



CALIFORNIA BAPTIST UNIVERSITY  
UNIVERSITY WRITING CENTER PRESENTS

# Terraform Discussion Questions

## I. MISSION TO MARS

1. In the opening page, Prop describes himself as a unicorn. What is the significance of starting the book this way? What does it say about how he is setting up his ethos (the credibility and impression he is trying to make on his readers)? (3)
2. What does Prop mean by "terraform" and "terraforming our world today"? (4-5)
3. What does the poem, "If We Ain't Careful" have to say about the potential dark side of terraforming? (8-10)
4. What do language and culture, words and worlds, have to do with each other? And what's the deal with stories? (5-8, 12-17)
5. What does the creation narrative in Genesis have to do with terraforming? (21)
6. Discuss the chapter outline. What expectations do you have from the book? (25-28)
7. Review Terraforming Project 1. (31-32)

## II. TELL BETTER ORIGIN STORIES

1. What's the main idea in the opening story about oral history? (38-39)
2. What is the significance of storytelling? (40)
3. What's the problem with bad stories and how can they be different? (45-51)
4. What are the four things Prop says he's not going to do? (54-56)
5. What is the difference between the real and the truth? (60-65)
6. Which poem or line from a poem in the chapter speaks to you?
7. Review Terraforming Project 2. (68-69)

## III. THE TRUTH IS YELLING AT YOU

1. What is the "overview effect" and how might it change our perspective? (79-83)
2. How does Prop define "history revisionism"? (83-89)
3. What is the larger truth that Prop discovers from revising his story? (88)
4. How do moods in one area of life affect another? (93) How can truth shift our moods? (96)
5. Which poem or line from a poem in the chapter speaks to you?
6. Review Terraforming Project 3. (111-113)
7. Reflect on what Prop says in his poem, "I Hate Cats." (113-116)

#### IV. SOIL IS SACRED

1. Prop says that the soil is a gift. What other ways have people thought about nature? (121-122)
2. What is the significance of Prop's story about an "earth sandwich"? (123-126)
3. How do family history and geography become a person's soil? (126-134)
4. What does it mean that soil gets in our bones? (135-136)
5. Why might it be significant to reclaim the soil of our beliefs or ancestors? (137-143)
6. Which poem or line from a poem in the chapter speaks to you?
7. Review Terraforming Project 4. (146-150)

#### V. INSTITUTIONAL NEIGHBORLINESS

1. What are the two ways of flourishing and their different definitions of being one body? (156-157)
2. Reflect on the story of Daniel. (159-165)
3. How do empires function? (166-168)
4. Review Michael Sandel's three definitions of justice. How does it help unpack Prop's statement about Libertarianism and racism? (176-179)
5. What is "institutional neighborliness" and how many from MLK's list would you like to see? (179-183)
6. Which poem or line from a poem in the chapter speaks to you?
7. Review Terraforming Project 5. (193-194)

#### VI. REMEMBER THE QUIET

1. What is the importance of remembering the quiet? (197-201)
2. According to Prop, what is the better question to ask ourselves? (207)
3. Why is it necessary to remember the enemy? (208-209)
4. Why remember the pain and the 'rona? (209-213)
5. Which poem or line from a poem in the chapter speaks to you?
6. Take a moment to breathe and be present. (215-216)
7. Review Terraforming Project 6. (221-224)

#### VII. IMAGINE A BETTER FUTURE

1. What is the importance of dreaming and the imagination? (230-231)
2. What is the difference between "changing the math" and "changing the philosophy"? (235-236)
3. What is the purpose of binaries, and how do we go beyond them? (240-242)
4. According to Prop, what is the main difference between Michael and Prince? (247-251)
5. Which poem or line from a poem in the chapter speaks to you?
6. Reflect on Prop's summary of the book. (254-257)
7. Review Terraforming Project 7. (257-261)

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