1. Charles Dickens originally titled his novel *Recalled to Life* and later changed it to *A Tale of Two Cities*. He then used the title for the first section of the novel. It reveals at the very beginning that this is a book about life, death, and most importantly, rebirth. What point does Dickens make by using this idea of rebirth or resurrection? How does he use this motif to develop theme?

2. One theme of *A Tale of Two Cities* is love’s power of resurrection. Consider the characters Carton and Manette. How does each contribute to this theme?

3. Recall the famous opening sentence of Charles Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities. In what sense were these paradoxes (contradictions) true, and how do they prepare the reader for the action and themes of the novel?

4. The opening lines of *A Tale of Two Cities* are some of the most famous in British literature. They introduce the contradictions in the world of the novel, between positive and negative forces: “light and darkness, wisdom and foolishness, hope and despair,” and so on. Analyze whether positive or negative forces triumph at the end of the novel. Make sure you consider the fates of all the major characters in your analysis.

5. A foil is a contrasting character that helps to set off the traits of a major figure in a story. In Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*, for instance, Sydney Carton and Charles Darnay are foils, as are Madame Defarge and Miss Pross. Choose one of these pairs and discuss how their similarities help to emphasize their differences, and how the contrast between the two serves to advance the plot and bring out the author’s meaning in the novel.

 ***A Tale of Two Cities* Essay Test**

Of the six essay options listed here, three will appear on your test, and you will choose one of those three to write a well-crafted essay on. You will be able to use your strategy notes and the book, but you only have one class period to complete your essay. When grading, I will be looking for deep thinking and analysis that proves you not only read the novel, but understood it as well. Only summarizing the novel will earn you a C at most. Using specific quotes with page numbers will strengthen your essay but isn’t required. Organization, word choice and sentence fluency will also be smaller parts of your grade.

6. The death of Sydney Carton is a memorable moment in *A Tale of Two Cities.* However, it is not a real surprise because Dickens prepares the way for Carton’s action. Examine how the author leads up to Carton’s sacrifice. Analyze how Dickens uses repeated thematic images, symbols, foreshadow, and other techniques to create a sense of forward motion toward Carton’s meeting with the guillotine.