

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_



## Individual Reading Project

### Spring 2010



Twice this semester you pick a book you'd like to read and respond to that book by doing a project. There are several response options, so this project is basically what you make of it. It's one of the few times that you get to read almost anything you want, do almost anything you'd like to respond, and get credit for it. Enjoy!

#### Due Dates:

First Project check in: T 16 February

**due: T 9 March 2010**

Second Project check in: T 6 April

**due: T 27 April 2010**

#### Your Goals:

- Read a book
- Think about it
- Analyze it (take it apart)
- Synthesize it (put it back together again, make connections)
- Discuss the author: What did s/he want to do with this work? Was s/he successful? Explain.**
- Prove to me that you read the whole book and had your brain in high gear while you were doing it.
- Have fun

ALL projects MUST be in MLA format!

#### Process:

##### Pick out a book.

- 150 pages or more
- No magazines, children's books, or comics (with few special exceptions)
- No books you've read already (Rereading is a great thing to do; just don't do it for this project.)
- One Classic, see list for suggestions

Read the whole thing. Yes, I can often tell when you've just watched the movie or read the first five chapters, etc. (Make sure to write about the whole book, not just the first half.)

Choose a project. Read the instructions for each project carefully. You are required to follow the criteria, or your grade suffers.

Produce a final paper. If your project is artistic in some other way, that's great, but remember that it's the paper that will matter most. Make sure that the paper develops ideas, is organized, has a compelling voice, uses powerful and accurate words, flows nicely, is mechanically correct, and in MLA format.

Turn in your project along with the appropriate rubric.

## IRP FAQ

**Q.** Why are we doing this?

**A.** “Do your bit to save humanity from lapsing back into barbarity by reading all the novels you can.” -Richard Hughes (1900 - 1976) Welsh author, dramatist

Reading is a crucial way to learn and to understand this universe. How well you read depends upon a lot of things, but reading as much and as often as possible is one of the best ways to become a better reader, student, and person. My hope is that if you get to choose what you read, you'll enjoy the experience more.

**Q.** How long does it have to be?

**A.** Two to five typed pages or about 750 to 1900 words, using MLA format.

**Q.** So, if I write five typed pages, that's an A, right?

**A.** No. There are no automatic As. You will get an A IF you go above and beyond (not necessarily in quantity/length). For me, an A means exceptional, outstanding, and impressive.

**Q.** What is MLA?

**A.** It stands for Modern Language Association. They are a group of scholars, writers and editors. They read a lot of manuscripts and papers, and it's much easier for them if all of those things look basically alike. We call that their formatting. I have the manual that tells you how to punctuate, cite sources, set margins and a whole lot of other stuff you must do to stick to MLA format. A lot of the papers you write in college English classes will have to be in MLA format. **Everything you write for English classes at Solon will have to adhere to this format.** I'll give you a handout on how to do this.

**Q.** What do I do if I don't have access to a computer?

**A.** Remember that the Media Center is open from 7:45 to 3:45, sometimes even longer if you ask Mrs. Clingerman nicely. With rare exceptions, I can give you a pass from seminar to use the Media Center lab. If you still can't get to a computer, you may write the paper very neatly, in ink. MLA formatting must still be followed and the paper must still be at least seven hundred words. **DO NOT** write the paper in pencil and/or turn in paper with “frillies” on it.

**Q.** So, this is just like a book report, right?

**A.** Not exactly. The focus here is much more on what's happening in your head as you think about the book. Yes, you need to reassure me that you really read the whole book, but mostly I'm interested in what you thought and felt about the book. Also, I'm really interested in seeing you think deeply about the components of the book, like character, plot, voice, symbolism, irony, etc. Use all those literary conventions you've learned about in middle school. Be sure to make connections – to other texts, to your life, to the world, or to humanity in general.

**Q.** Can I turn it in a day late?

**A.** Sure, but it'll be an automatic two point deduction per school day late.

- Q.** But my computer died last night!
- A.** Why did you wait until last night to type or print out your paper? Remember to save often and to many locations. You can print when you get here in the morning, before school. Also, remember that you can email it to me as a Word attachment.
- Q.** Can I print it out when I come to class?
- A.** No, it must be printed out before you get here. Try printing in the Media Center before school. Also, remember to keep a hard copy for yourself. Never give a teacher the only print-out of a paper, even if you have it saved at home.
- Q.** Can I do the same project this time that I did last time?
- A.** No, you have to do different kinds of projects. For instance, if you did a split journal for your first project, you can't do a split journal for your second projects.
- Q.** So, If I choose project 2, I have to write poems *and* write a paper?
- A.** No, your poems ARE your paper. Be forewarned: they will be assessed using the same rubric.
- Q.** If I do the correspondence project, do our letters have to be typed?
- A.** Yes, any assignment you had in from now on should be typed and in MLA format, unless otherwise instructed.
- Q.** We're doing the correspondence project, but my partner hasn't written back to me! What should I do?
- A.** You are graded on YOUR letters, not his/hers. Picking a conscientious partner for this project helps. However, if your partner lets you down, you may switch partners (you can use parents or other teachers). Just keep writing!
- Q.** Can I switch books?
- A.** Sure. Sometimes you start a book and then realize it's not for you. This is perfectly normal. You can always switch books, but your project will have to be turned in by the due date, regardless.
- Q.** Can I read a book that's been turned into a movie?
- A.** Yes, you may, but be sure to READ THE BOOK. The makers of the movie often change things significantly. If you want to talk in your project about how the book and movie are different, that's great.
- Q.** How do I 'talk about the author?'
- A.** We'll practice this in class. Try hypothesizing. Why do you think the author made this character like this? What was the author trying to accomplish? Other than entertaining people or selling books, why do you think the author wrote this book? No, you don't have to become a mind-reader. You just have to make an educated guess and then back up your hypothesis. What makes you think this?
- Q.** Does my book talk script and reflection have to be typed?
- A.** Yes. **Anything** you turn in to an English teacher in high school **must be typed!**

Project Options:

### 1. Split Journal

**At least four entries**

This is similar to keeping split page notes; except that the left side is a brief summary of the story and the right column is your analysis and response. It'll look something like this:

Summary	Analysis and Response
Write just enough for me to have a rough idea of what's happening and to assure me that you read closely.	<b>This is the IMPORTANT side! Tear your book apart and put it back together again. Ask questions, try to generate hypotheses, make predictions about what will happen next, compare this book to others or to other kinds of texts (plays, poems, movies, etc.). Find themes or motifs running through the book, use some literary terms you learned in middle school (climax, pun, comic relief, conflict, character development, metaphor, simile, etc.). Remember that there's an author at work here, manipulating the story, characters, and you. Be sure to make a variety of reading response moves.</b>

Stop your reading every few chapters and write a split journal entry on what you've just read. You must have at least four entries. If you want to stop and journal more often or if you have a long book, feel free to have more entries. I can supply you with a Word template to use when typing this out on the computer.

### 2. Poetry

**At least four poems, two drafts of each**

Try not to just summarize what you read. Don't TELL me what happened in the book. Show me what effect the book had on you. These poems might be a response to something a character does, an "ode" or tribute to a character, or verbal representation of a theme or motif from the book. Assigning page length to poetry is tricky, so I won't require that each poem be at least a certain number of lines or anything. However, I'll warn you that doing this project well is tricky. No, your poems don't need to rhyme. I must see substantial revision from the first to final drafts.

### 3. Dramatic Performance

**Original script + performance or tape**

Write a dramatic monologue based on your book. Make sure to turn in a written script. You will perform or play your tape on the date the paper is due. Remind me that you need to do this, so I can introduce you. If you video- or audio- tape the scene, it must be of high quality. This means it has to be edited, costumed, and taken seriously. Don't just turn on a camcorder or audio recorder and giggle. If you do an audio drama, sound effects are a good idea. Keep in mind that I still want to see your interpretations of the text. The same rubric is used for all projects.

### 4. Artistic Interpretation

**Write a paper on pictures that you draw**

Create a series (three or more) of pictures that depicts major events and themes of your book. Bind the pictures and the paper in some attractive way. Your paper should be a sort of forward to the art. Tell me why you chose what you did and why you chose to draw it the way

you did. **What does this say about the point the author was trying to get across? What are the themes you were trying to depict? Why are they important?** The written paper is much more important, grade-wise, than the drawings. **Do not** just write a few sentences of summary on each picture. I want to see a paper, not captions.

## 5. Correspondence

### Write at least three letters about your book

This can be kind of a group project. Pick your partner carefully. You are graded on your letters, not your partner's, but not getting timely response to your letters can be a pain. Stop every so often and write to your partner about your book. Each letter should:

-  Tell your partner briefly what happened in your book.
-  **Tell your partner what you think or feel about your book.**
-  **Discuss what the author is doing to create this story or these characters.**
-  Ask your partners specific questions about his or her book.
-  Challenge your partner on things she or he has written previously.
-  Have the accurate date at the top.
-  Use all the conventions of a friendly letter.
-  Thank your partner for working with you.

You'll put your letters together in one packet like this:

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Top:    | Both color rubrics with each name and title<br>First letter written<br>Next letter written . . . |
| Bottom: | White rubrics, each filled out about your own paper  |

## 6. Book Talk

- I. Write and produce a book talk. Create an MP3 (other formats may work) file that tells us:
  - Narrator's first name only
  - Title of the book
  - Author's full name
  - Publisher
  - Copyright date
  - Discuss how one element of literature is used.
  - Why should someone else read this book? Sell it!
- II. Turn in script & file (2 minutes, **max.**) that I can load onto my computer then put on my website.
- III. **Turn in 1-2 pages journal on the process of creating this project. What did you learn? What surprised you? What would you do differently next time? What do you understand better about your book now?**

## 7. Alternative

### You design a project

As long as you end up with a paper that fulfills all the above criteria, the sky's the limit. Remember that I'm interested in knowing what you thought and felt. Write a proposal or fill out a check-in form so I can okay the project ahead of time. Attach the proposal to the back of the project before you turn it in.

One last thought: **DON'T JUST SUMMARIZE, ANALYZE!**