**1.**What factors account for Orgon’s devotion to Tartuffe?

**2.**What is gained by having Tartuffe appear for the first time in the third act?

**3.**Why do Orgon’s comments on religion create such a sense of absurdity?

**4.**How is Dorine indispensable to the plot of the play? How would the play be affected if her part were omitted?

**Study Questions and Essay Topics**

* Who are famous Tartuffes of today--that is, people who pretend to be upright in order to get money, property, or power?
* Name several genuinely pious, upright people in recent years who gained worldwide recognition because of their goodness.
* It appears that Orgon is not a good judge of character, for he accepts as gospel everything that Tartuffe says. Do you believe there are many people like Orgon who vote in elections?
* Who is the most sensible person in the play?
* In what ways does the play resemble a modern situation comedy?
* Molière exposes hypocrisy through comedy and satire. Others condemn hypocrisy and other reprehensible behavior through serious modes of expression, such as sermons or didactic essays. Which approach do believe is more effective?
* Do you believe Molière ridicules religion in the play? Or does he ridicule people who practice religion the wrong way?
	+ Ask your students to discuss the central themes of the play, which include:  familial discord and generational conflicts; thwarted young love; hypocrisy and deception; appearance vs. reality; and the all-consuming and potentially destructive power of extremism in its many forms (e.g., obsession, zealotry or fanaticism).  Have them select moments from the play in which these themes are dramatically presented.
	+ Ask your students if any of these themes seem more important to them than others.  Urge them to explain their responses.  Can they identify any other themes?
	+ Discuss other plays or works of literature your students have read or studied with similar themes.
	+ Molière wrote *Tartuffe* in the comic mode, and although he entertained and charmed both royal and public audiences, not everyone found the play to be funny—in fact, the original version of the play was condemned by the court clergy, censored, and suppressed.  Ask your students to consider why some audience members might have considered *Tartuffe* unfunny, offensive, and/or worthy of condemnation.
	+ Have your students put on critical reading glasses to consider *Tartuffe* as 1) a political parable, and/or 2) a critique of religious fanaticism.
* **Study Questions - *Tartuffe***
* 1. Why does Tartuffe appear on stage late?  Is he what you expect?
2. Name some of the stock comic character types Moliere uses here.
3. Who is the paramount "Voice of Reason"?  Which other characters seem to contend for that role?
4. Look at the uses of verbal and dramatic irony. Pick out several places each is found.
5. Name two themes for the play; how does Moliere develop each?
6. In which scenes are stage directions most important?
7. Where do you see satire overwhelming "fun" comedy?
8. Orgon's weaknesses are easy to see; what are his positive traits?
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What would be a more likely outcome today?