

Seinlanguage Study Guide

Seinlanguage by Jerry Seinfeld

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Plot Summary

Seinlanguage is a book of observations exploring the mundane routines of everyday life through the humorous eyes of Jerry Seinfeld. The book covers everything from dating to traveling to friendship. Seinfeld includes such things as the tension that often occurs on a first date to the comfortable rapport between his parents, married for many years. This book is entertaining, written much like Seinfeld's standup comedy, and allows the reader to visualize Seinfeld delivering the jokes in person. It is a book all of Seinfeld's fans are sure to enjoy.

Dating is a difficult situation that Seinfeld likens to a job interview. A couple must move into a relationship while learning everything about each other, rather like owning a new car without the benefit of an owner's manual. Eventually the relationship ends and the couple is left with the pain of hurt feelings. Seinfeld thinks this could be avoided with cards, such as those from a children's game, which would allow a person out of a relationship for free. Personal maintenance is another aspect of human nature Seinfeld finds amusing. The differences between the way a woman takes care of herself versus how a man does are numerous. Seinfeld thinks that women have a great way of shopping for clothes that men do not share.

Seinfeld next focuses on friendship, discussing how men have relationships contingent on the next pretty girl that comes their way. Seinfeld also discusses gift-giving, friends he does not want, and the awkwardness of having friends with new babies. In "Shut Up and Drive," Seinfeld shares his observations on travel, including car travel, the subway, and airplanes. Seinfeld speaks directly to airline attendants in the end of the chapter, begging them to please stop waking passengers up in order to serve them food.

In "Job Security," Seinfeld admits he has never held a proper job himself, but explores his observations of various occupations. Seinfeld seems to like law enforcement best, thinking how cool it would be to have the authority to tell people when they have done something wrong. Being a clown is at the bottom of Seinfeld's list and unemployment is the most difficult job, according to Seinfeld's observations. In "The Thing is the Thing," Seinfeld explores people's need to own stuff. Seinfeld talks about money, about theft, and about the media, particularly television. Seinfeld finds television to be most entertaining, although he does not like shows that are "to be continued" and public service announcements.

"Out and Back" is a chapter in which Seinfeld explores things he does outside of his home and things he does inside. Seinfeld talks about trips to the movie theater, sporting events, and the opera in the first half of the chapter, while the second half centers on his personal habits inside his apartment, such as his compulsion to be neat, but his dislike of cleaning. In the final chapter, "The Ride of Your Life," Seinfeld explores life in general, beginning in childhood, through the influence of parents, to the final steps in a person's life. Seinfeld sums up neatly, describing death as a person's need to move often and search for boxes, the final box being a person's coffin.



Chapter 1, Freeway of Love

Chapter 1, Freeway of Love Summary and Analysis

Seinlanguage is a book of observations exploring the mundane routines of everyday life through the humorous eyes of Jerry Seinfeld. The book covers everything from dating to traveling to friendship. Seinfeld includes such things as the tension that often occurs on a first date to the comfortable rapport between his parents, married for many years. This book is entertaining, written much like Seinfeld's standup comedy, and allows the reader to visualize Seinfeld delivering the jokes in person. It is a book all of Seinfeld's fans are sure to enjoy.

Dating. Seinfeld believes that dating is like a job interview except that at the end of a date you risk the chance of winding up naked. Seinfeld suggests that, perhaps before a date, two people should meet in a room similar to a prison visitation room with a glass partition between the parties. Dating is being evaluated, with every action questioned in the light of the possibility of spending a lifetime with that behavior. Seinfeld also finds women with breathy voices very sexy, suggesting that even a plane crash could not keep him from being turned on by such a voice. Seinfeld believes women need to like the job the guy they are dating has, but men do not. If a woman is beautiful, a man can date her no matter her job. Seinfeld thinks that dating over dinner is a stupid thing to do. How can a person control their eating habits so as to not embarrass themselves in front of someone they are attempting to impress?

Seinfeld wonders what would happen if people on dates simply say what is on their minds. Seinfeld thinks blind dates should only last a few seconds. However, Seinfeld figures modern dating is better than dating in the past, when virgins were sacrificed in volcanoes. Seinfeld also thinks that fix-up dates are the worst because when you meet the date your friends have fixed you up with, you wonder if this is really what they think of you. Ventriloquist dummies seem to have very active social lives and Seinfeld finds this strange. Seinfeld has also thought how funny the word "nightcap" is, picturing an actual hat that he is supposed to give his date. Seinfeld also believes the state of your hair after you wake in a strange home is a reflection of how you really feel about being there: panicked. Seinfeld also finds ending a date with someone you never want to see again awkward because there seems to be no polite way of saying goodbye.

The Sex. Seinfeld believes there should be a sexual rule-book to help when conflict arises between a man and a woman in their sexual relationship. Seinfeld also believes men are like firemen when it comes to sex, always ready in a matter of minutes. Women, however, are like fire. The conditions have to be right for sex to occur. Seinfeld also observes that men often act like sperm, always swimming in circles and bumping into things. Seinfeld is still self-conscious when buying condoms, wishing there was a secret signal a man could give a druggist when he wants to buy them, allowing him to avoid embarrassment. Seinfeld also believes that fashion works well on men because



every year, a woman covers something new and reveals something new. Seinfeld also wonders about talking during sex, not sure if it spices up the sex or the conversation.

The Relationship. Seinfeld believes beginning a relationship is like driving a car without an owner's manual. Seinfeld also thinks that men are afraid of commitment because they wonder if there might be something better right around the bend. For Seinfeld, the best part of a relationship is when he is sick and his girlfriend tries to make him feel better. Seinfeld also believes that weddings are all about the woman, not the man. Seinfeld compares marriage to a form of government. When a person is single, they are the one in charge. However, in marriage the government is suddenly a democracy with committees and meeting. Divorce is like being impeached when the person was not even the President.

The End. There is no easy way to end a relationship. Adultery is one. Becoming friends afterward, however, is impossible. Seinfeld thinks that when a person begins a relationship, they should have a "get out of relationship free" card to prevent a messy break. Unless the other person has an 'Eight More Months of Guilt, Torture, and Pain' card to use against the other person's "get out of relationship free" card.

In this chapter, Seinfeld reveals many opinions on what being a single person and dating, touching on the theme of socializing. To illustrate this theme, Seinfeld draws largely on his own experiences, using his own perspective to create funny anecdotes to entertain his reader. Seinfeld touches on his own dating past, his own relationship experiences, and creates a chapter that is both funny and insightful. Seinfeld's point of view is that of the single man trying to find a strong relationship in the modern world of dating. The tone is full of humor as well as sarcasm and wit. Nothing is sacred in this chapter, with Seinfeld examining everything from the first date, to sex, to relationships and break-ups. Seinfeld finds dating to be like a job interview, often stressful and unpleasant. Seinfeld finds sex awkward at times, though he is honest about a man's ability to be attracted to almost any naked part of a woman's body. Relationships are another point about which Seinfeld seems to be uncomfortable, describing it as a sort of dictatorship in which he has no control. Finally, Seinfeld seems to think that breaking up is painful and should be made easier by the possession of cards that one might find in a children's game.



Chapter 2, Personal Maintenance

Chapter 2, Personal Maintenance Summary and Analysis

The Upkeep. Seinfeld finds it amazing how a woman can wax her legs but still be afraid of spiders while men are more interested in transplanting their hair rather than removing it. There are lots of cosmetic surgeries available to people today, including liposuction and rhinoplasty. Seinfeld finds the name rhinoplasty a misnomer, an insult to the patient who wants a large nose fixed. Seinfeld has never had plastic surgery, though he has given urine samples quite often, always concerned with the needed amount. Seinfeld also finds he is competitive with physical tests, wanting to prove he can do better than anyone else. Medical science continues to make so many advances, that Seinfeld predicts one day there will be commercials in which people will show how they saved themselves from a heart attack. Seinfeld cannot find what is so appealing about smoking cigarettes. Seinfeld thinks it might be the fire. Seinfeld thinks exercise is funny because everyone works out hard to get in shape, but they have nothing to get in shape for. Seinfeld also does not understand why people are so careful to lock up their dirty towels and workout clothes at the gym. Who would want to steal smelly clothes, anyway? Seinfeld is also curious about the purpose of body odor. Seinfeld thinks body odor should smell good to help people of the opposite sex become attracted to one another.

The Outfits. Seinfeld hates clothes and he especially hates shopping for them and washing them. Seinfeld also does not believe dry cleaning actually exists, imagining that dry cleaners do nothing but return to you the same outfit in the same shape as when you brought it in. Seinfeld also does not understand how rain can ruin a leather jacket when the cow it came from spent most of its life outdoors. Seinfeld believes the suit is the uniform of all men. Even pajamas look like suits. When a man dies, he is often buried in a suit. Men are bad at buying clothes, but women seem to have a special way of doing things. Women hold the clothes up to their bodies to see how they might look, but a man will never do this. Women have a special way with perfume, too, though Seinfeld does not understand why women bother. Seinfeld does not understand soap-on-a-rope or deodorants with cologne in them either. When it comes to being naked, Seinfeld thinks people are uncomfortable because they have no clothing to fuss over and that all people should wear a belt when they are naked to take care of this problem.

This chapter discusses Seinfeld's observations about the way people take care of themselves, including their habits of exercising, bathing, and dressing. Seinfeld again draws on his own experiences, using his perspective to explore and find humor in some of the most mundane practices of everyday life. This chapter touches on the theme of socializing again in a more subtle way, discussing the idea of body odor as a repellent to dating - Seinfeld thinks it ought to smell better in order to attract a man to a woman. Seinfeld also discusses such things as working out in a gym, buying clothes, and the



perfume women wear. Seinfeld finds all these things amusing for various reasons and his purpose in sharing them with his readers is one of sharing this amusement with others. The tone once again is one of humor mixed with some sarcasm, especially when Seinfeld discusses plastic surgery.



Chapter 3, Paldom

Chapter 3, Paldom Summary and Analysis

The Male Code. Male friendship appears to be conditional on one of the men meeting a woman. When a woman comes into the picture, all bets are off. A man can be paralyzed by a woman and advertisers often use this knowledge in order to sell their wares.

Seinfeld, a single man, is often perceived as gay by his friends because he is thin and neat. Seinfeld also thinks men are homophobes because they are suggestible and are afraid someone, someday, will be able to talk them in to a gay relationship.

Getting the Message. Seinfeld believes there are people in your life who are your friends whether you like them or not. Seinfeld likes to pretend he is a talk show host when talking to one of these friends in order to end conversations that are uncomfortable. Seinfeld hates when he says the wrong thing to people and wishes he could have a second chance in certain situations, as with filming a movie. Seinfeld also likes answering machines and is sometimes disappointed when the person he is calling answers the phone. Seinfeld also wishes he could be an answering machine when he runs into someone he does not want to talk to on the street, so he can take a message and move on. Seinfeld also believes that people care more about their answering machines because they are constantly having them fixed. Seinfeld also believes the answering machine, cell phone, and other phone related devices have been invented because people basically have nothing to say. Seinfeld says the downside to a message on the answering machine is that someone usually wants something from you. Humans are the only animals that do favors for each other. Seinfeld says it is hard to do favors for people, though, because no one truly appreciates the favor.

The Gift of Friendship. Seinfeld believes there is a large industry of bad gifts, including the paper weight which says, 'I put no effort in this gift.' Also bad gifts in Seinfeld's opinion are the shower radio and the gift certificate. Seinfeld's friend just had a baby and he finds himself forced to be as excited as the new parents even though the baby is basically unattractive and boring.

In this chapter, Seinfeld explores the world of friendship, again illuminating the theme of socializing with a focus on Seinfeld's friends, mostly the male friends. Seinfeld admits that a man will drop his best friend when a pretty woman comes along. However, there are also friends you cannot get rid of and at times Seinfeld feels as though he would like to be an answering machine so he does not have to talk to these people. Seinfeld also finds that friends often ask for favors, but he does not think most people appreciate the sacrifice of a favor completed. Finally, Seinfeld believes most gifts given between friends are bad gifts and that visiting a friend with a new baby is simply boring. This chapter is full of humor and wit as Seinfeld makes observations about friendships.



Chapter 4, Shut Up and Drive

Chapter 4, Shut Up and Drive Summary and Analysis

On the Ground. Seinfeld finds compact car only parking spots discriminatory and hates it when a car follows him thinking he is about to free a parking spot for them. People in New York will kill each other over a parking spot because there are more cars than there are spots to park. Handicap spots are like a mirage in the desert, a good place to park but not one that a person can use. Seinfeld finds driving schools amusing since they remove tickets from your license, but wonders what the incentive is for the instructor not to speed since he goes to the class every day. Seinfeld finds the sticker on an ambulance windshield amusing because it is written backwards so a driver can read it in his mirror, but is dangerous because a person might get in an accident attempting to read it. Limos also confuse him because the windows are tinted. Seinfeld figures if a person is in a limo, they want to be seen. However, Seinfeld has never been incredibly impressed with limos. Seinfeld feels sorry for the token taker in the subway and finds the ride on the subway to Coney Island scarier than anything they can offer at Coney Island.

Look, Up in the Air. Seinfeld is not afraid of flying, though he finds it unnatural for people to fly. Seinfeld also thinks the stores in an airport are terribly overpriced. The people who get to ride in the carts at the airport appear to be royalty to Seinfeld because people get out of their way when they are coming down the hallway. Seinfeld sat on a plane once and wondered if there are keys to the plane and if that why planes take off so late sometimes, because someone lost the keys. Seinfeld finds that bathrooms on a plane resemble a small apartment and is amused by the signs that encourage passengers to clean up after themselves. Everything on a plane is small, from the food to the seats, the delays and the little man at the terminal who tells passengers how to make a connecting flight. Flying does not make Seinfeld as nervous as the ride to the airport, since if he were to miss his flight there would not be an alternative. Finally, Seinfeld asks all flight attendants to get their priorities straight and never wake a passenger to serve them dinner.

This chapter is about traveling. Seinfeld finds traveling stressful and, at times, amusing. Recording his personal observations, the tone is humorous and somewhat sarcastic, with a bitter edge at times. Seinfeld's point of view is that of the person flying or the person attempting to find a parking spot in New York. Seinfeld's purpose is to observe these mundane activities in people's lives and share his opinions with his readers, to amuse them. The chapter, like the rest of the book, is entertaining and fun to read.



Chapter 5, Job Security

Chapter 5, Job Security Summary and Analysis

Office Space. Seinfeld has never had an actual job, but he thinks that it would be uncomfortable having to say hello to the same people over and over in an office situation. Seinfeld thinks that workers should come up with a code of some sort so they do not have to think of different replies each time they meet a person. Seinfeld likes work and finds that this makes people nervous, so he does not talk about it often.

Lawmen. Seinfeld thinks that lawyers are the only people who actually know all the rules of the country and that the funniest part of their job is getting to say 'Objection.' Seinfeld thinks he might like a job in law enforcement because it seems fun to tell people they have done something wrong. People like to catch other people doing something wrong. Seinfeld also thinks it is strange cops are still required to give the Miranda rights since everyone knows them from watching television. Seinfeld also thinks the chalk outline guy has the best job in law enforcement.

First Aid. People like to recommend a doctor to others. Seinfeld finds this amazing, especially when they say to mention their names, as though this guarantees getting the real medicine. Seinfeld hates the waiting room in a doctor's office and finds forms have gotten longer and more complicated over the years. Seinfeld also wonders why the pharmacist is always standing so high above everyone else when his job is essentially a very simple one. Seinfeld also wonders why psychiatrists cannot tell time, assuming every hour only has fifty minutes in it. Psychics also worry Seinfeld who thinks they should be licensed.

Entertainers. Seinfeld thinks it must be awful to be a clown and to be called a clown all the time. Talk show hosts never seem to know how much time they have left. Magicians seem to think their audiences are dumb and they use this idea to construct their shows. Las Vegas is entertaining to Seinfeld because someone is constantly explaining everything to you. Unemployment seems to be the toughest job, in Seinfeld's opinion. Seinfeld has a friend who is unemployed and he works harder at keeping his unemployment benefits than he did at his job.

This chapter is about the work place and the different careers available. Seinfeld admits he has never worked, so his perspective this time is more of an outsider than from personal experience. However, the tone continues to be amused and somewhat sarcastic, as Seinfeld explores the different types of jobs out there. Seinfeld likes the idea of being a law enforcement agent, a cop, so that he can tell people that they have done something wrong. First Aid brings Seinfeld to the subject of doctors and the endless forms they always have people filling out, and entertainers, such as himself, who have their own odd jobs. Finally, Seinfeld comments on unemployment, finding it the hardest job of all. Seinfeld's purpose in this chapter, along with amusing his readers, is to explore the different types of jobs available and what he likes or dislikes about

them, as well as commenting on everything job-related, from office socializing to unemployment.



Chapter 6, The Thing is the Thing

Chapter 6, The Thing is the Thing Summary and Analysis

My Money's Not Working. Seinfeld is not good at investing money and has decided that rather than letting his money work for him, he will work for his money. Seinfeld hates when he goes shopping and the clerk calls to verify his credit card, as though he is doing something wrong by buying what he has chosen. Seinfeld also notices that the difference between a man's wallet and woman's is that women carry photos of every person they have ever met. Seinfeld thinks about taxes and is sure that doing the taxes is worse than having to pay them. Seinfeld was audited once and thinks the IRS should do something to liven up the process, like putting your receipts in a Lucite sweepstakes drum and make the person feel as if they have won something.

The Criminal Life. Seinfeld thinks about jail a lot even though he has never been there. Seinfeld figures they show it on television so often that a person cannot help but think about it. Seinfeld's apartment was robbed, but he did not call the police because he does not believe they can do anything. It's not like a superhero can come and help. Seinfeld is a big fan of Superman and George Reeves is his favorite Superman. Seinfeld thinks George Reeves was a lot like Superman, that he was stuck with the role. Seinfeld has a lot of questions about Superman, but he figures it is best not to question something if you want to enjoy it. Seinfeld wonders if the security guards in the museum can really stop someone from stealing a painting. Seinfeld also thinks that if someone wants your stuff, he is going to take it, but is amused by the way people attempt to disguise their stuff to keep thieves from taking it.

Media Mezzo. Seinfeld believes that the worst thing about television is that the people on the TV are always doing something better than he is. Seinfeld hates "to be continued" shows on TV too, because you have to wait for a good ending. Comedians cannot do that because then the joke would not make sense. Seinfeld believes TV has power over him as well, which explains why he bought a set of Ginsu knives. Seinfeld also does not understand why people cook on TV if you cannot eat it, smell it, or taste it. Seinfeld also hates the public service commercials that attempt to get you to be an organ donor. Seinfeld talks about the invention of the helmet, suggesting that this proves humans are stupid because instead of not doing activities that require a helmet, we invented the helmet. Seinfeld also notices that men like to channel surf where women like to stop and check out a program before moving on. Seinfeld thinks this comes from ancient times when kings would flip through storytellers without listening to their entire story. Magazines are another medium Seinfeld likes. Magazines need to fill space so sometimes there are stupid stories in them, stories Seinfeld likes to read. Newspapers are bad, especially Sunday papers because you feel compelled to read the whole thing by the end of the day. Seinfeld dislikes sweepstakes that come in the mail. Just once, Seinfeld would like for one of these sweepstakes to be honest and tell a



person they have no chance of winning. Seinfeld also thinks that fear of success is proof that society is running out of addictions to blame poor behavior on. Finally, Seinfeld does not understand why people who fail at committing suicide do not try again. Seinfeld figures if a person is going to set a goal for themselves, they should try harder to reach it.

This chapter is about the things people need in order to have a good life. Seinfeld makes many observations on the types of objects that are important to people and the reasons why this might be. One of his observations is about money, another on the need of other people to take away your stuff, and another on television. Seinfeld finds television a very rewarding thing to have and enjoys watching it, though he hates public service announcement ads. The tone of this chapter continues to be humorous and sarcastic. Seinfeld's purpose is to examine the need of people to own things and the things most people hold most precious in their lives. Seinfeld approaches this subject through the perspective of a person who holds things as valuable as other people in society. There is some irony in this chapter when Seinfeld talks about people attempting to steal his stuff, and the invention of the helmet.



Chapter 7, Out and Back

Chapter 7, Out and Back Summary and Analysis

Dining Out. Seinfeld thinks it is odd that the check comes at the end of the meal when a person is no longer hungry and no longer feels carefree about the amount of money he is spending. Seinfeld remarks on how everyone wants to know what everyone else eats. Seinfeld admits that he will eat anything put in front of him, including leftover food on a room service tray in a hotel. Hunger makes people do weird things and even leads to cannibalism. Seinfeld also thinks that eating lobster is cruel and unusual, especially in a restaurant where a customer can choose his lobster from a lobster tank. Seinfeld also feels like a failure when he has to get a doggy bag at a restaurant, as though he has failed to do something.

Watching Out. At the opera, Seinfeld wonders why the orchestra conductor waves his baton around, as though that is really going to help the musicians play better. Seinfeld also finds fashion shows very entertaining, but he does not believe many people actually pay attention to the clothes. Seinfeld loves sporting events but finds boxing a simple and stupid sport. Seinfeld loves women's gymnastics and wonders if it is wrong to stare at the athletes' butts. Seinfeld does not see the point in professional wrestling, but thinks the job of professional wrestling referee has got to be a great job because there is no way to mess up. Seinfeld finds Olympic diving a depressing sport because the judging is so critical. Professional football, to Seinfeld, is a bunch of millionaires running after a little ball. Seinfeld wonders why they do not just hire someone to give the ball to them. Seinfeld loves to go to the movies, but he thinks the theaters refuse to hire anyone between the ages of fifteen and eighty, so everyone is either really old or really young. Seinfeld often gets confused by the plot of movies. Seinfeld usually finds out what happened on the way to the car when his friends explain it to him. Seinfeld also thinks people shush too much in the movies and that movie advertisements make little sense.

Out On the Street. Seinfeld makes a call on a pay phone and the operator calls him for more money. Seinfeld wonders why they would do this and expect people to be honest. Seinfeld goes to the snake house at the zoo and decides all the snakes are dead, that is why no one ever sees them move. Seinfeld can never find anything in a mall because the maps are upright and a person cannot walk that way without suction cups on their feet. Seinfeld thinks Hoffritz must be a scary place to work with people coming in all day buying knives. Seinfeld does not like the mall parking garage because each level looks the same, so he thinks they should name them things people can remember. Seinfeld thinks LA is like a mall because it is climate controlled with plenty of parking. Seinfeld also believes that if people were to stick with the classic Greek priorities, the only places they would go would be to the library or a gym. However, Seinfeld finds health clubs too strict. Seinfeld sees people walking their dogs and has decided that the human race has failed. Why else do humans pick up dog's feces and carry it around?



In. Seinfeld lives in an apartment and likes it pretty well. The apartment is situated well and it is clean. Seinfeld does not like cleaning, however, and has thought about hiring a maid, but he is afraid he would feel guilty for making a mess in the apartment. Seinfeld does not cook, either. Seinfeld also does not see the point in washing a dinner dish he has not used the entire surface of or of putting a spoon in the drawer and a bowl in the cupboard when he uses them together. Seinfeld loves apartment living, but he does not like having to confront noisy neighbors. Seinfeld also thinks that planes make it too easy for people to move cross country.

This chapter is Seinfeld's observations on the activities he does outside his home and the things he does in his home. In the first part of the chapter, Seinfeld illuminates the theme of socializing once again as he describes the things he likes to do outside his home. Seinfeld goes to sporting events, to the movies, the zoo, and shopping at the mall. Seinfeld finds all these activities to be enjoyable, although there are certain aspect of each Seinfeld does not enjoy. In the second part of the chapter, Seinfeld illustrates the theme of living alone as he describes his life inside his apartment. Seinfeld is neat, but does not like to clean, and he is not a good cook. Seinfeld uses his own perspective to write this chapter, pulling stories from his own experiences. Seinfeld's purpose seems to be to entertain the reader while discussing the things that matter to him. The tone of the chapter continues to be humorous and somewhat sarcastic.



Chapter 8, The Ride of Your Life

Chapter 8, The Ride of Your Life Summary and Analysis

Cycle One. Seinfeld believes that being a baby is difficult. Seinfeld was not a good eater as a child and his mother attempted to disguise his food, but this trick did not work for him. Seinfeld likes that now, as an adult, he does not have to live with the food restrictions his mother placed on him. Seinfeld used to like getting ice cream from the ice cream truck, amazed that the man in the truck could pull out anything he asked for. Seinfeld loved candy as a child and imagined he could actually taste the difference between the different colored M&M's. Seinfeld always thought the makers of jawbreakers were brave in going ahead and naming their product exactly what it was, just like 2000 Flushes. As a kid, Seinfeld found it incredibly easy to make friends, although as an adult it has become harder. Seinfeld had a pet parakeet as a child and the parakeet would always fly into the mirror as though it thought it was flying toward another parakeet. Seinfeld believes that children ponder the mysteries of the world more than adults. Seinfeld once wondered about bugs. Seinfeld remembers being in the Cub Scouts and never making it to school in the uniform because he would get beat up. Gym class was another difficult situation, especially when he had to wear the gym suit. Seinfeld thinks the initials on important tests are used because the makers of the test do not believe a student can understand the name of the test. Seinfeld was a good tester, especially essay questions, but he always got his papers back with the word "vague" written on them. Seinfeld liked bumper cars as a kid, but noticed there was always one kid who could not handle the car and ended up stuck in a pack of empty cars. Seinfeld always preferred mechanical rides over animal rides, finding those creepy. Seinfeld thinks the best toy he ever received as a kid was the box a new refrigerator came in because he could turn it into his own apartment.

Parental Influence. Seinfeld liked to ride in his parents' car when he could stand up in the back. Seinfeld's parents used to fight over the same two things in the car, how fast his dad was driving and how much gas they had. Seinfeld's dad always argued that his wife was looking at the gauges from the wrong angle. Seinfeld can remember his parents dragging him to historical sights as a kid, taking him to Amish country to show him what it was like when the whole community was grounded. Seinfeld thinks all fathers are intimidating because they made a human being so now they can do what they want. However, Seinfeld never wants to imagine his parents having sex, remembering a time when he would have been happy to learn he was adopted. Seinfeld also thinks parents have all the power. Seinfeld was twenty-eight before he was no longer afraid to touch the thermometer. Seinfeld's parents live in Florida now because they are old and that's the law. Down there, all Seinfeld's father will do is use the hot tubs, saunas and Jacuzzis. When Seinfeld visits, he goes with him.



Homestretch. Seinfeld has reached an age where he is now the parent over his own parents. Seinfeld also notices that the older people get the more they seem to shrink and drive slower. Seinfeld also thinks that a person knows he is getting older when there is only one candle on his cake and he needs help to blow it out. Seinfeld thinks life boils down to movement. Everyone has to keep moving, but that also means they have to continuously look for boxes. Even the coffin is a box.

This chapter is Seinfeld's commentary on life itself. Seinfeld spends a lot of time talking about childhood, focusing on his own life experiences. Seinfeld has found childhood a unique experience, including the ability to stand up in the back of the car, taste all the colors in M&Ms, and the ability to truly enjoy pets. Seinfeld also talks about his parents, how he visits them in Florida and has to take care of them like they are now the children. Finally, Seinfeld talks about the end of life, as we all search for the ultimate box, the coffin. The tone shifts slightly in this chapter with less sarcasm and more nostalgia. Seinfeld's purpose is to share with his readers his view of his own life, his experiences, and his fears. This chapter also touches on the theme of family as Seinfeld talks with affection of his family. This chapter is a suitable ending for the book as it ties together everything Seinfeld has talked about throughout the book.

Characters

Jerry Seinfeld

Pals

Women

Lawmen



Objects/Places

Televisions

Seinfeld talks about how he does not like "to be continued" episodes on television and how funny it is when a person moves a television in their car and has to leave it for a minute, they would cover it with a sweater hoping to disguise it.

Restaurants

Seinfeld talks about taking dates to restaurants and the irony of the bill coming after the food is gone when the person is no longer hungry.

Answering Machine

Seinfeld loves his answering machine and wishes he could be one so he does not have to talk to people he sees on the street.

Cars

Seinfeld and his mother have a constant fight in the car over how fast his father is driving and how much gas they have.

Apartments

Seinfeld loves his apartment, but does not have the nerve to ask neighbors to be quiet in the middle of the night.

Maid Service

Seinfeld likes to have maids come and clean his house, but always feels as though he should apologize for being messy.

Airports

Seinfeld finds the shops in an airport ridiculously overpriced.

Compact Parking Spaces

Seinfeld finds parking spaces reserved for compact cars discriminatory.



Mall Parking Lots

Seinfeld finds all mall parking levels look exactly the same.

Movie Theaters

Seinfeld finds that all movie theaters only hire really old or really young people and no one in between.

Themes

Socializing

Seinfeld covers socializing in more than one chapter within his book suggesting that this might be one of the main themes of the book. The first time Seinfeld mentions socializing is in the first chapter, Freeway of Love, in which he examines dating at length. Seinfeld finds dating quite difficult, especially the idea of taking a woman to a restaurant. Seinfeld discusses the inability to eat like he normally would during a date, his unconscious need to devour bread in front of a strange woman, and the awkward moments at the end of the date when he does not know whether or not he will be invited up to the girl's apartment. The second time Seinfeld discusses socializing is in the chapter, Paldom. In this chapter, Seinfeld talks about his relationships with friends. Seinfeld finds the answering machine quite useful in these relationships, often wishing he was a walking answering machine so that when he runs into people in the street he can take a message and walk on. Seinfeld also talks about how men will forget their friendship with each other when a beautiful woman comes into the picture.

Seinfeld again mentions socializing in the chapter Job Security. Seinfeld talks about how awkward it is to work in an office all day and to be forced to say hello to the same people more than once in the course of the day. Once more Seinfeld discusses socializing in the chapter Out and Back. This chapter covers the world outside of his apartment and the world inside his apartment. Seinfeld talks about going to sporting events, about eating in restaurants, about talking on pay phones, and about parking in New York. The one thing all these things have in common is that Jerry often does them with friends and therefore socializes. To Seinfeld, socializing seems to be a stressful activity, something forced upon him or behaviors he is forced to deal with. Seinfeld seems to dislike paying a restaurant bill after he has already eaten or being asked to deposit money in a pay phone after he has finished his call. Socializing in general appears to be something Seinfeld finds awkward and unpleasant, though he is quite experienced with it.

Living Alone

Seinfeld often discusses the fact that he lives alone in this book, highlighting yet another theme of the book. Seinfeld talks in the chapter on Paldom about how he lives alone and is neat, a group of circumstances that leads some of his friends to think he might be gay. Seinfeld admits that he likes to live alone, likes to be clean, but did not like to clean in the chapter Out and Back. Seinfeld will often hire a maid, but the presence of the maid also makes him nervous, as though he should apologize for being messy. Seinfeld also mentions he does not like to wash a dinner plate that he does not use the entire surface of and that he will often put his cereal bowl and spoon away together so that he will not have to search for one or the other later.



Seinfeld talks about how he does not like to cook and his version of gourmet cooking is how dark to make his toast. Seinfeld makes no excuses for this. Seinfeld is very candid about his feelings toward just about everything in his life, including living alone, and does not try to pretend that it is something he would change. Seinfeld finds life full of humor and expresses this humor with some sarcasm. This includes a close look at himself, his life as a single man, not only in the previously mentioned chapters, but also in Freeway of Love when he discusses the world of dating. Part of being a single man is living alone and dealing with loud neighbors, cleaning chores, and the choice whether or not to bring a maid into his home. Seinfeld discusses these chores with candor and humor, delighting the reader with entertaining snapshots of Seinfeld's real life.

Family

In the final chapter of the book, The Ride of Your Life, Seinfeld discusses aspects of his childhood and his parents' influence. Seinfeld talks of his parents with the same sarcasm and wit as when he discusses his friends or his dates, but there is an underlying sense of affection in Seinfeld's words. Seinfeld talks about how his father was so strict when he was a child that he did not touch a thermostat until he was in his late twenties and how his parents always had the same fight in the car when he was a child. Seinfeld also talks about life with his parents as an adult, suddenly finding himself the caretaker rather than the child. All of this is presented in a humorous way, causing the reader perhaps to miss the fact that Seinfeld is discussing his real family, his real concerns, and his real struggles.

Family clearly plays an important role in Seinfeld's life even though he reserves only a small portion of his book for addressing the dynamics of his family. The book is, after all, a collection of observations of a single man. However, the final chapter does make it clear how important family is to Seinfeld. Not only this, but in the introduction of the book, Seinfeld mentions his father and his influence. Family is a serious part of Seinfeld's life and perhaps this is why his family is mentioned in small snatches throughout this book, because Seinfeld finds the seriousness with which he holds his family does not fit the comedy of his book. However, Seinfeld allows the reader to see his childhood through his own eyes and the influence his family had on him then and now, as he has become an adult. It is an intimate, rare portrait of a funny man.

Style

Perspective

Jerry Seinfeld is a comedian who makes funny observations about the world around him. This book is an example of Seinfeld's comedy which is filled with funny observations about the world in general and the culture of the United States in particular. Seinfeld has been a comedian for many years, drawing on his own life and the lives of his family members for his material. Seinfeld makes many observations about dating, his experiences living alone, and his experiences with his friends in a social climate. Seinfeld also makes observations in this book about his parents, especially their decision to live in Florida and how that seems to be a required occupation for older people.

Seinfeld writes this book to entertain his old fans and to perhaps gain a few new fans. Seinfeld expects to cause his readers to laugh, or at least to see the humor in normal, everyday activities. Seinfeld is a comedian and it is the definition of his chosen career to make people laugh. This book is a non-fiction book, but it is not very serious, unlike most non-fiction books. It is also not an autobiography, although it does draw some of its material from Seinfeld's own life. This book is a comedy act divided into topics and written in the same dry manner in which Seinfeld presents his act on stage. This book is basically a written version of the same act Seinfeld does on stage.

Tone

The tone of this book is subjective. The entire book is made up of Seinfeld's own observations on life, his comical view of the simple, every day things around him such as dating, socializing, and work. Since the comedy within this book is the opinions of the writer, Jerry Seinfeld, they cannot be considered objective because an objective tone would suggest Seinfeld had no personal stake in his opinions and this is not true. Seinfeld makes these observations with his reputation as a comedian on the line, thus his tone is clearly subjective, not impartial.

The impact of the tone on the reader is to make Seinfeld appear brave, as though he is going out on a limb. The jokes seem fresher, bolder, more exciting to the reader. The reader must find honesty in these jokes and might even identify with Seinfeld within the context of some of the jokes. The reader also finds the book lighthearted, though sarcastic, without the heavy mood or tone of some other types of non-fiction books like autobiographies in which celebrities reveal terrible things about their pasts or heavy history tomes that recount endless battles. There is little intimacy in this book, but there are comical antidotes that readers may relate to. The mood of this book is relaxed, comical, a book that should be read by people who do not want to be educated or to have to think deeply on the subject. This book is a string of jokes intended to entertain.

Structure

Seinlanguage is divided into eight chapters and each chapter is divided into several subheadings. Each chapter is named for the subject that will be discussed within the chapter, such as Freeway of Love or Paldom. The subheadings within the chapters deal with smaller subjects covered by the main subject of the chapter, such as under Paldom there is the subheading of The Male Code. The book does not have a plot *per se*, it is simply a list of jokes organized under different chapters and subheadings, each chapter taking on a different subject.

The structure of the book is well organized and easy to understand. The chapters can be read in any order without confusing the progression of the book since none of the chapters are interrelated, except perhaps on a time line, beginning with dating and ending with death. The book is relatively short, with so much white space within each chapter that the chapters could probably have taken up half the number of pages had the white space been removed. The structure of the book is quite positive, easy to read, and enjoyable for readers who find Jerry Seinfeld's comedy entertaining.



Quotes

"Dating is pressure and tension. What is a date, really, but a job interview that last all night? The only difference between a date and job interview is that in not many job interviews is there a chance you'll wind up naked at the end of it." Chapter 1, Freeway of Love, p. 9.

"But you know, some people actually cheat on the people that they're cheating with, which is like holding up a bank and then turning to the robber next to you and going, 'All right, give me everything you got, too.'" Chapter 1, Freeway of Love, pp. 24-25.

"Women definitely go to maintenance extremes. It's amazing the way women take care of all the hair on their bodies. One of the great mysteries to me is the fact that a woman could pour hot wax on her legs, rip the hair out by the roots, and still be afraid of a spider."

Chapter 2, Personal Maintenance, p. 31.

"I once had a leather jacket that got ruined in the rain. Now why does moisture ruin leather? Aren't cows outside a lot of the time?" Chapter 2, Personal Maintenance, p. 41.

"What causes homophobia? What is it that makes the heterosexual man worry about this? I think it's because deep down all men know that we have weak sales resistance. We're constantly buying shoes that hurt us, pants that don't fit right. Men think, 'Obviously, I can be talked into anything. What if I accidentally wander into some sort of homosexual store thinking it's a shoe store and the salesman says, 'Just hold this guy's hand, walk around a little bit, see how it feels. No obligation, no pressure, just try it.'"" Chapter 3, Paldom, pp. 54-55.

"I love my phone machine. I wish I was a phone machine. I wish if I saw somebody on the street I didn't want to talk to I could just go, 'Excuse me, I'm not here right now. If you just leave a message, I can walk away.'" Chapter 3, Paldom, p. 57.

"What's tough about seeing people when they have a new baby is that you have to try and match their level of enthusiasm. They're always so excited. 'What do you think of him? What do you think?'" Chapter 3, Paldom, p. 63.

"Do you think that the people at the airport that run the stores have any idea what the prices are every place else in the world? Or do you think they just feel they have their own little country out there and they can charge anything they want?" Chapter 4, Shut Up and Drive, p. 75.

"Attention all flight attendants: Stop waking us up on the planes to eat your crummy food. If we're sleeping, let us sleep. Would you want to be awakened in your bed to eat a runny omelet? No. Nobody wants to be woken up for anything. You eat when you get up." Chapter 4, Shut Up and Drive, p. 81.



"Went out to dinner the other night, check came at the end of the meal as it always does. Never liked the check at the end of the meal system. Because money's a very different thing before and after you eat." Chapter 7, Out and Back, p. 127.

"Everyone gets excited about a baby. Except the baby. It's no fun being a baby."

Chapter 8, The Ride of Your Life, p. 155.

"My parents had two constant arguments while they were driving, over how fast my father was going or how much gas was left in the tank. My father had a standard defense for either one of these. It was always, 'That's because you're looking at it from an angle. If you were over here, you'd see. From where you're sitting, it looks like I'm doing ninety on empty. But that's because you're over there. If you were over here, you'd know I'm in the driveway with a full tank of gas.'"

Chapter 8, The Ride of Your Life, p. 169.



Topics for Discussion

Why did Jerry Seinfeld write this book? Is it fiction or non-fiction? Who is the intended audience? Is it only for Seinfeld's fans or would anyone enjoy it?

Why do you think Seinfeld structured the book the way he did? Is it confusing to move from one subject to another so quickly? Is it easy to understand?

What do you think the tone of the book is? Is it sarcastic, funny, or serious? Why do you think this tone was used? How does the tone of the book compare to Seinfeld's standup act or his television show? Similarities? Differences?

What is the difference between an observation and an opinion? Which does Seinfeld offer in this book? Do you agree with Seinfeld's take on society? What do you agree with? What do you disagree with?

What do you think of Seinfeld's observations on dating? Do you agree with the things Seinfeld talks about? Have these things ever happened to you? If yes, give an example. Do you think Seinfeld's opinions are universal or unique to him? Why or why not?

What do you think of Seinfeld's opinion on the work place? How do his observations compare to your experiences at work (or school)? Can you relate to Seinfeld's observations or do you think they are unique to Seinfeld? Why or why not?

Why do you think Seinfeld wish he could be a walking answering machine? Is this rude or practical? Do you agree or disagree? Have you ever felt this way? What happened in your situation?