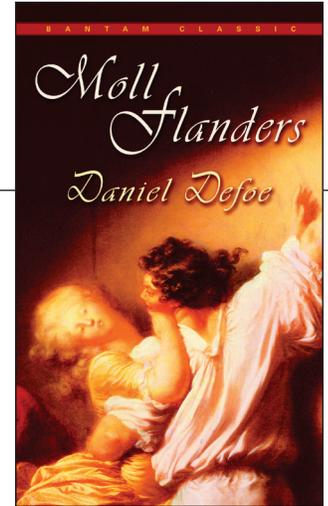




Moll Flanders

by Daniel Defoe



Bantam Classics | MM | 978-0-553-21328-7 | 320pp. | \$4.95/\$6.95 Can.

Also available as an e-Book, hardcover, and a trade paperback.

Reading Level: 10.0

discussion and writing

1. Why did Defoe choose a woman to be his main character? Do you think she is a believable character? Is Defoe commenting on the female gender in this novel, or humankind in general?
2. Defoe seemingly contradicts himself when speaking of the Church. How is the Church represented in this novel? Consider Moll's early life as a warden of the Church through to her redemption.
3. Study the many men that pass through Moll's life. Are any of them good men? Do any of them respect Moll more than others? Do their social positions and wealth effect the way they view Moll and women in general?
4. Modern day critics have debated over Defoe's exact intent. Some argue *Moll Flanders* is a picturesque novel, others say a fictionalized Puritan spiritual work, still others claim it is a bourgeois romance. And other critics liken this novel to a work of irony much like Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. Which analysis makes the most sense?
5. Some critics argue that Moll's wit and independence prove Defoe's respect for women while other critics argue Moll's sinfulness and self-acknowledged depravity show Defoe's anti-women's rights view. Which do you agree with?
6. Consider the men Moll steals from, both husbands and victims. Is this a comment on class or gender?
7. After reading of Moll's spiritual reawakening, do you feel Defoe is a supporter or criticizer of religion? Is he a supporter of any divine providence?
8. Compare and contrast Moll's marriages before her life of crime and after. What are Defoe's views on marriage? If you were to consider this a work of irony, what exactly is Defoe criticizing? Is his irony even consistent throughout the novel?