**The Discussion About the Rabbits**

1. What do we learn about the characters that are involved in the event?

2. What are the important themes represented through the event?  
3. What language features are used to show the characters and themes?  
4. Key quotes.

**Characters in event:**

* **McMurphy**-understands to go, not scared, strong minded, slightly aggressive (more so verbally than physically), masculine, authoritative to patients, out going, challenges other authorities.  
  *McMurphy is suspicious about the way the patients are being treated by Nurse Ratched. He uses the metaphor of a “pecking party” to show his view on the meetings.*

Quote: I had judged from our encounter this morning that you were more intelligent-an illiterate clod perhaps, certainly a backwoods braggart with no more sensitivity than a goose, but basically intelligent nevertheless

* **Billy Bibbit**-tries to be courageous, easily persuaded, a sheep.  
  *Billy Bibbit plays a passive part in the scene. He likes to please the group, agrees with most opinions.*

Quote: Ah, it’s n-no use. I should just k-kill myself

* **Nurse Ratched**-sneaky, controlling, powerful, abuse her power, professional, organised, feared, unapproachable, Strict, stern, unsympathetic, fake, ball cutter, bitch.  
  *Although not featured in this scene, Nurse Ratched was the focal point of conversation. McMurphy finally got the patients to admit her control over them and their fear of her as the group discussed her nature and way of running the institution.*   
  Quote: to hell with that; she’s a bitch and a buzzard and a ball cutter, and don’t kid me, you know what im talking about.
* **Harding**-scared, emotionless, passive, ‘leader’, wise, feminine.  
  *Harding plays a very conversational part in this scene, at the beginning defending her as a motherly figure, but later agreeing with McMurphy’s argument and admitting she was feared and oppressing.*Quote: Harding tries to grin, but his face and lips are so white the grin is lost.
* **Chief Bromden**-observant, sneaky, secretive, independent.  
  *Chief Bromden who narrates the scene is observant and takes note on the other opinions on the matter but does agree nor disagree.*Quote: Or look at Chief Broom clutching to his namesake there beside you.
* **Cheswick**-easily influenced, afraid, doesn’t want to start conflict.  
  *Cheswick tries to have his say in the matter however is not really saying anything to contribute. He tries to gain control of the conversation but does not succeed.*  
  Quote: Cheswick never goes on; he is one of these guys who will make a big fuss, like he’s going to lead an attack, holler charge and stomp up and down a minute, take a couple steps, and quit.
* **Dr Spivey**-doesn’t stand up, passive, efficient, to himself, professional, cowardly, bystander  
  *In this scene Dr. Spivey is regarded as a “rabbit” just like the patients who fear and are under the control of Nurse Ratched.*Quote: he’s a frightened, desperate, ineffectual little rabbit, totally incapable of running this ward without our Miss Ratcherd’s help, and he knows it.

**Important themes:**

* **Emasculation:** *I have been accused of a multitude of things, of jealously and paranoia, of not being man enough to satisfy my wife, of having relations with male friends of mine, of holding my cigarette in an affected manner even- it seems to me-accused of having nothing between my legs but a patch of hair and soft and downy blonde hair at that!*
* **Power:** *People who try and make you weak so they can get you to toe the line, to follow their rules, to live like they want you to.*
* **Fear:** No*-ones dare come out and say it before, but there’s not a man among us that doesn’t think it, that doesn’t feel just as you do about her and the whole business-feel it somewhere deep down in his scared little soul*
* **Freedom:** *We’re not in here because we are rabbits-we’d be rabbits wherever we were-we are all in here because we cant adjust to our rabbit hood. We need a good strong wolf like the nurse to teach us our place.*
* **Separation:** *The rabbit accepts their role in the ritual and recognize the wolf as the strong.*
* **Inequality:** *The ritual of our existence is based on the strong getting stronger by devouring the weak.*
* **Feminism:** *The doctor doesn’t hold the power of hiring and firing. That power goes to the supervisor, and the supervisor is a women…*

**Language features used to show the characters and themes**

* **Lots and lots of metaphors:** *I’m a rabbit. The doctor is a rabbit. Cheswick there is a rabbit. Billy bibbit is a rabbit. All of us in here are rabbits of varying ages and degrees, hippity-hopping through our Walt Disney world.*
* **Analogy:** *The* *flock gets sight of a spot of blood on some chicken and they all go to peckin’ at it, see, till they rip the chicken to shreds, blood and bone and feathers.*
* **Symbolism:** *for all your cowboy bluster and your sideshow swagger, you too, under that crusty surface, are probably just as soft and fuzzy and rabbit-souled as we are.*
* **Imagery**: *Billy Bibbit and Cheswick change into hunched-over white rabbits, right before my eyes…*
* **Simile:** *A sound comes out of his mouth like a nail being crowbarred out of a plank of green pine.*
* **Dialogue:** *“You’re no damned rabbit”  
   “See the ears? The wiggly nose? The cute little button tail?”  
   “You’re talking like a crazy ma-“  
   “Like a crazy man? How astute.”*
* **Onomatopoeia:** *the laugh starts up again*-*eee-eee-eee*