

**Forrest Gump**

**(1994)**

**MPAA Rating: PG-13**

**Run Time: 142 minutes color**

**Available on video**

**Tom Hanks stars as the title character, a sweet and simple man of low IQ who nevertheless**

**manages to play key roles in important historical events over several decades in American**

**History.**

**Cast: Forrest Gump--Tom Hanks**

**Jenny Curran--Robin Wright**

**Lieutenant Dan--Gary Sinise**

**Bubba Blue--Mykelti Williamson**

**Mrs. Gump--Sally Field**



Historical References

(Previewing)

Research the following historical figures and events. Write a summary of each briefly explaining the main points/ideas/actions of that person or event.

* Elvis Presley

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* The Ku Klux Klan

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* The Black Panthers

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* Bear Bryant (football coach at Alabama)

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* George Wallace and segregation

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* Vietnam War

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* Peace/Hippie Movement

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* John Lennon

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* Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon

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* Apple Computers

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* Ronald Reagan assassination

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* Watergate Scandal

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* Smiley Face “Have a Nice Day”

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**Double Entry Journal**

Below is a double entry journal. In the *left* column, you will describe scenes from the film that seem intriguing, interesting, or relate to your life in some way. In the *right* column, you will write your responses to the scenes you have selected. Your responses might indicate what the scene means, what it reminds you of, what you don't understand, how you feel about it, or any other comments that seem appropriate.

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| **Scenes** | **Responses** |
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Analysis

1. The film begins with the flight of a seemingly insignificant feather as it floats down from the sky and brushes against various objects and people before finally coming to rest at the feet of Forrest Gump (Tom Hanks). Why does the film begin in this manner and what does it mean? Explain.

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2. Forrest's mother speaks in terms of hackneyed clichés as she gives him advice, yet he appears to believe everything she says and takes it to heart. Why?

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3. State the **theme** of this film.

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**theme** *n.*

**1.** An implicit or recurrent idea; a motif: *a theme of powerlessness that runs through the diary; a party with a tropical island theme.*

4. Select one of the following and explain its symbolism in the movie: Ping Pong, Shrimp Business, Curious George.

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5. Jenny's life is the **antithesis** of Forrest's life. Why do you think this is and what does this have to do, if anything, with the theme of this film?

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**an·tith·e·sis** *n.*

*pl.* **an·tith·e·ses**

**1.** Direct contrast;opposition. **2.** The direct or exact opposite:

*Hope is the antithesis of despair*

6. Jenny, like Forrest's mother, also gives advice. Her most significant is, "whenever there is trouble, run away.” How does this advice impact her life and how does it impact Forrest's life when he applies it?

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7. Do the special effects in this film overpower the story? Explain your opinion about the use of

special effects (the ability of Gump to speak to the famous characters in this film.)

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8. One critic who did not like the film has said that the film is a "love story in which the audience wishes the two lovers never became involved." Do you agree or disagree. Explain.

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9. The same critic also said that the film has a "bizarre melodramatic finish which forces the couple to be eternally together, without actually having to be eternally together." What does this mean? Explain.

**melodrama** *n.*

**1a.** A drama, such as a play, film, or television program, characterized by exaggerated emotions, stereotypical characters, and interpersonal conflicts.

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10. Answer the following questions:

a. Is Forrest Gump a good man or just extremely lucky?

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b. Is his lack of perception God's gift or God's curse?

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c. Is he a childlike innocent or just a man with a low IQ and no common sense?

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d. Are his honesty and cheerful demeanor attributes or merely results of his low IQ?

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e. Is what happened to him merely accidents or the predestined hand of God (or fate)?

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11. What does this mean? "Stupid is as stupid does"? Explain.

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12. As a simpleton, Forrest heeds people's advice literally, not figuratively. Explain what this means by using the advice given to Gump to "always keep your eye on the ball."

**lit·er·al** *adj.*

*Abbr.* **lit.**

**1.**Being in accordance with, conformingto, or upholding the exact or primarymeaning of a word or words. **2.** Wordfor word; verbatim: *a literal translation.* **3.** Avoiding exaggeration, metaphor,or embellishment; factual; prosaic: *literal description; a literal mind.*

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13. Explain what this means: "Life is like a box of chocolates; you never know what you're going to get."

**figurative** *adj*

*Abbr.* **fig.**

**1a.** Based on or making use of figures of speech; metaphorical: *figurative language.* **b.** Containing many figures of speech; ornate. **2.** Represented by a figure or resemblance; symbolic or emblematic. **3.** Of or relating to artistic representation by means of animal or human figures.

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14. Is this film an allegorical story? If so, what is it an allegory of? Explain.

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**al·le·go·ry** *n.*

*pl.* **al·le·go·ries**

1.a. A literary, dramatic, or pictorial device in which characters and events stand for abstract ideas, principles, or forces, so that the literal sense has or suggests a parallel, deeper symbolic

sense.

15. Why does Forrest run for three years? Why does he suddenly stop? Why do the other people start to run with him?

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16. Forrest Gump sums up his Viet Nam experience by saying that everyday they go for long walks looking for a guy named Charlie. Could this be a simplification of what happens in all wars? Explain.

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17. List any questions that you might have about this film in the left hand column. We will work as a group to find the answer to the questions and then record them in the right hand column. You must have at least 5 questions to receive credit for this section.

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| --- | --- |
| **Questions** | **Answers** |
| 1. 2.3.4.5. |  |

Fun Facts

* Bill Murray, John Travolta and Chevy Chase turned down the role of Forrest Gump. Travolta later admitted that passing on the role was a mistake.
* Tom Hanks’ younger brother Jim Hanks doubled for him in many of his numerous running sequences.
* Forrest and Dan’s Shrimp Emporium “Bubba Gump”, is now a themed restaurant with about 9 locations around the U.S.
* During the ping-pong matches, there was no ball; it was entirely CGI, animated to meet the actors’ paddles
* The line, “My name is Forrest Gump. People call me Forrest Gump,” was ad-libbed by Tom Hanks while filming the scene and director Robert Zemekis liked it so much that he decided to keep it in.
* In 2007, the American Film Institute ranked this as the #76 Greatest Movie of All Time.
* It took only 66 days for the film to pass the $250 million mark at the box office
* Warner Bros. gave up the rights to the film in 1988, in exchange for the rights to Executive Decision (1996), because the studio felt that the project had lost its commercial promise in the wake of Rain Man (1988).
* The disco and strip scenes were shot in the Ambassador Hotel, Los Angeles, California, as was the archive footage (1968) of Robert. F. Kennedy Jr, after he won the California Primary. RFK was gunned down in the kitchen of the Ambassador Hotel just minutes later.
1. Choose one Fun Fact and respond to it.

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