THE GREEN MILE

Creating Characters

1. Briefly characterize the following people:

   Paul, John Coffey, Percy, Billy The Kid

2. The actors in The Green Mile used their facial expressions and body language to communicate their characters' personalities.

   a. How do you know, through facial expressions and body language that Percy is essentially a cruel little boy?

   b. How did Michael Clarke Duncan use his facial expressions and body language to tell us that, despite his size, John is a scared, sensitive man?

   c. How did Michael Jeter use his facial expressions and body language to tell us that Del is a playful and frightened man?

Dialect & Setting

1a. As you listen to the characters speak, what distinctions do you notice in their pronunciations? Note the pace of their speech, which syllables they hold longer, and their pronunciation.

   b. How does this help you believe they are in Louisiana?

2. Paul and John speak very differently. How would you describe the differences in the way they speak? What do these differences tell us about their characters' personalities? Do they simply suggest different levels of education? Or, do they also reflect a difference in class and social position? Explain.

Stereotypes & Gender Roles

1. In The Green Mile, we see a man's story, where women are mostly victims or helpers, and men are often predators, or at least the active characters.

   a. Can you describe moments when women are victims?

   b. Can you describe moments when men are predators?

2. Can The Green Mile be accused of perpetuating stereotypes, or did the story have to be told this way in order to accurately reflect crime and prison in the 1930s?
3. It is unusual to see men cry, especially murderers and prison guards, but we see several of them cry in *The Green Mile*. How does seeing so many "tough guys" cry affect the male stereotype we often see in prison movies?

**Literary Devices**

1a. Define *allusion*.

b. What are some allusions that are seen in this movie?

2. When Del walks *The Green Mile*, John says of him, "He da lucky one." When Bitterbuck and Del are asked if they have any last words, they say, "I'm sorry for what I done." When John Coffey is asked the same question, he says, "I'm sorry for what I am."

What is it that John Coffey was regretting? The fact that he has been convicted of murder? His unavoidable ability to witness terrible things? His ability to "take it back?" His being able to feel others' pain and thoughts? Explain.

3. How is it significant that the lines to which John remembers from the ‘flicker show’ are ‘I’m in heaven’?

**Camera Techniques & Music**

1. How are transitions used when we are first introduced to Mr. Jingles and when we are first introduced to ‘Wild Bill’? What effect is the director trying to get across?

2a. Shot selection can also help us feel the mood of the scene. Examine Arlen Bitterbuck’s execution. Look at where the camera is focused, the use of music, the ‘speed’ of the scene, etc.

b. Examine the camera technique used when they are executing Del- how does it differ from Arlen Bitterbuck’s execution? Why and how does it show parallels to John Coffey. What is the director trying to get across to the audience?

3. How does the use of music during the scenes with Mr. Jingles communicate humour? Why is it surprising when Percy crushes him?

4. List one other instance where you see effective use of music (or not using music), and explain why it is effective.