

### **Discussion Questions for *The Martian* by Andy Weir**

(Some questions taken or adapted from <http://www.andyweirauthor.com/books/the-martian-tr/the-martian-hc>)

1. What makes us root for a character to live in a survival story? Did you identify with Mark?
2. Did you find the science and technology behind Mark's problem-solving accessible? Believable? How did that information add to the realism of the story? Which of Mark's solutions did you find most amazing and yet believable?
3. Who knew potatoes, duct tape, and seventies reruns were the key to space survival? How does each of these items represent aspects of Mark's character that help him survive?
4. How is Mark's sense of humor as much a survival skill as his knowledge of botany? Do you have a favorite funny line of his?
5. To what extent does Mark's log serve as his companion? Do you think it's implicit in the narrative that maintaining a log keeps him sane?
6. The author provides almost no back story regarding Mark's life on Earth. Why do you think he made this choice? What do you imagine Mark's past life was like?
7. There's no mention of Mark having a romantic relationship on Earth. Does that make it easier or harder to endure his isolation? How would the story be different if he had a partner back home?
8. Were there points in the novel when you became convinced Mark couldn't survive? What made those situations seem so dire?
9. Were you surprised the first time the narrative switched from Mark's log entries to third-person narrative back on Earth? Does alternating the viewpoint enhance the story?
10. Did you believe the commitment of those on Earth to rescuing one astronaut?
11. How does the author handle the passage of time in the book? Did he transition smoothly from a day-to-day account to a span of one and a half years?
12. Unlike other castaways, Mark can approximately predict the timing of his potential rescue. How does that knowledge help him? How could it work against him?
13. What does *The Martian* have in common with classic space exploration films like *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Apollo 13*, and *Gravity*? How is it different?
14. Is Mark a strong main character? Did you like him? Find him believable? Interesting?
15. Were there any passages or scenes that you remember well or particularly liked? Were you surprised by anything?
16. Would you recommend this book to a friend?
17. Are there any questions you would like to ask, or other comments you'd like to make?