is illustrated in the text and give examples.

21. Every work of fiction has conflict at its root. The conflict is the problem that must be solved by the main characters. What is the main conflict in TMN?

a. What is the main conflict in TMN?

b. A conflict can be increased by complications. What complications happen in TMN?

c. The climax of a story is the high point of action or tension. It is also called the turning point because after the climax, the conflict is soon resolved. What is the climax of TMN?

22. Read the story of the temptation of Eve in the Garden of Eden in the Bible ([Genesis 3](#) and [創世記 3章](#)). What are the similarities and differences?