

***Doctor Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe**

STUDY GUIDE

PROLOGUE

1. What usual subjects of tragedy will **not** be covered in this play?
2. How is the motif of the Fall introduced?
3. How is the motif of the Appetites introduced?
4. What specific flaw in the character of Faustus is mentioned?

ACT I, scene 1

1. What specific reasons does Faustus give for abandoning each of the following careers:
 - a. philosophy
 - b. medicine
 - c. law
 - d. theology
2. Irony is important throughout this play. In particular, Faustus “misuses” religious terminology. Find at least five specific examples of such misuse.
3. An additional irony is the conflict between what Faustus first says he “most desires” and the worldliness of what he actually seeks. What does Faustus say he hopes to gain from necromancy?

ACT I, scene 2

1. What perspective on the actions Faustus takes is offered in this scene?
2. How does Wagner’s conceit about his own knowledge parody Faustus’ claims?

ACT I, scene 3

1. How does Faustus’s conjuring rely upon religious references?
2. Once again, Faustus errs in reasoning. What specific warnings does Faustus receive?
3. How is the motif of the Fall further advanced in this scene?
4. As presented in this scene, what is hell?
5. Exactly what bargain does Faustus offer Lucifer?

Act I, scene 4: Discuss the several ways in which Wagner clearly demonstrates that he is Faustus’s disciple.

Act II, scene 1

1. What specific warnings does Faustus receive?
2. Explain the irony in the following line: “*Consummatum est.*”
3. How has Mephistopheles’s character changed?
4. How is the motif of the Fall further advanced in this scene?
5. As presented in this scene, what is hell?
6. Once the bargain is completed, what are Faustus’s orders and how are they satisfied?

Act II, scene 2

1. What evidence is there that Faustus regrets his bargain?
2. What diversions keep Faustus from repenting?
3. How is the motif of the Fall further advanced in this scene?
4. How is the motif of the Appetites further advanced in this scene?

Act III, scene 1

1. How has Faustus actually used the power he has gained?
2. What is ironic about the ritual of “bell, book, and candle”?

Act III, scene 2 and 3: How do these two scenes represent a convergence of plot and subplot?

Act IV, scene 1

1. How does this scene offer further evidence of the trivial uses to which Faustus has put his power?
2. What is ironic in Faustus’s admiration of Alexander?

Act IV, scene 2: In what way does this scene combine comic and tragic elements?

Act IV, scene 3: How does this scene reflect Faustus’s consciousness of his approaching fate?

Act IV, scene 4: Why is this scene here?

Act V, scene 1

1. What is Faustus’ last act of conjuring? Why does he do this?
2. What is the purpose of the appearance of the Old Man?
3. What is the purpose of the appearance of Helen?
4. How do the Old Man and Helen function as dramatic opposites?
5. How is the motif of the Fall further advanced in this scene?
6. How is the motif of the Appetites further advanced in this scene?

Act V, scene 2

1. What evidence is there that Faustus realizes the error of his ways?
2. How does the image of Christ’s blood figure in this scene?
3. What does Faustus ask of God in his last half hour?
4. Explain the significance of Faustus’s last words.

EPILOGUE: How does the epilogue echo the prologue?

THE PLAY AS A WHOLE:

1. Is Mephistopheles Faustus’s friend or his deadly enemy?
2. Why doesn’t Faustus repent?
3. What role do diversions play in *Doctor Faustus*?
4. How does magic affect the comic characters, Wagner and Robin?
5. What does the Chorus think of Faustus?
6. What is the definition of hell in this play?
7. Faustus dreams that magic will bring him limitless power. To what extent do his dream come true?
8. Compare and contrast *Doctor Faustus* to *Everyman*.