CHARACTERS
Art "Artie" Spiegelman – the narrator of the story; he interviews his father Vladek regarding his experiences during World War II and eventually at the concentration camp Auschwitz
Vladek Spiegelman – Art’s father; he is a cranky, cheap, stubborn old man
Françoise (Fran-swa) Moully-Spiegelman – Art’s wife
Anja Zylberberg-Spiegelman – Vladek’s first wife, a Holocaust survivor, the mother of Richieu and Art
Richieu (Ree-shoo) Spiegelman – Vladek and Anja’s first child
Mala – Vladek’s second wife, a Holocaust survivor; she and Vladek do not get along
Luca Greenberg – Vladek’s lover before Anja
Janina – Richieu’s Polish governess; she reluctantly helps Vladek and Anja when they escape Srodula
Orbach – a family friend of Vladek’s uncle; he frees Vladek from detention in Lublin
Tosha – Anja’s older sister who looks after the children, including Richieu; she is married to Wolfe and is the mother of Bibi
Mr. Izlecki – a former customer; he gives Vladek supplies and saves him from a round-up
Mordcaï – cousin of Vladek; he spares the family at the stadium
Persis – a big shot in the Jewish Council; he is Wolfe’s uncle and the one who arranges the Jewish children’s safety, including Richieu’s
Hasek Spiegelman – cousin of Vladek who saves Anja and Vladek but not Anja’s parents; he is the cousin of Jakov and the brother of Miloch and Pesach
Mr. Lukowski – a former Polish janitor of Vladek’s parents; he offers help to Anja and Vladek after they escape from Srodula
Mrs. Kawka – Polish woman who allows Vladek and Anja to stay in her barn
Mrs. Motonowa – Polish woman who escorts Vladek and Anja to her home in Szopience
Mr. Mandelbaum – former sweet shop owner; his nephew Abraham unwillingly tips off the Nazis about Vladek and Anja’s plan to escape with others to Hungary

SETTINGS
Rego Park, NY – Vladek’s current home in the United States
Częstochowa (Cze-cho-va) – small city in Poland where Vladek lives before marrying Anja
Sosnowiec (Sos-noo-vee-ak) – a Polish city in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie where Vladek visits his parents every holiday; Vladek moves here after he and Anja are engaged
Bielsko-Biała (Bee-sko Bee-ala) – a city in southern Poland where Vladek’s textile factory is located; the family later moves here
Lublin – a Polish town where Vladek trains for the army and where he is detained on his way home as a P.O.W.
Srodoła (Shro-doo-la) – a town in southern Poland situated 40 miles west of Kraków; this becomes the ghetto from where Vladek and Anja escape
Szopienice (Zo-pee-a-nee) – a Polish town where Vladek and Anja hide
Kraków – Polish city near the location of the concentration camp Auschwitz

WORDS TO KNOW
Bar Mitzvah – the ritual ceremony that marks the 13th birthday of a Jewish boy
Gemeinde - a German word for municipality, or in religious contexts, a parish or congregation
Gestapo – Nazi secret police
Judenrat – Jewish administrative body formed in German occupied territory of Poland
Nazi – German fascist political party ruled by Hitler from 1935-1945
Parshas truma – a yearly Jewish event; each Saturday, a section of the Torah was read - this was called a parsha; one week a year was the parshas truma
Pogrom – organized killing of a minority
Rabbi – Jewish religious leader
Roh-eh Hanoled – the ability to see into the future
Synagogue – a building of Jewish worship and study
Torah – the collective body of Jewish teaching embodied in the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud
Wehrmacht - the name of the unified armed forces of Germany from 1935 to 1945; it consisted of the Heer (army), the Kriegsmarine (navy) and the Luftwaffe (air force)
Zloty – a unit of Polish currency

LITERARY TERMS
Dialect – a particular kind of speech used by members of one specific group because of its geographical location or class.
Epigraph
Juxtaposition – the placement of two dissimilar items, people, thoughts, places, etc., next to one another to emphasize the differences or heighten the similarities.
Litotes – a conscious understatement that achieves the opposite effect of the words themselves. Example: I like money a little.
Metafiction – fiction that comments on actually being fiction
Mixed Metaphor – combining two or more metaphors in such a way that the meaning is ridiculous, impossible, or incorrect. Example: The athlete sailed down the road of life without missing a step.
Paradox – a statement that is self-contradictory on its surface, yet makes a point through the juxtaposition of the ideas and words within the paradox. Example: “Noon finally dawned for the remaining, weary soldiers” and “He that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat..."
Reading Guide Questions for Maus I

Chapter One: The Sheik
1. This is a graphic memoir. A graphic memoir tells a person’s life through text and drawings. Why does Art Spiegelman use mice instead of people to portray the characters in the story? What do the mice represent?  
2. On page 11, Spiegelman tells us that his father’s second wife Mala was a survivor too, like most of his parents’ friends. Why does Spiegelman call Mala a survivor? What does he mean?  
3. On page 12, we get our first shot of Artie’s father as a young man. What do you make of the shape Spiegelman uses for this panel?  
4. What kind of relationship does Art Spiegelman and his father, Vladek have? Use specific pictures and text to support your answer.  
5. Why is the chapter called “The Sheik”? What does this suggest about Vladek’s character?  
6. Why does Vladek choose Anja over Lucia? What do you think of his choice?  
7. Why does Vladek ask Art not to write about Lucia in his book?  
8. Artie argues that covering the incident with Lucia will make Vladek’s story “more human” (23). What is ironic about this?  
9. What does Spiegelman include in the background on p. 82 that seems to foreshadow?  
10. What incident at the end of the chapter speaks of the generation gap between Vladek and Artie?  
11. Describe Vladek’s ability to adapt to his changing situations in this chapter.

Chapter Two: The Honeymoon
1. What childhood offense of Artie’s was Vladek particularly strict about? Why do you think this is important to him?  
2. How does Vladek’s father try to keep him out of the army? Was he successful? Do you think Vladek’s father made a smart decision? Explain.  
3. What does Vladek mean on page 50, when he says, “Well at least I did something.” Do you believe that he is justified in feeling this way? Explain.  
4. What do the Nazis see as proof that Vladek has never had to work hard in his life? What technique is being used with the panel on page 51 that interrupts the story?  
5. How are the Jewish prisoners of war treated? Do they live under the same conditions as the other prisoners? Explain.  
6. How does Vladek survive the work camp? What motivated him?  
7. Why doesn’t Vladek get off the train in Sosnowiec? How does he end up in the city of Lublin? How does he eventually get to Sosnowiec?  
8. What happens to Vladek’s father while Vladek was away? How does Vladek’s father feel?  
9. On page 64, Vladek wears a pig mask. What does this mean? How is Vladek able to pose as a Pole without being found out?  
10. What incident at the end of the chapter speaks of the generation (and personality) gap between Vladek and Artie?  
11. Describe Vladek’s ability to adapt to his changing situations in this chapter.

Chapter Three: Prisoner of War
1. Why do you think this is important to him?  
2. How does Vladek’s father try to keep him out of the army? Was he successful? Do you think Vladek’s father made a smart decision? Explain.  
3. What does Vladek mean on page 50, when he says, “Well at least I did something.” Do you believe that he is justified in feeling this way? Explain.  
4. What do the Nazis see as proof that Vladek has never had to work hard in his life? What technique is being used with the panel on page 51 that interrupts the story?  
5. How are the Jewish prisoners of war treated? Do they live under the same conditions as the other prisoners? Explain.  
6. How does Vladek survive the work camp? What motivated him?  
7. Why doesn’t Vladek get off the train in Sosnowiec? How does he end up in the city of Lublin? How does he eventually get to Sosnowiec?  
8. What happens to Vladek’s father while Vladek was away? How does Vladek’s father feel?  
9. On page 64, Vladek wears a pig mask. What does this mean? How is Vladek able to pose as a Pole without being found out?  
10. What incident at the end of the chapter speaks of the generation (and personality) gap between Vladek and Artie?  
11. Describe Vladek’s ability to adapt to his changing situations in this chapter.

Chapter Four: The Noose Tightens
1. In the first panel on page 73, what purpose do the little arrows with boxes that say “wooden hanger” and “new trench coat” serve?  
2. What happens to the Jewish businesses during Vladek’s absence? How do Jewish people earn enough money to live at this time?  
3. Compare Vladek’s response to the new economic situation to those of his brother-in-law Wolfe’s.  
4. Why does Vladek lie to his family about the amount of money he makes from his under-the-table deals?  
5. Look at the uppermost panel on page 80. How does Spiegelman visually emphasize the fact that the streets have become unsafe for Jews?  
6. In another panel on page 80, Spiegelman portrays Vladek wearing a small star and standing in the middle of a giant one. What point do you think Spiegelman is trying to make with this image?  
7. How does Vladek’s friend, Ilzecki save his son during the war? How does Vladek try to save his son Richieu? What happened?  
8. Why do the Germans hang Nahum Cohn and his son? How does Vladek feel about the hangings? Why does he feel this way?  
9. What does Spiegelman include in the background on p. 82 that tells us that the Germans gave Poles incentives to expose unregistered Jews?  
10. What forces Anja’s grandparents into hiding? Who are the Jewish police? Why is Art surprised to hear about the Jewish police?  
11. Describe Vladek’s ability to adapt to his changing situations in this chapter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter Five: Mouse Holes</th>
<th>Chapter Six: Mouse Trap</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. How does Art respond to his father when Vladek calls to ask for help with fixing the drainpipe? Do you think he is justified in feeling this way?</td>
<td>1. When Artie suggest that Vladek has become so tight with money as a result of his past, Mala snorts “Fah! I went through the camps.. all our friends went through the camps. Nobody is like him!” (131). What early evidence suggests he was stingy long before the camps.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is “Prisoner on the Hell Planet”? How is this comic different from Maus? How is it similar?</td>
<td>2. On pgs. 131-133, Spiegelman shows Artie commenting on the book that he is writing – within the very book, Maus, that Artie refers to. What is the literary term for this type of narrative?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What information in the comic Prisoner on the Hell Planet is relevant to your understanding of Art’s relationship with his parents?</td>
<td>3. Why does Artie worry about the way he’s portraying his father, Vladek in the book? Should Art worry about this? Explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Explain the effect of the juxtaposition shown in the last panel on p. 105.</td>
<td>4. How does Janina, the governess react when Vladek and Anja come to her for help? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. What happens to many of the young children taken by the Germans from Srodula while they are en route to Auschwitz? What literary term could be used to describe Vladek’s comment about the children, “and they never anymore screamed.”?</td>
<td>5. At the bottom of p. 136, Vladek tells Artie that it was easier for him to pass as a non-Jewish Pole than it was for Anja. How does Spiegelman’s illustration of his parents walking in the street subtly convey this fact?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Why does Vladek build a bunker? Does this bunker help the family survive? Explain.</td>
<td>7. How are Anja and Vladek able to travel openly and without incident to Mrs. Motonawa’s house, twenty kilometers from their hiding place?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. How are Vladek and his family twice betrayed by fellow Jews in this chapter?</td>
<td>8. Do you think Mrs. Motonowa is justified in throwing out Vladek and Anja? Explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Comment on both the images (including their placement) and words in the final panel on p. 115. What is significant about Zyliberberg having been a millionaire and still being unable to escape?</td>
<td>9. Why does Vladek consider going to Hungary with Anja?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. What is a “kombinator”?</td>
<td>10. How does Vladek escape from the children who were playing on the street and screaming, “A Jew!!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. How does Spiegelman represent the quavering in Vladek’s voice when Vladek’s heart begins to bother him?</td>
<td>11. Why do the Jews speak in Yiddish in front of the Polish smugglers? Was this a good idea? Explain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Why does Anja’s nephew Lolek refuse to go to the hidden bunker?</td>
<td>12. What convinces Vladek to trust the Poles who have offered to smuggle him and Anja into Hungary?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. What are the literal “mouse holes” the title of this chapter refers to?</td>
<td>16. Vladek questions why he ever remarried after Anja’s death. Why do you think he married Mala? Do you think Vladek and Mala have a good marriage? Explain.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>