

Writing About the Book

On a separate sheet of paper, write the answer for each of the following.

Extending the Novel

1. The original plan for *Wildfire* included five scientists. Christian Kirke, an anthropologist, could not come because he was in the hospital. He was known for his ability to solve highly abstract problems. Assume that Kirke was one of the scientists. Write a short narrative in which you extend the novel and describe Kirke's presence at *Wildfire*. Include how Kirke could have solved the problem.

Thinking about Assumptions

2. Early in the analysis, Burton made a mistake when he assumed that the anti-coagulated rats had died from *Andromeda* by coagulating. Assumptions based on incomplete data can be false. Assuming that *Andromeda* was from an extraterrestrial source, what mistaken assumption about proteins did the *Wildfire* team make? Remember that they found none of the 20 amino acids listed in the novel.

Responding to a Review

3. One reviewer of Crichton's novel from *The New York Times* stated, "... I was well into Michael Crichton's *The Andromeda Strain*. And he had me convinced it was all really happening." Write an essay in which you react to this statement. Do you think this could really happen? Has it happened already? Be sure to use specific references to support your answer.

Evaluating a Character

4. "Jeremy knows everything, and is fascinated by the rest." Explain how this statement applies to Jeremy Stone. Which of Jeremy Stone's characteristics make him the right character to be the leader of the team of scientists at *Wildfire*?

Writing a Journal Entry

5. Imagine that you are working undercover for the government to document examples of advanced technology. You have been granted a 10-day pass to tour the *Wildfire* facility. Everything you see or write about is classified information to be filed by the government for future use. You may bring only writing supplies and paper into the facility. Write the entry describing the technology you observe during your stay.

Analyzing the Organism

6. If you were Jeremy Stone, what would you report to the president, and what advice would you give about *Andromeda*? Cite specific incidences in which a previously known pathogen has become less lethal with the passage of time. What external influences would have caused *Andromeda* to mutate to a non-lethal form? Would mutation to a less lethal form be considered a successful mutation? Why?

Testing on the Book

On a separate sheet of paper, write the answer for each of the following.

Critical Thinking and Writing

1. Sir Winston Churchill is quoted in the novel as saying, “True genius resides in the capacity for evaluation of uncertain, hazardous, and conflicting information.” Another comment quoted from Montaigne is, “Men under stress are fools, and fool themselves.” Cite specific incidents in the novel in which the scientists made errors in judgment after missing clues.
2. Koch’s postulates are a set of steps to determine the causative agent of a disease. They are the following: 1) isolate the organism from the patient, 2) infect a healthy animal to recreate the disease, and 3) isolate the organism from the newly sickened animal and compare it to the organism originally isolated. The Wildfire team made several errors in determining how Andromeda killed its victims. Compare and contrast these errors with Koch’s postulates. How did the Wildfire team stray from or adhere to Koch’s postulates?
3. Jeremy Stone was skeptical about Mark Hall. He thought he would be of no help. Write an essay titled “The Odd Man Hypothesis.” Describe how Mark Hall was, in fact, the right man for the job, and how he proved himself to Jeremy Stone.
4. Although Andromeda did not contain any known amino acids, assume that it had protein based upon different types of amino acids than what we have on Earth. What element is Andromeda missing which makes it different from Earth viruses?
5. In the Epilogue, what implication is made by the loss of *Andros V*?

