

Discussion questions about Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*
for schools and reading groups

- How do you think the italicised interludes and the main sections of the novel are related?
- Woolf once said 'The six characters were supposed to be one'. How 'real' do you think the characters in *The Waves* are?
- Is *The Waves* a 'unique' novel? How does it compare with other books by Woolf (or anyone else) you have read?
- Why do critics and others often refer to *The Waves* as 'a poem' or as an example of 'poetic prose'? What features does it have in common with poetry?
- Woolf weaves many quotes and contemporary references into *The Waves*. Can you pick out any examples? How does knowing about these allusions affect the way you read the novel?
- What do you think of the 'said Bernard', 'said Rhoda' (etc) style of narrative?
- Why doesn't Percival speak, and what do you think his 'role' is in the novel?
- What is the effect of having Bernard 'sum up' or retell everything again in the final section?
- Why might *The Waves* be of such interest to post-colonial scholars?
- How would you go about making a film version of *The Waves*?