

INDEPENDENT READING

MINI UNIT

Name: _____

Period: _____



TASK #1: FIRST IMPRESSIONS (5 POINTS)

MAIN CHARACTER(S)?

MINOR CHARACTER(S)?

OVERALL SETTING/PLOT/CONFLICT?

AUTHOR'S WRITING STYLE?

TASK #2: CHARACTERIZATION (5 POINTS)

Name of Character: _____





DIRECT CHARACTERIZATION:

(directly tells the audience what the personality of the character is)

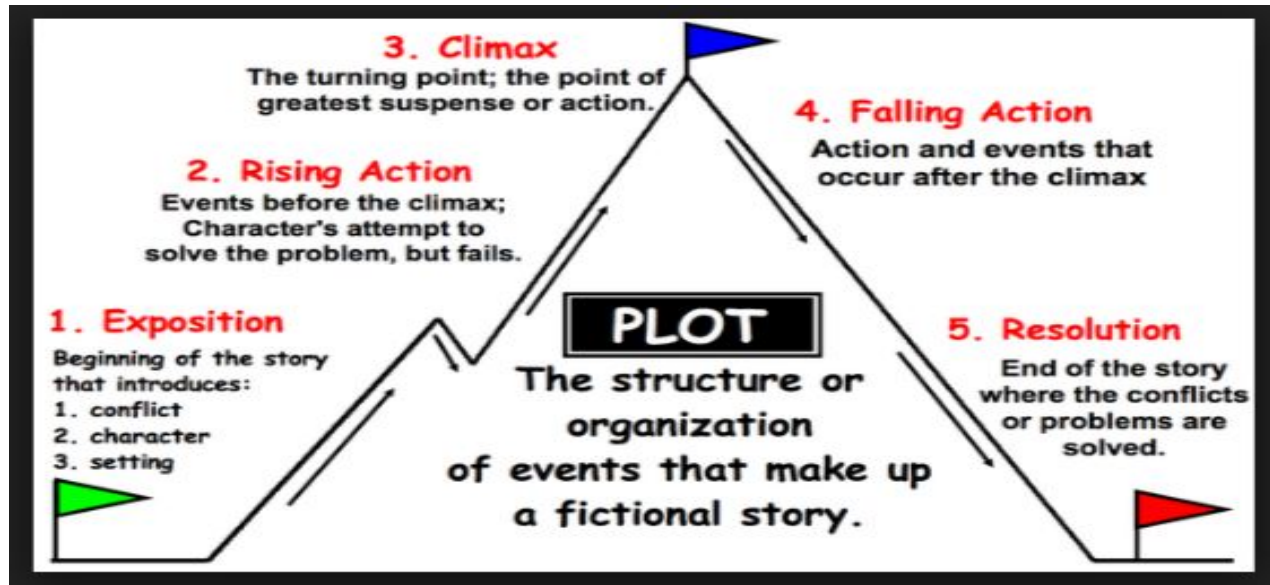
| "Quotation": | Citation: | What do we <u>learn</u> about the character from this example? |
|--------------|-----------|--|
| | | |

INDIRECT CHARACTERIZATION:

(shows things that indirectly reveal the personality of a character through STEAL)

| | "Quotation": | Citation: | What do we <u>learn</u> about the character from this example? |
|---|--------------|-----------|--|
| SPEECH  | | | |
| THOUGHTS  | | | |
| EFFECT (ON OTHERS) | | | |
| ACTIONS  | | | |
| LOOKS  | | | |

TASK #3: PLOT STRUCTURE (5 POINTS)



As you read, take bullet point notes below to keep track of the overall plot structure of your book:

1. EXPOSITION
BEGINNING/
INTRODUCTION

2. RISING ACTION
EVENTS LEADING TO
CLIMAX

3. CLIMAX
THE TURNING POINT/
MAJOR ACTION

4. FALLING ACTION
EVENTS AFTER THE
MAJOR ACTION

5. RESOLUTION
(DENOUEMENT)
SOLVING OF
CONFLICTS/PROBLEMS

TASK #4: AUTHOR'S CHOICES (10 POINTS)

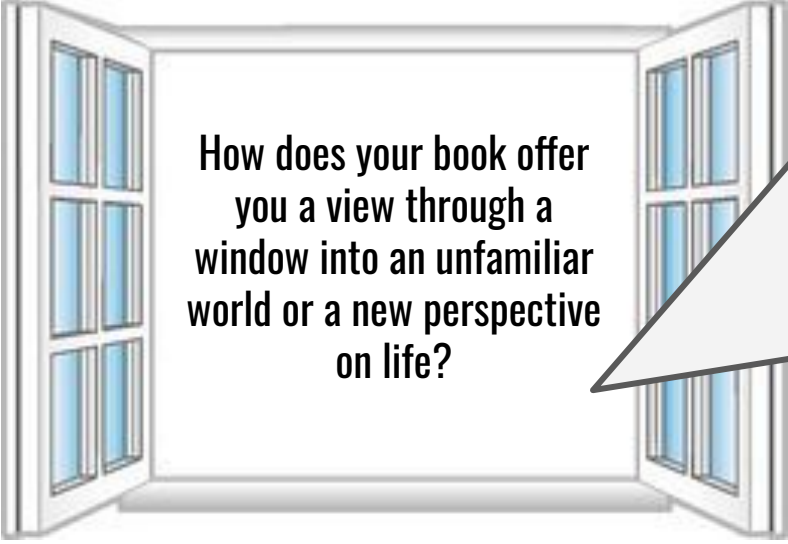
| | | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Imagery | Simile | Metaphor | Foreshadowing | Suspense |
| Setting | Symbolism | Tone | Flashback | Humor |
| Sensory Details | Character Development | Cliffhanger | Personification | Point of View |

Select **THREE** of the above author's choices/techniques to explore further in your book:

| TECHNIQUE: | "QUOTATION": | (CITATION): | EFFECT ON THE READER: |
|-------------------|---------------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

TASK #5: WINDOWS & MIRRORS (10 POINTS)

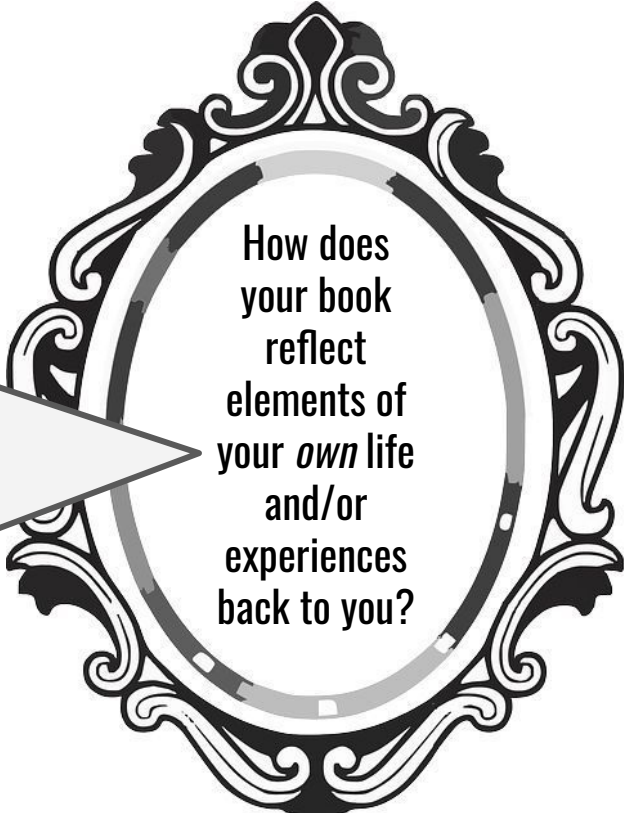
“Books are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors, and readers have only to walk through in imagination to become part of whatever world has been created and recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, however, a window can also be a mirror. Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back to us, and in that reflection we can see our own lives and experiences as part of the larger human experience. Reading, then, becomes a means of self-affirmation, and readers often seek their mirrors in books” - Rudine Sims Bishop



How does your book offer you a view through a window into an unfamiliar world or a new perspective on life?

WHAT DOES THIS BOOK SHOW/TEACH YOU ABOUT OTHERS?

WHAT DOES THIS BOOK SHOW/TEACH YOU ABOUT YOURSELF?



How does your book reflect elements of your *own* life and/or experiences back to you?

TASK #8: PASSION PROJECT (40 POINTS)

You will be designing your own project to reflect your understanding of your independent reading book. A passion project should be based on anything that genuinely interests you or brings you happiness. If you like to write, write. If you like to draw, draw. If you like to create, create. If you like to paint, paint. If you like to research, research. ETC. The goal is to personalize your project so it is something you actually enjoy doing. Anything goes, as long as you have a solid plan of attack, clear connection(s) back to the book, teacher approval, and a way to somehow eventually present your creation to the class. You could use any of the 7 tasks in this packet as jumping off or starting points, or you could create a totally original, unique idea. I hope you will find this process *both* challenging and rewarding.

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorm three totally different ideas for possible passion projects below.

I could create...

to show/highlight...

about my book.

I could create...

to show/highlight...

about my book.

I could create...

to show/highlight...

about my book.

PROPOSAL

Write a brief proposal outlining your passion project below. Include what you plan to create, how you plan to create it, how it connects to or what it shows about your book, and how you will ultimately present it to the class.

TEACHER APPROVAL: _____

TASK #8: POSSIBLE PASSION PROJECT IDEAS

- **Become the Teacher** - Teach the class something specific about your book using specific quotes/passages, recipes, memos (letters or correspondence between characters), role playing, acting out a dramatic scene, or a scrapbook
- **Multimedia/Art** - Use music, art prints, maps (is your book about a journey? Map that journey for your peers!), games (invent a board game the class can play!), a video presentation or short movie, record an imaginary radio show or podcast where you interview a main character from your book, etc.
 - Use newspaper articles or format, photos, pantomime, sculpture, puppets, or diorama to present some essential ideas or characters from your book
- **Picture book/Graphic Novel** - Create a picture book for children or design a brief graphic novel of a key scene in the plot of your novel.
- **Model a Process** - Explain a process—how to make, do or build something that connects to your book. Build a model of something and explain it step by step.
- **Research** - You might also take a more conventional route and do a brief literary/research paper on your book that focuses on a specific topic or issue. Should you choose this option, you **NEED** to consult with me about extra sources, possible topics and the like.
- **Movie Trailer** - Use a computer multimedia program or an app to create a faux-movie trailer or sneak preview of a film adaptation of your book.
- **Retelling a Scene** - Pick scene(s) and retell the events from a different character's perspective. Identify the scene, the character, and how the scene is different in your retelling. Imagine you have entered the mind of that other character. You can write the scene as if you are that character recounting the events.
- **Alternative Ending** - Write an alternative ending for the book. Try to maintain consistency with the author's style. You must actually rewrite the ending and not simply describe it.
- **Searching for Literary Devices** - Find a creative way to highlight literary devices from your book (similes, metaphors, imagery, personification, symbolism, hyperbole, pun, irony, oxymoron, etc.). Explain in detail why you chose them and how they enhanced the novel.
- **Detailed Character Sketch** - Write a character sketch highlighting your favorite character in the book. Describe what the character is like on the outside (age, gender, hair, appearance, etc.) and on the inside (personality, hopes, dreams, etc.). Pay more attention to the internal qualities of your character than to the external qualities. Include a detailed drawing of your character. Include at quotes and explanations that encapsulate your character.
- **Fortune Cookies** - You are dining at a Chinese restaurant with 3 characters from the novel you read. On that particular night, the fortune cookies are amazingly appropriate for the general mood/tone/events of the novel. Tell what each fortune cookie said and why it was especially fitting to the character who received it by using 3 or more specific examples from the text for each character.
- **Time Capsule** - Make a time capsule for the book you read. Tell what each character would put in and why. Also include items that relate to the theme, plot, and setting. Explain those as well. You should write 3+ sentences for each item in the time capsule. You need at least 10 items included in your time capsule.
- **Gift Giving** - Think of what 5 (or more) gifts would be perfect to give to the main character. They can be tangible or intangible but should be things that he/she would really want or use. Find a way to creatively display those gifts. Explain why you chose each gift and why it fits your character.
- **Illustrator** - Make 10 or more cartoons or drawings that show the major events in the story. Below each write a brief explanation (2-5 sentences) of each scene.
- **Selling the Book** - Design two creative advertisements that will sell your book to two of the following: the owner of a bookstore, a concerned parent, a reluctant reader, a movie watcher, and/or a friend/family member. For each advertisement, you can create anything you would like but your write up should identify and describe the need (why does the person need your book), engage your audience's attention in the subject matter of the book, and clearly appeal to your intended audience.
- **Poetry** - Write a series of poems (Found poems? Concrete poems? Blackout poems? Anything goes!) that represent important themes/ideas/moments from your book.
- **Newspaper** - Make a newspaper about your book; include feature stories for the front page (with headlines), opinion articles from the "editor," display advertisements, classified ads, and other categories that are relevant to your story (obituaries, sports articles, entertainment calendars, etc.).
- **Social Justice** - Does your book focus on a controversial issue or topic? Create a brochure/presentation/etc. that furthers the author's message and helps to educate us on that issue.
- **Book Pitch** - Create a pitch to "sell" this book as a curriculum option to Chicago Public School ELA Curriculum department. Explain why you loved this book and why it should be considered for the middle school curriculum. Get creative and persuasive to highlight the strengths of your book and why all middle schoolers should read it!

MORE IDEAS ON THE NEXT PAGE→

TASK #8: POSSIBLE PASSION PROJECT IDEAS

- **Character astrology signs.** After reading brief descriptions of the astrology or sun signs, figure out which signs you think three of the main characters from your book were born under. Write an explanation of why you think they fit the sign, drawing on their actions, attitudes, and thoughts from the book.
- **Heroes and superheroes.** Select two or three people your character would think of as a hero or superhero. Describe the characteristics of the hero and why those characteristics would be important to your character. Also describe which characteristics your character would most want for himself/herself that the hero or superhero possesses.
- **Create a childhood for a character.** If your main character is an adult, try to figure out what he or she would have been like as a child. Write the story of his or her childhood in such a way that shows why he or she is the way he or she is in the novel.
- **School counselor's recommendation letter.** Write a summary appraisal from the school counselor's point of view that assesses the character's academic and personal qualities and promise for study in college. The college is particularly interested in evidence about character, relative maturity, integrity, independence, values, special interest, and any noteworthy talents or qualities. Why do you feel this student would be well-suited to attend college?
- **Talk show invitation.** Select a character, think about his or her involvements and experiences, then figure out which talk show would most want your character on as a guest. What would they want the character to talk about? Who else would they invite on the show to address the issues the character is involved in? Write up the correspondence between the talk show host and the character in which the host explains what the character should focus on while on the show. After the show, have them exchange one more letter mentioning how they felt about what happened.
- **Radio exchange.** Your character calls into a radio show for advice. Choose which show your character would call in to and then create the conversation he or she would have with the radio advice giver.
- **Movie recommendations.** From all the movies you've seen in the last couple of years, pick five you would recommend that your character see. Give a brief summary of each movie and explain why you think the character should see it.
- **Create a website homepage.** Select several characters and design a home page for each of them, picking out appropriate backgrounds and pictures and then creating information that would tell a viewer about your character. Also, create links to at least five different sites that you think your character would be interested in. Then write up and post on the page an explanation of how you made the decisions you did and what you believe this tells us about the character.
- **Title acrostic.** Take a poster and write the title of the book down the side of the poster. For each letter in the title, construct a sentence that begins with that letter and that tells something significant about the story. Find a way to creatively present the final product.
- **Cartoon squares.** Create a series of six drawings in six squares that shows a significant event in the novel. Under each picture or cartoon, write a few lines of explanation.
- **Word collage.** Write the title of the book in the center of a sheet of paper. Then look through magazines for words, phrases, and sentences that illustrate or tell something about your book. As you look, think in terms of the theme, setting, plot line, as well as characters. Work to get fifty such words, phrases, or sentences so the whole sheet of paper will be covered. The visual impact of the collage should tell a potential reader a lot about the book.
- **Yearbook entries.** Imagine what three or four characters from your novel were like in middle school. Cut out a picture of a person from a magazine to represent each character. Mount one picture per page and under each picture place the following information which you will create: nickname of character; activities, clubs, sports they were in and what years; class mock award such as "class clown"; quotation that shows something about the person and what is important to him or her; favorites such as colors and foods; a book that has had a great impact on him or her; voted "most-likely-to" what?; plans after middle school.
- **Letter exchange.** Create a letter exchange between a character and the author or write a series of self-reflective letters from several characters on what the character learned about himself, others, and life.
- **Awards.** Create an award for each of the main characters based on their actions in the novel. One might be awarded "most courageous" for fighting peer pressure, another might be awarded "wisest" for the guidance he or she gave other characters. For each award, write a paragraph that explains why this character deserves this award.

MORE IDEAS ON THE NEXT PAGE →

TASK #8: POSSIBLE PASSION PROJECT IDEAS

- **Talk show on issues in novel.** Create and perform a talk show around one of the major issues or themes in the novel. For example, after reading *The Outsiders*, you might want to discuss the issue of running away from home. Include people to represent several points of view on the issue. You might include characters from the book, a police officer, etc.
- **Dream vacation.** Where do you think your character would most like to go on a vacation? Pick a spot, describe it, and explain why he or she would want to go there or download information from the Internet on the place. Then write a day-by-day itinerary of what the character would do each day and why you think the character would enjoy this activity.
- **Scrapbook.** Think about all the kinds of mementos you would put in a scrapbook if you had one. Then create a scrapbook for your character, cutting out pictures from magazines or drawing the mementos he or she would have in a scrapbook.
- **Photos or magazine pictures.** Find two or three photos or magazine pictures that would have special significance to your character. Mount them on a sheet of paper and write an explanation of why they would be important to your character.
- **Music.** After reading a novel, figure out how you would divide up the book into sections. Then select a piece of music that you think captures the feel or tone of each section. Record the pieces and if possible do voice-overs explaining what is happening in the novel during the piece of music and why you felt this piece of music fit the section of the novel.
- **Poetry.** Write three poems in response to the novel. The poems can be about the characters, where the book took place, or the themes in the book. The poems can be in any format of your liking.
- **File a complaint.** Adapt the persona of one of the characters who you feel was portrayed in a disrespectful manner. Write up a complaint explaining what you feel was unjust in your portrayal and explain the actions you would like the author to take to remedy the biased portrayal.
- **Tangible or intangible gifts.** Select a character and figure out what two or three things you believe your character most needs or wants. Draw or cut out pictures to represent these “gifts” and write to your character an explanation of why you picked these things out for him or her.
- **Talk to the author.** Write a letter to the author of the book explaining to him or her why you think he or she wrote the book and what he or she was trying to show through the book. Be sure to explain what you got out of the book. If the author is still alive, send the letter to the author via the publisher of the book.
- **Point of view column.** Write an opinion column like those that appear on the editorial page of the newspaper. Choose a theme or topic from the novel you just read and write the column from the point of view of one of the characters. Your character might write about the importance of education or why we should accept people who are not like us.
- **Character monologues.** Select an event in the story that characters have different views on. Then write up two or three characters’ opinions on the same event in the form of monologue (one person talking to him or herself).
- **Answering machine message.** Answering machine messages have gotten more and more creative over the years, reflecting the interests and idiosyncrasies of the owner. Select five characters from the novel you have just read and create an answering machine message from each of them. Pay particular attention to diction and tone.
- **Found poems.** Select a chapter from the novel you have just read that you consider powerful or interesting. Then select words, lines, and phrases that you think project strong images and show the impact the chapter makes. Arrange this material into a poem.
- **Name analysis.** Select a few of the characters from the novel. Look up each of their names in a name book to see what the name means. Write all the meanings down and then write a short essay for each character explaining in what ways the name is suitable and in what ways the name does not fit the character.
- **A character’s fears.** One way we get to know characters is to think deeply about them and make inferences based on their actions and on what they and others say about them. Through a person’s actions we can learn what they fear and what they want to avoid the most. Select several characters from your novel and write short essays on what you believe they fear the most and what evidence you used to come to this conclusion.
- **Current events.** Select five current news or feature stories from television or news magazines that you think your character would be interested in. Then explain how your character would respond to each of the stories and the opinions your character would have about what was happening in the story.
- **Advertisements.** To show your understanding of a character, go through several magazines and newspapers looking for advertisements of goods you think your character would like. Cut out the pictures, mount them on a poster board, and under each picture write a few lines about why this product would appeal to your character.

MORE IDEAS ON THE NEXT PAGE →

TASK #8: POSSIBLE PASSION PROJECT IDEAS

- **A pamphlet.** Think of an issue that was very important to your character. Then create a pamphlet aimed at persuading others of the importance of the issue. Include factual information, testimonials, pictures or graphics, etc.
- **New acquaintances.** Select two characters. Then think about three to five people, living or dead, that you would like your characters to meet. Write about how you selected these new acquaintances and what you'd like the character to learn from the people you introduced him or her to.
- **Book choices for character.** Select a character and then choose five books for him or her, thinking about what he or she might like and also what you think they need to know more about.. Why did you select the nonfiction books you did? What do you hope your character will like about or get out of the fiction?
- **Community resources for characters.** After looking on the Internet, create a file of community resources that would help a character in your novel cope with an issue. If the main character has abusive parents, you could collect pamphlets, names of self-help groups, and any agencies that address the problem. Then create a display board so others can see what is available.
- **Detective work.** If a detective or police officer suddenly showed up in your novel, who or what would they be investigating? Write about what the detective is looking for, how he or she knew something was awry or needed investigating, and what was recommended.
- **Create a character's room.** We learn a lot about people by what they keep in their closets, what they have on their walls, what they select to put in a room. Select a character you know well and create a living room, bedroom, kitchen, or some other room that would mean a lot to the character. Draw it or write about it, making sure to include an explanation of why you designed the room as you did.
- **Playlist.** Design a playlist of songs for a character you know well, being sure that the collection includes music that expresses as many aspects of the character as you are aware of.
- **Photo album.** Think about the events that happened in your novel. Decide which scenes or pictures from the novel a character would want to remember. Then draw several of these "photos" for an album page or write about which pictures the character would want in his or her album.
- **A character alphabet.** Choose a character you liked and then create sentences based on the alphabet scheme (A, B, C, D, etc.) that demonstrate your knowledge of the character. You can create a slide presentation.

OR LITERALLY ANYTHING
ELSE YOU CAN THINK OF
AND ARE PASSIONATE
ABOUT CREATING AND
PRESENTING.