

# Discussion Questions

## *Real Life* by Brandon Taylor



Source: Readinggroups.org,  
[readinggroups.org/resources/4651](https://readinggroups.org/resources/4651)

1. How does hearing about Wallace's accounts of his experiences in a predominantly white university make you feel?
2. Why does Wallace feel isolated from other people?
3. What is the 'real life' that the title of the novel refers to?
4. How has Wallace's childhood influenced how he interacts with other people?

Source: [ilovelibraries.org](https://ilovelibraries.org/booklovers/bookclub/facilitate-discussion),  
[ilovelibraries.org/booklovers/bookclub/facilitate-discussion](https://ilovelibraries.org/booklovers/bookclub/facilitate-discussion)

### Questions to consider (Fiction):

1. How did you experience the book? Were you immediately drawn into the story—or did it take a while? Did the book intrigue, amuse, disturb, alienate, irritate, or frighten you?
2. Do you find the characters convincing? Are they believable? Are they fully developed as complex human beings—or were they one-dimensional?
3. Which characters do you particularly admire or dislike? What are their primary characteristics?
4. What motivates different character's actions? Do you think those actions are justified or ethical?
5. Do any characters grow or change during the course of the novel? If so, in what way?
6. Who in the book would you like to meet? What would you ask, or say?
7. If you could insert yourself as a character in the book, what role would you play?
8. Is the plot well developed? Is it believable? Do you feel manipulated along the way, or do plot events unfold naturally, organically?
9. Is the story plot or character driven? Do events unfold quickly or is more time spent developing characters' inner lives? Does it make a difference to your enjoyment?
10. Consider the ending. Did you expect it or were you surprised? Was it manipulative or forced? Was it neatly wrapped up—maybe too neatly? Or was the story unresolved, ending on an ambiguous note?
11. Can you pick out a passage that strikes you as particularly profound or interesting?

12. Does the book remind you of your own life? An event? A person—like a friend, family member, boss, co-worker?
13. If you were to talk with the author, what would you want to know? (Many authors enjoy talking with book clubs. Contact the publisher to see if you can set up a phone or Skype chat.)
14. Have you read the author's other books? Can you discern a similarity—in theme, writing style—between them? Or are they completely different?