

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Persepolis Discussion Questions

Directions: Choose one of the following topics and write an essay response to the question. You must write a minimum of 4 paragraphs. Use your copy of Persepolis and/or any other materials needed (Malala's speech, the Claude McKay poem, etc.) to complete your response. You should work silently and individually to complete this assignment. Your response will be graded and placed in the gradebook by Thursday, in time for report cards. Cite evidence from the texts and support your argument.

1. In the poem *If We Must Die*, Claude McKay discusses facing death and other obstacles with courage and dignity, and reflects upon his perspective on the black experience during early 20<sup>th</sup> century America. McKay clearly believes that fighting for your rights is a worthy way to die. In *Persepolis*, Uncle Anoosh and many other freedom fighters face danger and death for fighting for their rights in post-revolution Iran. Do you believe the death of Uncle Anoosh, as well as the decision of other members of Marjane's family to fight against the regime, make a difference at all? Compare Marjane's family to the speaker in McKay's poem. Do they all fight in vain? Is a cause worth fighting for even if you know you can't win? Use evidence from the poem and *Persepolis* to support your answers.
2. In her address to the United Nations, Malala Yousafzai describes her experience fighting for the educational rights of women in Pakistan. When she was 14, she was singled out and shot by members of the Taliban, an Islamic extremist group, who despised her for promoting equal educational access for women. After recovering, she continued her activism. Today she is a student at Oxford University in Great Britain. In "The Trip" in *Persepolis*, the government closes the universities and Marjane grows concerned that she will not be able to become an educated and liberated woman. Compare Marjane's experience in Iran and Malala's experience in Pakistan. What is the importance of education in repressed nations ruled by dictators? How can an educated person pose a threat to tyranny? Use evidence from Malala's speech and *Persepolis* to support your answers.
3. In "The Trip" the government closes universities in order to revise schoolbooks, orders women to wear the veil, and forbids any participation in Western culture. How does the Iranian government use political and religious censorship to prevent Iranians from opposing the government and from disobeying the principles of Islam? How does censorship affect the daily lives of the Iranian people in *Persepolis*? What are the consequences of disobeying the new laws under the Ayatollah's regime? Is the protection of one's individual freedoms more important than the risk of getting caught by the Iranian government? Why or why not? Use evidence from *Persepolis* to support your answers.