

Vonnegut and bergeron essay sample



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Part 1:

1. What did Vonnegut base his novel Slaughterhouse Five on? Vonnegut based this novel on his experiences during World War II. When Vonnegut was 20 he entered the army, was sent to Europe, and immediately captured by the Germans. British and American bombers destroyed the city by dropping high explosives and incendiary bombs, this resulted in a firestorm that turned the city into an inferno and killed 60,000 civilians. Vonnegut and fellow POWs survived by accident because they were being housed 60 feet underground in a meat locker and slaughterhouse. His job during the weeks after were to gather up and burn the remaining of the dead bodies.

2. In what genre did Vonnegut most often write?

Vonnegut most often wrote in the fiction genre.

3. How did being a journalist influence Vonnegut's writing?

Being a journalist influenced all of Vonnegut's writing by the rules of journalism. The rules of journalism were: get the facts right, compose straightforward declarative sentences, and know the audience.

4. Describe what life was like during the 1970's for Vonnegut. Life during the 1970's was difficult for Vonnegut, his life basically fell completely apart. Once his children grew up and left home, his marriage with his wife fell apart and he left Cape Cod to move to New York, where he came depressed and suffered from writer's block. While his son also experienced a rough time as well, he suffered from bipolar disorder. Vonnegut's major theme in his novels became disintegration of families. Altogether these novels were not

successful as fiction, it did help Vonnegut work through his emotional problems.

5. Discuss the topic or theme for any two of Vonnegut's works. Be sure to include the name of the work. The theme for two of Vonnegut's novels during the 1970's was the disintegration of families. He wrote two books about this, Breakfast of Champions and also Slapstick.

Part 2:

1. How are George and Hazel Bergeron described? What sort of life do they lead? In the story George has 'way above normal intelligence', and Hazel has 'perfectly average intelligence'. They both live a completely controlled life.

2. What is the meaning of the last words of the Bergerons, "that one was a doozy"? The meaning of the words "that one was a doozy" means that they can tell that the sound is very annoying.

3. In real life, what ways do we try to make people equal? Does it work to make people equal, or just to make them alike? Why do you think we use these methods? Are they effective? In real life we try making people equal by providing the same opportunities, but not everyone takes those opportunities or succeeds, therefore not everyone is equal, they are just alike. I think we use these methods because it wouldn't be fair if not everyone had the same, equal opportunity. No, in my opinion, they are not effective. 4. Consider the characters of Hazel and George. Why isn't Hazel handicapped? Hazel is not handicapped because she has "perfectly average intelligence". 5. To what extent do television, radio, and the mass media

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generally function like George's mental handicap radio? A television, radio, and mass media is generally like George's handicap radio because all of these items are distractions from the real world.