The Stranger Study Guide Questions
Part One

Chapter 1
1. What does the reference to “a soldier” tell you about the time period of the story?
2. After Meursault arranged for his mother to live in a nursing home, why did he visit her so infrequently?
3. Why was it odd that Madam Meursault desired a religious burial?
4. Does Meursault give an explanation for wanting/not wanting to see the open casket? Why would someone respond in this way? In your opinion, is this normal behavior?
5. Where is the caretaker from? What is his age?
6. Describe Meursault’s dream-like experience beginning on page 9. What is happening?
7. What is the purpose of holding a vigil? How long does it last?
8. What is Thomas Perez’s relationship with Maman?
9. How do they reach the church? How long does it take? How is the casket transported?
10. What are three of Meursault’s last thoughts of the burial?

Chapter 2
1. Who does Meursault meet the day after his mother is buried?
2. On page 21, what hint is the reader given as to where Meursault lives?
3. What does Meursault choose to do on Sunday? What does this demonstrate about his character?
4. What does Meursault mean when he says, “It occurred to me….really, nothing had changed.”?

Chapter 3
1. What is your opinion on Meursault’s compulsion to wash his hands?
2. In your opinion, offer an explanation for why Meursault takes a “flying leap” onto a truck with Emmanuel.
3. Who is Salamano? Explain his relationship with his pet. Do you think Salamano cares about its health care?
4. Who is Raymond Sintes? What is “the word around the neighborhood” regarding Raymond?
5. What prompted Raymond’s fight with “the man”?
6. What prompted Raymond to beat his girlfriend “till she bled”?
7. What does Meursault do for Raymond to have Ray say, “Now you’re a pal, Meursault.”

Chapter 4
1. What do Meursault and Marie hear coming from Raymond’s room? What is happening?
2. How do you know if Meursault is upset or calm about what just happened?
3. What happens to Salamano’s dog?
4. How does Salamano react?

Chapter 5
1. Where/who does Ray invite to spend Sunday together?
2. What ethnicity is Marie?
3. What opportunity does Meursault’s boss offer?
4. What offer does Marie propose?
5. In your opinion, is Meursault’s behavior normal regarding his job and his girlfriend? Why or why not?
6. What explanation can you offer as to why Meursault follows the woman from Celeste’s?
7. What two places does Salamano check for his missing dog?
8. During a brief discussion between Salamano and Meursault, what new information does Salamano convey about Meursault’s Maman?
9. How has Salamano’s loss brought out his humanitarianism? Give one example.

Chapter 6
1. When leaving for the beach, whom do Ray, Meursault and Marie see across the street?
2. Who is Masson? How often is he here?
3. When they first arrive at their destination, what do Marie, Meursault and Masson embark upon?
4. Who do the three men see on the beach?
5. On page 53, what is symbolic about Meursault’s statement, “The blazing sand looked red to me now.”?
6. What happens to Raymond?
7. On the second trip to the beach, where do the three men find the two Arabs?
8. Do the Arabs seem frightened by the approach? Why or why not?
9. What does Raymond consider doing to the Arabs?
10. Why don’t the Arabs react to this discussion unfolding directly in front of them?
11. On page 57, Meursault returns to the beach by himself. Camus uses symbolism when he states “There was the same dazzling red glare,” and “With every blade of light…..” In your opinion, what is being inferred?
12. When Meursault encounters the lone Arab, he is once again overcome by the sun’s heat. What event does the heat force him to recall?
13. What occurs to “shatter the harmony” of Meursault’s day?
14. Why does Meursault feel threatened and consequently pull out a gun?
15. On page 59 (last sentence), what is meant by “it was like knocking four quick times on the door of unhappiness.” Explain briefly.
The Stranger Study Guide Questions
Part Two

Chapter 1
1. What has happened to Meursault?
2. Is he taking his circumstances seriously? Give an example.
3. What question does the attorney feel compelled to ask?
4. What explanation does Meursault give regarding his “nature”?
5. How many times did Meursault fire his revolver?
6. The magistrate becomes frustrated with Meursault. What does he retrieve from his filing cabinet?
7. What’s the big question the magistrate finally asks Meursault?
8. On p. 70, Meursault says, “I thought about it for a minute and said that more than sorry I felt kind of annoyed.” Does Meursault have a conscience? Why or why not?
9. In your opinion, does Meursault feel complemented when referred to as Monsieur Antichrist?

Chapter 2
1. Briefly describe Meursault’s prison cell. Is this what he had expected?
2. Who is Meursault’s first visitor?
3. Describe Marie’s mood during the visit.
4. In a sense, what item was more difficult for Meursault to lose than his freedom?
5. On p. 79, Meursault states that having “a memory” is “an advantage.” Briefly explain.
6. The last sentences on p. 81 refer to Meursault’s mother’s funeral and to what nights in prison are like. In your opinion, is there a connection between the two?

Chapter 3
1. What is Meursault’s first impression of the jury?
2. What clues is the reader given to show that the Algerian court system is different than the U.S. Judicial System?
3. Who are the eight witnesses that will testify at Meursault’s trial?
4. A previous incident occurred between the caretaker and Meursault, which is briefly discussed during the trial. This leads to Camus’ title of the novel. What is the incident?
5. When Celeste, the fourth witness, is called to testify, how does he show support for Meursault?
6. How does the prosecutor attempt to prove that Meursault has no conscience?
7. What is the prosecutor implying when he questions Raymond? (refers to “chance” numerous times.)
8. Explain what Meursault means when he says, “it was back to my cell…sleep of the innocent.” (p. 97)

Chapter 4
1. Does Meursault feel like he has anything to say to defend himself?
2. In your opinion, does Meursault believe that his crime was premeditated?
3. On p. 100, Meursault reveals the key to his character/personality. What is this?
4. What penalty does the prosecutor ask of the jury?
5. Does Meursault have faith that his attorney will convince the jury of his innocence?
6. Imagism is used on p. 104. “left me with the impression…. Was making me dizzy.” In your opinion, what is Meursault feeling at this point?
7. Why can’t Meursault return Marie’s smile in the courtroom?
8. What is Meursault’s sentence? In your opinion, is his reaction normal?

Chapter 5
1. According to Meursault, why is witnessing an execution so important?
2. What is “the trouble with the guillotine”?
3. What is ironic about this when compared to how Meursault originally got into this predicament?
4. When Meursault’s situation finally “sinks in”, what are the two things he always thinks about?
5. What is Meursault’s pessimistic view on life and living?
6. Is Meursault a religious person? How do you know?
7. Meursault shows no respect for religion or the priest. Give one example of this.
8. What does the priest mean when he says, “your heart is blind.”?
9. In the last few paragraphs, how does Meursault finally relate to Maman?
10. Why does Meursault wish that a large crowd of spectators greet him with cries of hate at his execution?