

MRHS English - Independent Reading Activities

Type: Standard

Due: Three Dates Throughout Semester

Each English student is required to read three novels during the course of the semester (in addition to one class novel). Students are required - additionally - to complete THREE of the following activities on due dates predetermined by the class.

Activity: Novel Review (may be submitted on any one of the three due dates)

These can be found in the binder at the front of our classroom. Students must complete ONE of these for ONE of the books they have read during the semester. These may be completed at any time during the semester and submitted to Coffin at students' convenience.

Activity: Book Talk (may be submitted on any one of the three due dates)

The purpose of the Book Talk is: to give students opportunities to read enjoyable and informative print and to provide opportunities for students to share responses to a book; to exchange ideas with peers; and to develop personal interpretations and responses to literature by reflecting upon, discussing and evaluating selections.

How a Book Talk is Accomplished:

- Should be accomplished with minimal need for prepared notes (bulleted cue cards are permitted).
- Share the title, author, and genre of the chosen novel.
- Bring in a copy of the book to show classmates.
- Summarize the plot of the book without revealing the ending (but don't give a paraphrase of what can be found on the book jacket).
- Describe the main character and his/her development in the book (fiction or non-fiction).
- Discuss themes presented in the novel.
- Read AND explain a favorite passage from the book (passages should be at least 200 words).
- Share what student liked/disliked about the book.
- The presentation should be approximately 4 minutes long.
- See rubric on reverse for assessment criteria.

Book Talk Assessment

Each category below must be present and clearly evident in each student's Book Talk, which means that he/she should be well-prepared and SHOULD choose to complete the Book Talk activity immediately following the completion of a novel while the story is still fresh in the student's mind. That is just a suggestion, but one that students who wish to excel should also heed.

Categories and Criteria	Level 4	Level 3	Level 2	Level 1
Introduction	Presented title, author, genre & copy of novel	Presented three of: title, author, genre & copy of novel	Presented two of four - title, author, genre & copy of novel	No formal intro to novel; no copy of novel to show class
Plot Discussion	Plot fully summarized; clear explanation of development	Plot summarized with some explanation of development	Plot simply mentioned; little explanation of development	Plot discussion not clearly evident in presentation.
Characterization	Main character(s) described; full character development	Main character(s) described; development not shown	Main character(s) briefly mentioned; little description	Main character(s) not mentioned
Theme Discussion	Themes stated explicitly and clearly explained/exemplified	Themes stated and strong explained/exemplified	Themes stated and somewhat explained	Themes stated but not explained
Favorite Passage	Passage well-read with a compelling explanation	Passage read and explained adequately and clearly	Passage read and explained in a somewhat clear manner	Passage read/not explained OR explained/not read
Opinions (Likes/Dislikes)	Opinions about novel clearly mentioned and explained	Opinions mentioned with an adequate explanation	Opinions mentioned with little to no explanation	Opinions offered without explanation/support
Presentation	Clear projection; full eye contact; perfect organization	Strong projection; some eye contact; good organization	Decent projection; little eye contact; poor organization	Poor projection; no eye contact; lacks organization

Oral Presentation Tips:

Since two of the four independent novel activities require students to present orally, here are some suggestions to make that oral presentation a success:

- ★ Be prepared. Take the time to plan and practice the oral presentation.
- ★ Ensure each category (as outlined in the rubrics) is both present and fully-developed.
- ★ Ensure that sufficient information appears so as to fulfil requirements, but not to go overboard on time requirements.
- ★ Both activities are meant to be informal, which means that students should be relaxed and have fun with the subject matter.
- ★ Again, the key to having confidence when presenting is to be fully prepared to do so AND - as stated - do not leave either activity until the final week of classes when the novels that were read are no longer fresh in the memory.

Activity: Character in a Bag (may be submitted on any one of the three due dates)

Again, students shall choose ONE personal novel to complete this activity. This activity is less about the plot of the novel and more about an interpretation of a central character from the novel. The objective for each presentation is for students to choose a central character and think of symbols that could be used to represent that character. Students will be able to analyze and interpret a chosen character from the novel and represent that character in symbolic form and present orally in class.

How Character in a Bag is Accomplished:

- Should be accomplished with minimal need for prepared notes (cue cards permitted). It will take 4 - 5 minutes.
- Share the title, author, genre of book, and the context of the chosen character to the plot.
- Bring a copy of the novel to show classmates.
- Select ONE character from the novel and find FIVE objects that are symbolically significant (which might represent) of him/her.
- What holds these objects (bag, box, purse, etc) could also be a significant symbol and would count as one of the five objects.
- Objects may be found around the house or they may be hand-made.
- Symbols shouldn't be too concrete (literal); figurative symbols are the expectation. (don't use a doll to represent a little girl)
- Students will present the character to the class by showing each object and explaining the objects' SYMBOLIC importance.
- Required Materials: Novel and the bag/box/can/etc of 'Symbols'

Character in a Bag Assessment:

Categories below shall be assessed on a sliding scale of 4 (Exemplary) to 1 (Weak). No credit is given if a category is ignored.

Completion of Instructions Have all items been included? (Five symbols, receptacle, cue cards, note cards for submission)	4	3	2	1
Choice of Symbol Are choices sufficiently figurative or literal? Have they been carefully/purposefully chosen?	4	3	2	1
Level of Analysis How accurately and deep does the student analyse each object	4	3	2	1
Creativity/Originality Has the student created a memorable presentation which displays his/her creativity?	4	3	2	1
Oral Communication Has the student spoken clearly? Does he/she project with eye contact, showing solid organization?	4	3	2	1

Activity: Multimedia Commercial (may be submitted on any one of the three due dates)

Again, students shall choose ONE personal novel for this activity. In this activity, students create a multimedia 'commercial' using Windows Movie Maker or PowerPoint that 'sells' the books they've read. This works well for either fiction or non-fiction. There must be representative music chosen to accompany the commercial and there should be a minimum of fifteen representative slides/photos, showing: a brief plot summary (similar to what you might find on the back of a book jacket, but not the same); an introduction to the main characters (also brief); significance of the book's title; five main events from the plot; setting (time period, location, etc) and genre (mystery, romance, biography, etc); two of your favorite phrases/quotes from the book; an illustration of the theme (moral or lesson) of the book; a movie poster for the book (easy if it has already been made into a movie - but make it creative nonetheless); your final thoughts on the novel. Lastly, the commercial should be timed to end when your musical selection ends.

Information Reflects accurate, specific, purposeful information, expanded to fully illustrate the novel. Purpose is clear.	4	3	2	1
Format Is logical and effectively contributes to understanding of the novel's concepts.	4	3	2	1
Clarity There is a clear beginning, an organized body, and a clear closure.	4	3	2	1
Design Format is well designed (use of color, graphics, sound, moving images, titles).	4	3	2	1
Images & Sound Images and graphics are clear and used appropriately; sound is audible.	4	3	2	1
Technical Multimedia product is technically correct (operates without flaws)	4	3	2	1

More Presentation Tips

- ★ Body language is important. Standing, walking or moving about with appropriate hand gesture or facial expression is preferred to sitting down or standing still with head down and reading from a prepared speech.
- ★ Do not read from notes for any extended length of time although it is quite acceptable to glance at your notes infrequently. Speak loudly and clearly. Sound confident. Do not mumble. If you made an error, correct it, and continue. No need to make excuses or apologize profusely.
- ★ Pause. Allow yourself and your audience a little time to reflect and think. Don't race through your presentation and leave your audience, as well as yourself, feeling out of breath.
- ★ Add humor whenever appropriate and possible. Keep audience interested throughout your entire presentation. Remember that an interesting speech makes time fly, but a boring speech is always too long to endure even if the presentation time is the same.