

Independent Novel Study

Following are activities that can be completed with any novel. You can work your way through all of the part of the project or pick the ones that sound interesting to you. Each of these tasks are designed to build vocabulary and response skills in a fun and interactive way.

Part 1: Novel Selection

Select a novel appropriate for your grade and reading level. Read the first chapter to be sure it is a novel that appeals to you. You can pick any book you happen to have at home or something you can find online in an e-book or an audiobook format. If you're having a hard time finding a book to read take a look at the reading resources of Ms. Legge's website.

Part 2: Vocabulary

As you read your novel, make a list of words that you come across that are unfamiliar to you. When you have finished reading the novel, choose **one** of the following activities. Include a title and any necessary headings.

1. Vocabulary Log: Choose at least 15 words from your novel that you do not know the meaning of. Record the dictionary definition for each word (quote the page number for each word used).
2. Create a Crossword of at least 15 words from your novel. Provide a clue for each word and the answer key.
3. Create a Thesaurus: Select at least 15 words from your novel that seem overused or boring. Rewrite the sentence from the book in which the word was found with a better one (quote the page number for each word used).
4. Identify at least 15 interesting words from your novel and tell why you think each is interesting (quote the page number for each word used).

Part 3: Reading Journal (Connect & Question)

Your task is to keep a reading log, and to complete **3 Reader Responses**. Responses should address the following questions, but are to be written in paragraph form.

Response 1 Guiding Questions - (for the early chapters of the book)

1. What is the time and place of the book? What evidence in the book tells you this?
2. Name and describe the main character in the book. Describe him/her physically and describe his/her personality and history, if known. Then give your impression of him/her.
3. Name and describe a secondary character. Describe her/him physically and describe her/his personality and history, if known. Explain how s/he is important to the story and the ideas of the book.
4. Describe the relationship between two characters. Include their history together and details of their relationship. Explain the significance of their relationship to the book.
5. Describe one important event in the book and explain why it is significant to the story (to the plot, the characters, the ideas of the book).
6. Explain one specific aspect of the culture described in the book. Tell how it compares to a specific culture you are familiar with.
7. What are your feelings and thoughts about the novel based on one or more specific things you have read?
8. Find one specific idea, event, or behavior in the book that relates to real life. Explain how it relates to real life.
9. Tell about a connection you made with the story (text-to-self, text-to-text/media, or text-to-world). Explain how your connection helped you understand the story better.
10. Discuss five meaningful or deep-thinking questions you had while you read.

Response 2 Guiding Questions - (for the middle chapters of the book)

1. If the time or place changes during the book, explain how and give examples. How does this switching serve the story?
2. What is the general feeling or mood of the book? Give specific examples of how the author creates that feeling or mood.
3. Compare and contrast two characters psychologically. To do this, consider their behavior and personality. Consider whether their physical descriptions match or differ with their behaviors & attitudes.
4. Give an example of a conflict or conflicts between: i) two people ii) a person and his/her conscience (internal conflict) iii) a person and society iv) a person and an animal or nature v) a person and a spiritual/supernatural being
5. Who is the narrator of the story? Is s/he inside or outside the story? What is her/his relationship to the story?
6. Is the book written in the first or third person (I or s/he)? How does that affect the story?
7. What is your reaction to a relationship, event, behavior or message/theme of the book? Be clear about what you are reacting to and exactly what makes you respond as you do.
8. Choose a sentence or phrase that attracts you. Explain why you chose it, its value in the book and its value to you.

Response 3 Guiding Questions - (for the final chapters of the book)

1. If there is any special language used (dialects, foreign words, slang, etc.) give examples and explain its use and purpose. What is its effect?
2. Does the author use humor, irony, symbolism, or metaphors? Give examples and explain the effect.
3. What is the climax, of the novel? What major conflicts lead up to it and what is the resolution afterward?
4. What is the theme or themes in the novel? How does the author show this idea? Give evidence. Comment on how this theme fits in the novel and how it applies to life outside the book. What does this theme mean to you?
5. What did you learn from this novel? In answering this, you may comment on any aspect of the novel
6. including how it is written.

Part 4: Story Element Activities

Below are a variety of activities for you to pick from that will help you explore the story elements of character, setting, plot and theme.

Section One - Character:

1. Create a 'Wanted Poster' for a main character in the novel.
2. Write several diary entries made by one of the major characters.
3. Create a scrapbook that would belong to the main character. What items or images would the want to remember?
4. Create another character that would fit into the story. Write another chapter or choose one event to rewrite using that character. Remember to include a good description of your character.

Section Two - Setting:

1. Sketch a scene in the book depicting a part of the plot. (I'm marking for detail and accuracy not drawing talent!) Explain your illustration and why you chose to draw this scene
2. Draw a color map of where a major part of the story takes place. Label the major landmarks or points of interest.
3. Choose an important scene in the book, write a script for the scene and produce the scene on video with voice-over telling about it.
4. Make a 3-d model of a major scene from the novel.

Section Three - Theme:

1. Create a collage that represents and explains a major theme in the novel.
2. Find **three** songs that seem to relate to your novel. Write out the lyrics and then write an explanation of how they relate to the novel and the themes.
3. Create several pieces of art that illustrate the major themes/topics of the novel. Write an explanation of how they relate to the story.

Part 5: Reader Reflection

When we "read between the lines" or look for deeper meaning we are inferring. When that deeper understanding leads to a change in the way we see or do things, we are transformed. Your task is to look for the deeper meaning of the novel you read, making specific reference to the text and defending your position with sound reasons, and to discuss how this understanding changed you.

1. Describe a strong feeling or emotion that you experienced as you were reading this novel and what caused this feeling.
2. Give your opinion of the author's writing style? What images captured your interest? How did the author create suspense?
3. How can you relate to the story? Think about events, themes or emotions how can they relate to your life or something else you've read?
4. Write a letter to the author of the novel, expressing your thoughts, questions, etc.
5. Create a brochure to promote the book. Include a review of the novel wherein you try to get someone else to read it, a summary and a picture.