

Name _____ Date _____

British Literature

Response to "I Want a Wife"

Comprehension

1. In one sentence, define what Brady means by *wife*. Does this ideal wife actually exist? Explain.
2. List some of the specific duties of the wife Brady describes. Into what five general categories does Brady arrange these duties?
3. What complaints does Brady apparently have about the life she actually leads? To what does she seem to attribute her problems?
4. Under what circumstances does Brady say she would consider leaving her wife? What would happen to the children if she left?

Purpose and Audience

1. This essay was first published in *Ms. Magazine*, in 1972. In what sense is it appropriate for the audience of this feminist publication? Where else can you imagine it appearing?
2. Does this essay have an explicitly stated thesis? If so, where is it? If the thesis is implied, paraphrase it.
3. Do you think Brady *really* wants the kind of wife she describes? Explain.

Style and Structure

1. Throughout the essay, Brady repeats the words "I want a wife." What is the effect of this repetition?
2. The first and last paragraphs of this essay are quite brief. Does this weaken the essay? Why or why not?
3. In enumerating a wife's duties, Brady frequently uses the verb *arrange*. What other verbs does she use repeatedly? How do these verbs help her make her point?
4. Brady never uses personal pronouns *he* or *she*. To refer to the wife she defines. Why not?

5. Comment on Brady's use of phrases like *of course* (2, 3, and 7), *needless to say* (3), *after all* (7), *by chance* (8), and *naturally* (8). What do these expressions contribute to the sentence in which they appear? To the essay as a whole?

Self guided vocabulary study

- nurturant
- monogamy
- replenished
- adherence