Questions for *Man and Superman:* These will mostly be for discussion, but be prepared to write about any of them, as well, for the quiz.

1. At the edges of the narrative of this fairly conventional romantic comedy is the conflict Vera Britten suffered much angst over—whether it is possible to have an active life of public service *and* have a spouse and children. Here, though, it is a man worrying about that—Jack Tanner, Member of the Idle Rich Class. Does it seem like a reasonable concern, from what we see here? Does it seem likely that Jack will go into parliament, as Ann suggests, or become a writer of some note, or will he get pulled into the swirl of social life such as we see him doing here? If you have time to read the Revolutionist’s Handbook, which should be attached to your play, that can help you answer this question.
2. Shaw was an early defender of the women suffragists and other feminist causes. Accordingly, some have read this as a feminist play, while others complain that it seems rather “retro,” with its focus on husband-hunting. What do you think? Does this play seem to support the idea that women belong in their domestic sphere (on their pedestals), as depicted in the famous Victorian poem “The Angel in the House,” or is it an indictment of that ideal?
3. We had a brief discussion of socialism as a political force in relation to Sweet Land, and it reappears here, though not as centrally as in some of Shaw’s other works (an early prototype of Jack Tanner is the hero of his last novel, *The Unsocial Socialist*, who also has to run away from an amorous woman to do his work as a revolutionary). Does it seem ironic that the socialist agitator lives as a “Member of the Idle Rich Class,” or does it seem possible, from what we see here, to do the work of a genuine revolutionary from that position?
4. The *Don Juan in Hell* scene is, from Shaw’s point of view, the heart of the play. He said of the play as a whole that he “put all of his intellectual goods in the shop window,” though of course he kept writing for a few decades after that. Does it work, for you, as an intellectual extravaganza, or do you think the play would be better without it? Why or why not? Also, whom do you think wins the debate about whether social reform is worth devoting a life to, Don Juan or the Devil?
5. The trip to hell and back is one of the journeys in the play, and it contains many elements of the “hero’s journey,” as well as elements typical of a classic epic. What does it add to our understanding of what a hero and/or heroine can contribute to society?
6. A key theme of the play is the distinction between honor and respectability. Which characters challenge their society’s notion of respectability in service, at least ostensibly, of a higher notion of honor? Which of them does the play seem to endorse?
7. What challenge to the established social order does Straker present? What point is Shaw making about education in the contrast between Straker and Tanner? Note: If you’ve seen *Downton Abbey*, now you have some insights into the character of Tom Branson, the chauffeur with “a soul above his station.”
8. Despite Shaw’s Irish nationality and republican sympathies (i.e., he believed Ireland deserved independence from England), this is one of the few plays of his in which the subject of Ireland’s injustices comes up. What does it add to the play’s criticism of English society of that time (1901-1903) to have the two Hector Malones (whom we would now dub “Irish-Americans”) trying to join English society at its highest socio-economic level? Where does each (father and son) fall on the rebel-to-conservative spectrum in this crowd (with the rebels wanting to change the status quo and the conservatives wanting to shore it up?)