

Name: _____ Block: _____

Independent Reading Assignment

For this assignment, *you* will choose the book you want to read. There are three steps to this assignment.

- Pick a book to read. It may be fiction, nonfiction, a book of short stories, etc.
 - o Books must be at least 200 pages long. Please choose a book with a difficulty level appropriate for a high school reader. You should be reading a book that is new to you.
 - o Choose a book that is school appropriate. Although I will not personally be reading all the books you pick, use your good judgment in choosing a text. Will my mom kill me if she found out I was reading this? Will Mr. Peterson be fired when the school board learns he let his student read this book? The title of the book you choose must be submitted to me prior to reviewing the book.
- While reading the book, you will give a brief book talk to the class where you share your thoughts on the novel so far. The talk is worth 50 points.
- After reading the book, complete one of the eight project options. You may do each project option once. Each project is worth 50 points.

Book Project #1:

- Choose book by: Monday, September 24
- Book talk: (weeks of November 26-December 7) My date: _____
- Project due: Friday, December 7

Book Project #2:

- Choose book by: Monday, January 28
- Book talk: (weeks of April 8-19) My date: _____
- Project due: Friday, April 19

Independent Reading Book Talk

The book talk is designed to give the other members of the class a brief overview of the book you read and an idea of whether they might enjoy reading it.

Your book talk **MUST INCLUDE:**

1. Tell the class the title, author, and original publication date of your book (ideally, you will have the book with you to show to the class as well).
2. Open with a general statement about the book that gives your audience an overview. Don't begin your first sentence with the first event of the book. Instead, identify the genre and say generally who or what it was about. For example:
 - *To Kill a Mockingbird is a coming of age novel set in the American South during the 1930s. The narrator is a young girl named Scout, who learns important lessons about the poison of racial injustice and the value of moral courage.*
3. BRIEFLY summarize the book (don't spend too long on this).
 - a. You may want to tell who the main characters are, what the central conflict/idea is, and what the important events in the book are. It's best not to reveal too much or tell the ending.
 - b. I highly recommend you plan out your summary ahead of time (using notecards is a good idea), so you can be concise, clear, and ramble-free.
4. Finally, tell the audience if you would recommend the book or not, and explain your main reasons why. You may want to consider:
 - a. Was it an easy read or tough? Why?
 - b. Did it keep your interest? How?
 - c. Were the characters believable?
 - d. Would you recommend it for pleasure reading to your friends?

Note: Saying "this is a good book" or "I would definitely recommend this book" is NOT enough. You must tell us *why* you feel the way you do about that book. Be specific.

Optional: You may include any of the following additional areas in your book talk:

- Provide some brief background information about the author.
- Read a **SHORT** passage from the book (no more than a 2-3 paragraphs). This passage should be from a significant moment in the story that describes a main character in some way, illuminates the book's theme or central idea, represents an important point in the plot, strikingly reflects the author's style, or foreshadows something exciting. After you've read the passage, explain why you chose to read it to the class.
- Tell the class what you think is/are the theme(s) of the novel (the author's statement/message about human nature or society).

Your book talk will be graded on how well it fulfills the required criteria as well as clarity and preparedness.

Independent Reading Book Projects

Option 1: Additional Chapter

Oftentimes, a novel leaves the reader with uncertainty about the fate of the characters, with unresolved conflicts, or with an ambiguous ending. If your novel left you feeling unsatisfied, write an additional chapter to your book that ties up the loose ends or explains events more fully. You must be sure to:

- Write in the style of the author (to the best of your ability).
- Include both dialogue and description (if your novel does).
- NOT introduce new characters, events, or problems--but clarify existing ones.
- Write at least two typed pages.

Note: If there are existing sequels to your book, you may NOT choose this option! This book choice would probably not work well for historical fiction and non-fiction.

Option 2: Visual Representation

Complete a series of five drawings that show five of the major events in the plot of the book you read. Write captions for each drawing so that the illustrations can be understood by someone who has not read the book.

- Your illustrations should be neatly bound together in a “book.”
- Take time and care in selecting the events you would like to depict—they should be the five most significant moments in the book
- Each drawing should be colorful and full of detail and represent forethought and effort.
- Each caption should be two to four sentences in length and should include a description of the event, along with why the event was important

Note: Feel no hesitation in picking this option even if you are not a great artist. It is much more about your attention to detail and presentation as a whole than your artistic ability!

Option 3: What Would You Do?

Put yourself in the place of the main character of your book and describe how his or her life would have been different if you had been living it. Your essay should be at least two pages typed.

- This should be written in a formal style and contain a clear thesis.
- Refer to specific examples/events from the book and your own life when you write.

Option 4: Diary Entries

Keep a diary as one of the major characters of your book. Include the character's feelings and reactions to the events that happen in the book. You should include at least five diary entries (each entry should be at least one full paragraph) that cover the entire book (for example, one entry should be from the very beginning of the book, one from the ending, etc.).

- Each diary entry should be appropriately dated (if you don't know the exact dates, make up good guesses).
- Diary entries should refer to specific events in the novel and reflect back on those events. The entries should not just summarize what happens in the book but instead focus on the character's feelings and reactions to the events.

Option 5: Book Soundtrack

Create a playlist of songs that could be the background music (soundtrack) for a movie made of the book. Create a "jacket" with the album cover and song titles and explain why you have selected these songs and for what portions of the story.

- Your soundtrack should have 8-12 songs. You do not need to actually burn a CD with the songs (although you can if you want!). On a separate sheet of paper, provide a detailed explanation for why you chose each song.
- Create a CD "jacket" that lists the songs and has a decorated cover. The decorated cover should be original, neat, and detailed, and set the tone/scene for the album and book.

Option 6: Advertising Campaign

Create an advertising campaign for the release of the book you read. The campaign should include a press release and advertising poster.

- The press release should be approximately one page typed and should entice people to read the book. Include a brief summary of the book, information on the book's audience, and statements on why the book is a good read. *Remember*, this is not a book review, but an advertisement. Your purpose is to encourage readers to buy the book.
- The advertising poster (this can be done on a standard size piece of paper) should be colorful and entice people to want to pick up the book you read. Think of this poster hanging in a book store; how could the poster best encourage customers to purchase the novel?

Option 7: Facebook Page

Create a fake Facebook page for an important character from your book. This page *should not be made on Facebook*, but should instead be done by hand or created in a computer program. The character's Facebook page should have a layout similar to the real Facebook and include:

- A profile picture
- A friend list (with pictures)
- A current status posting
- The character's "wall" and appropriate wall postings to/from other characters
- An "info" page with things like relationship status, interests, jobs, education, "about me," group memberships, etc. (as relevant)

If you choose this project option, be sure your character's Facebook page really tells me something about the character and the book you read. Beautifully done Facebook pages with little information related to the book will not receive a high grade.

Option 8: Book and Movie Comparison

If a movie has been created of your book, watch the movie *after* reading the book. While you watch, take detailed notes. What is the same? What is different? How is it like or not like how you imagined the story while you read? In what way are the characters, settings, events, or themes portrayed differently or similarly in the movie? How did the presence of sound and visuals in the movie affect your understanding of the book? Did it alter your understanding any? Do you believe the movie is a successful adaptation? After a careful viewing of the movie, write a two-page paper (typed) about your observations.

- The essay should be written in a formal style and contain a clear thesis.
- Refer to specific examples/events from the book and the movie when you write.

Grading for Projects:

The projects will be graded based on the following criteria:

- 25 points: The project is detailed and shows evidence of fully understanding the book. The project utilizes specific details and examples from the book.
- 25 points: The project is neat, clean, and free of mistakes; there is evidence of time and effort put into the project.