

CASABLANCA - Pick 5 questions to answer in detail.

1. How is the film's "atmosphere" created? (Atmosphere = sets, lighting, music, costumes, accents, character types)
2. If the major motivating force in classical Hollywood cinema is *desire*, what are the desires of the major characters in this film? To what extent are these desires satisfied?
3. Rick and Lazlo can be said to represent two different types of heroism. How would you categorize each one as a hero? What qualities, if any, do they share? How do they most differ from each other? What does the comparison/contrast of Rick and Viktor tell us, about Ilsa and about them?
4. *Casablanca* has become something of a "cult" film, in part because of the personality of Humphrey Bogart. What is it about Bogart as a performer that makes him interesting?
5. In many ways Rick Blaine is a classic Warner Brothers tough guy, particularly at the beginning of the film, a guy who reveals his real self to nobody and sticks his neck out for nobody. This changes. How does Bogart allow us to see the emotions inside his character? Try to be as specific as possible.
6. *Casablanca* is in many ways a study in American heroism, and one could argue that Bogart serves as a model for what a man should be in our society. Discuss this.
7. How is Ilsa characterized in this film? Would it be fair to say that the main female character in *Casablanca* is merely an object of exchange between men? Does Ilsa ever *do* anything in the film?
8. Ilsa essentially got Victor Laszlo's blessing to seduce Rick into giving up the transit papers. Does that make her a bad wife or him a bad husband?

9. One of the film's most memorable aspects is the relationship between Rick and Renault.
What does Renault bring to the film?
10. Although the narrative is constructed on a change of heart on Rick's part, are we ever in any real doubt as to what Rick's final choice will be? What are some of the clues, from the very beginning of the film, that tell us what Rick's future behavior will be?
11. Like many films of Hollywood's golden years (not to mention today!), *Casablanca* has its share of elements that are frankly hard to believe--we are required to suspend our critical faculties temporarily in order to believe in the story. What would be some examples of this?
12. Most Hollywood love stories included a number of close-ups of the heroine (and perhaps of the hero) in soft focus and lovely lighting that audiences love. When do such shots occur in this film, and why?
13. Why is this film such a classic? Why are audiences drawn to it again and again?
14. In what ways does it capture central myths about America, about ourselves as we like to see ourselves and our place in the world? How do you feel about those myths?
15. What is your favorite love story done on film? Why is it better or worse than *Casablanca*?
16. Were there any moments from a film-making perspective that made you take notice? In other words, any particular moments of cinematography, or lighting, or framing of shots, or use of shadows, or props/sets?
17. If this movie were to be remade today, and you were able to hand-pick the director and stars, who would they be and why? (Go with the roles of Rick, Ilsa, Victor, Captain Renault, Major Strasser, Ugarte, and Sam)