



Book Club in a Bag

Discussion Questions

Normal People by Sally Rooney

1. Were you critical of Connell for the way he treated Marianne in school, or were you sympathetic toward his adolescent self-consciousness? Do you think he became less concerned by the thoughts of others as he grew older?
2. In *Normal People*, Marianne only barely opens up to Connell about her relationship with her family: how her father had been violent when he was alive, how her brother verbally and physically attacks her, and how her mother essentially forbids her to believe that she is "special" in any way. How does Marianne's family influence her opinion of herself and affect her relationships with other people?
3. How would you describe the power that Connell and Marianne hold over each other? Did you notice a power relation shift and evolve between them over the years?
4. Do you think that people are generally more vulnerable to internal crises and mental health issues in their late teens and early twenties? Why or why not? What are the most important support systems and coping mechanisms for someone going through such a difficult time, and do you think that Connell and Marianne find them in *Normal People*?
5. Despite the magnetic attraction that persists between Connell and Marianne, they are never officially "together" in this book. Considering the highs and lows they each go through over the years, do you think that they could have ever had a normatively structured boyfriend-girlfriend relationship? Did reading this novel lead you to question why we tend to put rigid labels on our relationships?
6. Did the actions of the characters seem plausible? Why? Why not?
7. Did the book end the way you expected?

The above questions were taken from <https://www.litlovers.com/reading-guides/fiction/11524-normal-people-rooney?start=3> to enhance your discussion of the book.

Author Biography

Sally Rooney was born in the west of Ireland in 1991. Her work has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Granta*, and *The London Review of Books*.

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/2144569/sally-rooney>

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