

Moby Dick

Herman Melville

Why does Ishmael describe going to sea as an alternative to violence or despair?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	Going to sea as self-treatment
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Chapter I · Loomings
START	Call me Ishmael.
END	I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can.
PASSAGE ID	sec-md-01

THE MOVE

Infer character from the metaphor used to describe a recurring need

WHY THIS PASSAGE

Ishmael describes going to sea as a practical response to moods that might otherwise turn toward despair or aggression. The metaphor of the sea as treatment reveals both self-awareness and the severity of the condition he is managing.

MARK

Underline the signs Ishmael gives that his mood is becoming dangerous or intolerable. Circle the moment he identifies going to sea as the remedy. Star the most extreme image of what he is avoiding.

NOTICE

- What symptoms tell Ishmael it is time to leave ordinary life?
- Why is going to sea described as necessity rather than recreation?
- What does the chosen remedy reveal about the kind of person Ishmael believes himself to be?

THINK

Answer provisionally: Why does Ishmael describe going to sea as an alternative to violence or despair? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: Why does Ishmael describe going to sea as an alternative to violence or despair? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	Ishmael treats sea-going as a preventive response to moods that might otherwise become violence, despair, or self-destruction. The recurring need reveals self-awareness about a dangerous inner pressure he manages through movement.
EVIDENCE	Use the symptoms he names—coffins, funerals, knocking hats off, or violence—and the decision to go to sea as remedy.
WATCH FOR	Do not romanticize the voyage as adventure only. The opening frames it as self-treatment.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

STUDENT PAGE · SAME PASSAGE, SAME THINKING

Moby Dick

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Why does Ishmael describe going to sea as an alternative to violence or despair?

START ANCHOR

Call me Ishmael.

END ANCHOR

I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can.

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK - Underline the signs Ishmael gives that his mood is becoming dangerous or intolerable. Circle the moment he identifies going to sea as the remedy. Star the most extreme image of what he is avoiding.
2. NOTICE - What symptoms tell Ishmael it is time to leave ordinary life? Why is going to sea described as necessity rather than recreation? What does the chosen remedy reveal about the kind of person Ishmael believes himself to be?
3. THINK - Answer provisionally: Why does Ishmael describe going to sea as an alternative to violence or despair?
4. WRITE - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.