



Reader's Guide

Tales from the Teacher's Lounge
Pop Quiz Reader's Guide

Name:

Date:

You may use these notes and only these notes on the quiz below:

Robert Wilder was twenty-six when he found his true calling. Leaving a lucrative advertising career in New York, he got a job as an assistant first-grade teacher at a Santa Fe alternative school—and never looked back. Now he brings his unique perspective—as a teacher, parent, and former student—to a series of laugh-out-loud essays that show teaching at its most absurd...and most rewarding. With brutal candor he chronicles his own lively adventures in modern education, from navigating cutthroat kindergarten sign-ups to subbing for a class experiment gone wrong—and dares to tell about it.



He shares the surprising lessons he's learned in the trenches of his profession, including how to bribe a four-year-old (his own) to stop swearing in a Lutheran preschool and the best way to teach moody teenagers...manage "helicopter" parents...and cope with bullies—whether of the school-yard, Internet, or parental kind. And he offers tough love for cheaters who log on to

www.SchoolSucks.com, then puts to rest forever the question of why new teachers gain weight (hint: the free donuts don't help).

In *Tales from the Teachers' Lounge*, Robert Wilder charts life's learning curve with a warmth and humor you don't find in textbooks. By turns heartwarming, eye-opening, and uproariously funny, these pitch-perfect essays offer priceless lessons in life, family, learning, and teaching from a true lover of education.

Multiple Choice (5 points each)

1. In "Born With a Grimace," Wilder's boss describes the way he styles his long hair as akin to:
 - a. Rod Stewart on the cover of *Foot Loose and Fancy Free*
 - b. Pre-Hannah Montana Billy Ray Cyrus
 - c. One of the Golden Girls
 - d. A diseased yucca plant
 - e. None of the above
2. In "Sub-Par," Poppy Wilder's substitute teacher uses which prop to motivate his students:
 - a. Duct tape
 - b. A puppet
 - c. A mannequin stolen from Macy's
 - d. *Kangaroo Jack* videotape
 - e. All of the above
3. In "Bully Bully," who is the real bully?
 - a. Wilder himself
 - b. Sister St. Ignatius
 - c. My friend Leonard
 - d. The Grubs
 - e. All of the above
4. In "Jesus Box," how does Wilder's son London address the Pastor at his Lutheran preschool?
 - a. Pasture
 - b. Posture
 - c. Pastime
 - d. Passover
 - e. That kid needs to be disciplined

5. In “Gradufection,” what substance is spread like a “sweet Ebola virus”?

- a. Wite-Out
- b. Mucous
- c. Chocolate
- d. Slime made in chemistry class
- e. Hand me a wet wipe for the love of God

True or False (2 points)

1. Before teaching, Robert Wilder actually got paid American dollars to work in the Chrysler building.
2. In 2003-2004, the average teacher pay in New Mexico is \$38,469.
3. Wilder actually sang the blues in Central Park after meeting (scaring) Carly Simon.
4. “Crazy Eddie” Wilder (Robert’s little brother) went from being a teacher to a turtle.
5. Teachers will eat anything (we mean anything) left in the teachers’ lounge.
6. A student once got detention for putting his head inside a watermelon.
7. When Wilder gets frustrated in class, one of his students always whispers “Daddy Needs a Drink.”
8. Wilder has done the occasional “spit-take” to energize his students during a discussion of *The Grapes of Wrath*.
9. Dressing in drag is the new black in many high schools.
10. Teaching is the saddest pleasure.

Fill in the Blanks (5 points)

1. William Faulkner’s *As I Lay Dying* has a lot in common with _____.

Paint drying *The Wizard of Oz* *Survivor* Hillbillies

2. After high school, Wilder attended Wesleyan, the place some call “_____.”

Diversity University Overpriced Sexcapades Opium Den

3. When writing a college recommendation, it’s best to be _____.

Honest Cryptic Flowery Tipsy Concise Asleep

4. Teenagers are mostly concerned with _____.

Themselves Themselves Themselves Themselves

5. Teachers love to _____.

Eat Complain Eat Complain Eat Complain Eat Complain

Short Essay (6 points)

1. Recall a teacher you had in middle or high school and briefly describe his or her poor fashion choices, verbal or facial tics, repetitive speech patterns, lousy haircut, cheap car and then compose a Shakespearean sonnet about how this person will definitely go to heaven for putting up with students like you.
2. Design a cooking show for the Food Network that includes the menu from your high school cafeteria starring one of the lunch ladies as a celebrity chef. Feel free to include some sort of catch phrase like “Hairy knuckles, see?” or “I have a bad cold and we have no funding for sneeze guards.”
3. Compare and contrast (even though comparing includes contrasting) “Helicopter Parents”—parents who hover over their kids and “Toxic Parents”—moms and dads who serve alcohol to teens. Define each category and then decide a. who would win in a fight, b. who will go to hell first, and c. who will get the most plastic surgery. Make sure to cite your sources so the administration can be properly vigilant (Toxics) or wary (Helicopters).
4. Ethical question: Should administrators, college reps, future employers, and God use Facebook, myspace, and your choice of ringtone, piercings, and tattoos determine your moral and ethical worth?
5. In *Tales From The Teachers’ Lounge*, Wilder is trying to show that teachers are human, especially given the nature of their profession. Will you see them that way? Discuss.

Answer Key

MULTIPLE CHOICE SECTION:

1. c
2. b (though it could be e)
3. e (add Donald Trump or Chris Matthews if you wish)
4. a (please forgive us)
5. c & e

TRUE OR FALSE SECTION

All answers are truer than you'll ever know (and sometimes the truth doesn't set teachers free one bit, it just gets them massive college loans and summer jobs).

FILL IN THE BLANKS SECTION

All the answers here are correct but if we were scoring like those fascist SATs, we'd have to give credit to the "most correct answer," which is just a synonym for deception, trickery, and misdirection, which really has no bearing whatsoever on your future performance in college (it's true, look it up) or in life for that matter. God bless us all, every bubble, filled in or not.

SHORT ESSAY SECTION

We don't even really read these; they're too long and there are far too many of you. We just look for vocab words like "military industrial complex" and "malfeasance" and some quotes from famous-sounding people. We don't have time to verify sources so you could totally make shit up and we'd never know. Famous sounding last names like Kennedy, Lincoln, Chamberlain, and anything with a hyphen will do the trick. We will definitely take off points for references to pop culture so never talk about Paris (the drunken celeb, not the drunken city), *The Matrix*, or bands like Arcade Fire. Even if you discuss complex modeling systems using one of these references, we'll crush you. That's just the way we roll. Get used to it.