

1. What sequences of shots does director/star Buster Keaton use to open the film and why?
2. Why does Annabelle Lee want Johnnie to enlist? What does this tell us about the outlook of Americans in the 19th century?
3. This film obviously could not use CGI. Does the use of more practical effects strengthen or weaken the film? How?
4. How are Union troops/spies depicted in the movie? How do you interpret these depictions?
5. What aspects of the film are possibly embellished to enrich the story? How do you think the story on screen differs from the real “Great Locomotive Chase?”
6. What kind of gags or jokes are used in the film? Do they stand the test of time?
7. Can you think of another film that mixes romance, comedy, and action in the same way that *The General* does?
8. Explain Johnnie’s attachment to his train. What is Keaton saying about man’s connections with technology?
9. Although the film was not a hit in its own time, it is today considered a classic of American cinema. What aspects of the movie do you think earned that standing?
10. What was your reaction to this movie as a silent film? Did it meet or change your expectations of this genre?