



# Reading Between the Lions

## The Art Institute's Book Club

[www.artic.edu/bookclub](http://www.artic.edu/bookclub)

### DISCUSSION GUIDE

#### Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South*

Please note that the questions below may contain plot spoilers.

1. What social classes are portrayed in the book? Are the same social classes depicted in the exhibition? Are any classes omitted?
2. What kind of skills does Margaret have? To what class does she belong?
3. What does Margaret's class allow her to see of other worlds? How much fluidity is there among classes?
4. If Margaret made a photocollage similar to those in the exhibition, what do you think it would look like? Is there another character who is more likely to make a photocollage?
5. How does the illness of Margaret's mother illustrate Victorian notions of propriety? From what does she suffer?
6. What do you think about the decision of Margaret's father to leave the church? Why do you think he left?
7. How would you characterize the Victorian Age? Does either the book or the exhibition refute any of your assumptions?
8. What are Margaret's flaws? Does she inspire empathy? How does Gaskell humanize her?
9. Is there a link between emotion and virtue in the book? What role does sentimentality play?
10. What differences between men and women are emphasized in the book? Do any of them surprise you given that the author is a woman?