

Discussion Outline for Pippi Longstocking

Suggested Discussion Questions and Activities:

1. In this story, Pippi lives on her own. Would you like to be on your own? Explain your answer.
2. Describe Pippi's appearance. You may also draw a picture of Pippi and the other characters who appear in the story.
3. Pippi tells many stories. Which one is your favorite? Explain your answer.
4. What do you think of Pippi's behavior? How does her behavior make you feel?
5. What do you think of Pippi's behavior in school? Was she right or wrong? Explain.
6. What is so funny about the way that Pippi cleans her floors?
7. Think about having Pippi as a friend. What are the positive and negative parts of having Pippi as a friend?
8. Pippi is a rule breaker. Name one rule she breaks. Have you ever broken a rule? And if so, did you have a good reason? Is it ever okay to break a rule?
9. Pippi lives with a horse and a monkey. If you could choose any animal to live with you what would it be? Where would it sleep? What chores would you like it to do for you?
10. Pippi has her house, Villa Villekulla, all to herself. What kind of house would you live in if you could design a house made to fit your needs perfectly? What would you name your house? Describe or draw it.
11. Pippi has sacks of gold pieces in a treasure chest her father gave her. What treasure do you have? (It might not have anything to do with gold or even money.)
12. Pippi almost never does what any grown up asks her to do. Why? What does she do instead? **Are you like her in this way or are you different?** Explain.
13. Pippi had an unusual way of dealing with the bullies. If you saw a bully picking on someone, what are some things you could do to help?
14. Is this a funny or a serious book? (recall skyscraper fire, Pippi's handling of pistols, living without parents, need to go to school)
15. Why should Pippi go to school?

16. Why did the author choose a little girl to be her heroine? How would the book be different if Pippi were a boy?

17. What are the qualities that make Pippi likeable?

18. Name some of the real childhood fantasies that Pippi represents.

19. Compare the characters of Pippi and Annika. How do their girlhoods differ?

20. Discuss the conventional aspects of Tommy & Annika's childhood and the unconventional aspects of Pippi's.

21. Examine Pippi's confrontations with adults. What tactics does she use to win?

22. Some critics suggest Pippi Longstocking is about loneliness. Find examples in the text that illustrate this loneliness. Is the loneliness ever resolved?

23. Compare Pippi's outrageous antics to those of Fudge Hatcher in the Judy Blume *Fudge* series.

More thoughts on this book:

Pippi provides plenty of examples that encourage children to question the adult world, rather than accept or unthinkingly adopt it.

Pippi isn't a simplistic character so commonly encountered in today's children's literature. While she has several childlike faults, she is also thoughtful, kind, and straightforward in dealing with others; she makes mistakes but accepts the consequences; and she's generous but not indiscriminate.

Pippi Longstocking, the rambunctious and lovable character found in children's fiction, has a lesson for all age groups. In a world of conformity, she reminds us of what it is to be an individual.

Pippi is fun because she breaks with conventional ideas about how girls should behave – and also, perhaps, makes fun of adults' gender roles in the process. Like when she goes to the market in her giant hat like a millwheel, dressed in a full-length evening gown and with huge green rosettes on her shoes. She has also applied charcoal to her eyebrows and coated her mouth and nails with red paint. "I think you should look like a really fine lady when you go to the market," says Pippi. She herself is not as concerned about her appearance as many other girls and women. Pippi is definitely not an object, and

evidently not prepared to succumb to the cosmetics industry, either.

There is a sign in a shop window in the small town where she lives that reads, 'DO YOU SUFFER FROM FRECKLES?' Pippi doesn't. She isn't interested in the anti-freckle cream on offer but nevertheless goes into the shop to make her position clear. "No, I don't suffer from freckles," she declares. "But my dear child," says the startled assistant, "your whole face is covered in them." "I know," says Pippi, "but I don't suffer from them. I like them. Good morning!"