

The Only Story | Questions

[Watch videos and explore links in this blog to prepare your answers](#)

Long Questions:

1. "As you read this small book, generally and specifically about love, remember that suffering is, after all, the Latin root for passion". Write about the theme of passion (love) and suffering in Julian Barnes's novel *The Only Story*.

Answer Key - [Watch this video](#)

2. Write an essay on the theme of passion and suffering in 'The Only Story'.

3. Susan Macleod – a woman wronged by uncle as a little girl, violent patriarch husband and then stranded by young lover – is the most pathetic character in '*The Only Story*'.

4. Write an essay on the Narrative Pattern in '*The Only Story*'.

Answer Key: [Watch this video](#)

5. Justify 'The Only Story' as a Memory Novel.

a. **Answer key:** ([Watch this video](#)) Write how memory is used in the style as well substance. Watch video recording on Memory Novel (for style) and also read on 'question of memory' (for substance)

6. 'Beautiful But Heartrending ', 'The Only Story' Looks Back at Love Gone Wrong'. In light of this observation, write a critique of the novel with reference to the treatment of 'love'.

Answer Key: [watch this video](#)

7. What does Julian Barnes philosophize on the Question of Responsibility? Do you agree with it?

a. **Answer key:** ([Watch this video](#)) The chain of responsibility (from *The Sense of an Ending*)

- b. The metaphor of ‘link’ – its metal, its frangibility
- c. The pull – the breaking – and the blame
- d. Ultimately, when one ponders upon it, it is necessary to see one’s own initial and take blame on self.

8. Explain with reference to the context: “The point of the story is ‘safe and capable’.”

- a. **Answer key:** Who speaks to whom?
- b. In which context?
- c. What is the meaning of it? (Susan cannot leave Gordon. Is this an excuse to not to leave the wealthy home of Gordon? Is Susan really a sensible and responsible person to stand by her promise to dying old Jack?)

9. Do you agree that ‘The Only Story’ is a critique of British society, culture and religion?

10. “Julian Barnes is an author of inventive and intellectual novels about obsessed characters curious about the past.” Justify this observation with your reading of ‘The Only Story’.

11. Explain the symbolic significance of Crossword Puzzle in ‘The Only Story’.

Answer Key: [The link in given in this blog to prepare this answer](#)

12. “There were two ways of looking at life; or two extremes of viewpoint, anyway, with a continuum between them.” How does this represent the philosophy of existentialism? Illustrate from ‘The Only Story’.

13. Write an essay on ‘Postmodern Absurdist Critique of Julian Barnes’s ‘The Only Story’.

14. [Julian Barnes makes a succinct critique on marriage in ‘The Only Story’. Do you agree? Justify your answer with reference to the novel.](#)

Short Questions / Notes:

1. [Write a short note on the Timeline of the Narration in 'The Only Story'.](#)
2. What role does Uncle Humph play in the character study of Susan Macleod?
3. [Write a short note on the question of memory.](#)
4. Paul Roberts – the Unreliable Narrator
5. The question of Responsibility
6. Crossword Puzzle
7. Susan Macleod – madwoman in the attic
8. [Joan – Old lady who played crosswords and lived with dogs](#)
9. Gordon Macleod
10. [Two Ways to Look at Life](#)
11. [Critique of Marriage](#)