

“The Secret Life of Walter Mitty” - Possible Answers for Discussion
(*Possibilities*, pages 17-18)

1. What is Walter Mitty’s real life like?
Walter Mitty’s life is boring, sedate, conventional.
2. Where does Mr. Mitty’s “secret life” take him? What does he become?
Mr. Mitty’s secret life takes him into a fantasy world that is more exciting to him than his real life.
He becomes: a Navy pilot, a famous surgeon, a man on trial for murder, a man facing a firing squad.
3. Describe Mrs. Mitty according to the information given in the story.
Mrs. Mitty is domineering; she treats her husband like a child and she tells him what to do.
4. Why do you think Thurber describes Walter Mitty as “undefeated and inscrutable to the last.” Do you agree?
Evaluate students’ interpretations based on the strength of their support of their argument.
5. What advice do you think Walter Mitty would give a high school student regarding career planning?
Answers will vary.
6. Before we can aspire to a particular occupation, we must be able to visualize ourselves in that role. Using James Thurber’s example, choose a career that is of interest to you and write dialogue that describes what one minute on the job might be like.
Responses will vary. Evaluate each based on the amount of thought and creativity the student put into creating the dialogue.
7. Now, complete the activity, “Envisioning Your Future” on page 14 of *Career Choices*, using your dialogue as a prompt.
Responses will vary. Evaluate each based on the amount of thought the student put into creating the dialogue.
8. Why do you suppose Mr. Mitty created an exciting secret life? What must he do in order to make his fantasy life real?
Mr. Mitty can escape into a fantasy world quickly and easily, because it only requires one piece of the Vision + Energy = Success formula (vision = his daydreams). To successfully realize his visions, he has to apply energy -- plan, set goals, make sacrifices, and work hard. Becoming a pilot or a doctor requires years of study and special training.

9. What four roles did Walter Mitty create for himself that afternoon? Choose one of these four roles and imagine that Walter is fifteen years old. Complete a chart for him like the one found on page 13 of *Career Choices*.

A bomber pilot

A famous surgeon

A man accused of murder

A man facing a firing squad

Evaluate the chart based on how thorough it is and how much imagination the student used to create it.