**PART 1  
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

Chapter 1: In your own words explain the symptoms of Ishmael Leseur’s Syndrome and its causes. What do we learn about Ishmael’s sister Prue in this chapter? Who does Ishmael blame for his syndrome?

Chapter 2: What does Ishmael feel about the story of how he got his name? What image does Ishmael use to describe his father and his keenness to tell the story of Ishmael’s naming to unsuspecting ‘victims’? Why do you think he uses this comparison? Do you think it is effective? Why/why not?

Chapter 3: Who or what does Ishmael’s father dress up as in the hospital the day Ishmael is born? Why does he do this?

Chapter 4: Who is Herman Melville and why does Ishmael describe him as the ‘real culprit’ in the curse of Ishmael Leseur?

Chapter 5: What does Barry Bagsley do that makes Ishmael describe him as a ‘mad dog mauling a shoe’?

Chapter 6: What method does Ishmael use to survive going to the same school as Barry Bagsley? How does Ishmael sum up Year Nine at St Daniel’s Boys College?

Chapter 7: Write down a list of words Ishmael uses to describe his new teacher Miss Tarango. Why do you think he says she won’t survive the term? Do you think he will be right or wrong? Explain your response.

Chapter 8: What conclusions do you think Miss Tarango might draw about Ishmael from his ‘Five Amazing Things about Me’ list?

Chapter 9: What challenge does Miss Tarango put to the class? Why should Barry Bagsley have ‘listened carefully’? What did Ishmael know about Miss Tarango after just one day?

Chapter 10: What effect does his encounter with Miss Tarango have on Barry Bagsley and his treatment of Ishmael?

Chapter 11: Why does Ishmael decide not to turn around and go home another way when he sees Barry and the others bullying the primary school boy? What happens?

**PART 2  
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

Chapter 12: Describe James Scobie. Why does Ishmael think he would be a ‘dangerous person to be around’?

Chapter 13: What two things does Ishmael say that strike you about Bill Kingsley?

Chapter 14: Why does Ishmael describe the Deputy Principal, Mr Barker, as the school’s ‘go to’ guy? How is the way Scobie responds to Barry different from Ishmael’s? What reason does Scobie give for not being afraid of Barry?

Chapter 15: What is a phobia? Which phobia does Scobie claim to have had? What does Scobie say caused his lack of fear?

Chapter 16: What do Barry, Danny and Doug do to test Scobie’s claim that he has no fear? What happens?

Chapter 17: Why doesn’t Scobie accuse Barry of putting the insects and bugs in his desk?

Chapter 18: How are things different for both Barry Bagsley and Scobie after the incident with the insects? What does Scobie speak to the assembly about? How does he win over the audience?

Chapter 19: How does Peter Chung compare to Frankie Crow? How does Scobie help  
St Daniel’s to defeat Churchill in the big Rugby match? What is written on each side of the sign Scobie holds up after the match?

Chapter 20: How does Ishmael feel about Scobie putting his name down for the Year Nine debating team? Why? What role does Scobie suggest for him in the team?

**PART 3  
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

Chapter 21: Ignatius Prindabel, Orazio Zorzotto and Bill Kingsley each have a different reason for joining the debating team. What are they?

Chapter 22: What does Razz accuse Ishmael of at the debating seminar? List the four steps of effective rebuttal.

Chapter 23: What was the first thing that Ishmael noticed about Kelly Faulkner? Ishmael says he is not in love with Kelly, so how does he try to explain why he couldn’t stop looking at her?

Chapter 24: How would you describe the boys’ first debating meeting?

Chapter 25: What was the main reason for the boys winning their debates? What was Bill Kingsley’s main weakness as a debater?

Chapter 26: What peg-person does Ishmael make in Year One? What happens when his teacher shows it to the class? How does Ishmael’s experience compare to his sister Prue’s?

Chapter 27: Why does Scobie ask Ishmael to debate? What do we learn about Scobie in this chapter? How does Scobie explain his lack of fear for bugs and spiders? What question did Ishmael want to ask Scobie?

Chapter 28: How would you describe Ishmael’s state of mind as he gets ready for his first attempt at debating? What discovery does Ishmael make when he sees the opposition team?

Chapter 29: Why does Ishmael miss most of the opposition’s arguments? Why aren’t Scobie or Razz any help to him?

Chapter 30: What reason does Ishmael give when he rebuts the view that privacy is a basic human right? Do you agree with this sentiment?

Chapter 31: What brings an end to Ishmael’s first debate? What does Ishmael compare himself to at the end of the chapter to explain how he feels?

Chapter 32: What is Ishmael told at the debriefing meeting the next day? What does Razz do?

Chapter 33: What does Scobie mean when he says that Ishmael showed the ‘true St Daniel’s spirit’ in the debate?

Chapter 34: What news do the boys hear about Scobie after the holidays? What other news does Ishmael have about their next debate?

Chapter 35: Why does Ishmael think that Bill Kingsley should be third speaker in the Secret Topic Debate? Why is Razz not so sure?

Chapter 36: After a comment from Razz, Ishmael describes the Preston girl as looking ‘mortified’. What does this word mean? How does Razz stop Bill from speaking? How does Ishmael feel about his performance on the night and the result of the debate? According to Ishmael, what was the only thing that could have made the night better?

Chapter 37: What does Ishmael find out from Scobie’s letter?

**PART 4  
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

Chapter 38: What does Miss Tarango announce at homeroom, and what effect does it have on Barry Bagsley? After Barry and the others wreck Bill’s certificate, what does Ishmael vow that he’s going to do?

Chapter 39: What does Ishmael say it feels like when Barry Bagsley taunts him about bullying Bill and he does nothing? Why isn’t Razza bothered by what Barry says about him? Why do you think Ishmael decides to go to the debating final with Razz?

Chapter 40: Why does Kelly want to thank Ishmael? What does Ishmael tell Kelly he will do the next time someone says the line ‘Call me Ishmael’ to him? What does Ishmael say that he knew when he heard Kelly Faulkner laugh?

Chapter 41: What are the two things Ishmael makes up his mind to do in this chapter?

Chapter 42: Why didn’t Ishmael think he was anything like his namesake in Moby Dick? Who does Ishmael relate to in the book and why? Why doesn’t Bill want Ishmael to tell Mr Barker about Barry’s bullying?

Chapter 43: What happens to Bill that fills Ishmael’s mind with thoughts of revenge? What does Barry tell Ishmael that he doesn’t have?

Chapter 44: At the end of this chapter what does Ishmael say he has finally worked out?

**PART 5  
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

Chapter 45: What does Ishmael plan to do at the end-of-year assembly to get his revenge? What surprises Ishmael about Mr and Mrs Bagsley? What is familiar about the look Ishmael sees on Barry’s face?

Chapter 46: What reasons does Ishmael give for not going through with his threat to expose Barry Bagsley as a bully? What does Razz do to bring the smile back to Bill’s face?

Chapter 47: According to Ishmael, how will next year be different? Chapter 48: What news does Mr Barker give Ishmael about Scobie?

Chapter 49: What is in the letter that Ignatius hands to Ishmael? How does Kelly end the letter and why does she end it this way?

Chapter 50: In what way does Ishmael say he feels different after he reads Kelly’s letter? When Ishmael asks, ‘Remind you of anyone?’ who is he referring to and how is he similar to that person?