



Discussion/Essay Questions

1. Based on this show, how would you define a guy/a doll?
2. Today, the term “guys” may be used to refer to a group of any gender, while “dolls” only applies to women and is typically met negatively. What has changed in our society?
3. Can you think of other words we use today that might be similar to how “guys” and “dolls” were used in 1947 when this musical premiered?
4. The musical is set in the early to mid-20th Century. In what ways was life different for women then than it is now?
5. How are characters empowered/disempowered?
6. How are the roles of men and women depicted in this show?
7. How does the concept of “winning” play into the show?
8. Which character won the most? Who lost?
9. *Guys and Dolls* centers around gambling, which is dependent on taking risks. What risks did you see the characters take in the show?
10. Have you gambled (made a bet or took a dare)? Share a story about a time when you gambled.
11. All the characters in *Guys and Dolls* gamble. What makes a person want to gamble or make a risky move?
12. Damon Runyon, author of the short stories upon which the musical is based, wrote about the lower-class society within New York. What characters might inspire his writing today?
13. Summarize the show. If you were to rewrite *Guys and Dolls* (perhaps *Guys and Gals*), how would you change it?
14. How do you feel about the values, behaviors and gender roles in *Guys and Dolls*? Do you see similarities or differences between them and the world today?
15. Review the songs and the characters who sang them. What do the songs tell us about them?

