

Discussion Questions for *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* by Jonathan Safran Foer

(Some questions taken or adapted from

<http://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/13-fiction/313-extremely-loud-and-incredibly-close-foer.>)

1. Is the book's title a good one?
2. How does *Extremely Loud & Incredibly Close* relate to life in the U.S. today?
3. Who was your favorite character? Why?
4. How much of a person's character would you say is shaped by the times in which they live?
5. Oskar is an unusually precious child. Do you find him sympathetic or annoying? Or both?
6. For Shakespeare buffs: Oskar "plays Yorick" (the long dead jester whose skull Hamlet holds in his hand) in a school production. What is the significance of that role to this book? (See *Hamlet*: Act V, Scene I, Line 188)
7. Jonathan Safran Foer has said that he writes about characters and their miscommunications: some characters think they're saying a lot but say nothing; others say nothing but end up saying a lot. Which characters fall into which category in *Extremely Loud*? What might Foer be saying about our ability to communicate deep-seated emotions?
8. Some critics have wondered where Oskar's mother is and how the child is left alone to wander the streets of New York alone at night. Is that a relevant comment? Do you see this book as a work of realism (in which case the mother's role would matter) ... or as more of a fable? If the latter, what is *Extremely Loud* a fable of?
9. Do you find the illustrations, scribbles, over-written texts, etc. a meaningful, integral part of the work? Or do you find them distracting and gimmicky? Why are they there?
10. How do both main plot and subplot (Oskar's grandfather and the bombing of Dresden) interweave with one another?
11. Were there any passages or scenes that you remember well or particularly liked?
12. Has anyone had any experiences that relate to places or experiences in the book?
13. Any comments about the way the book ended?
14. Would you recommend this novel to a friend?
15. Are there any questions you would like to ask?