

Name _____

Book Analysis

The purpose of this assignment is to help you develop the comprehension and text analysis skills that will not only help you appreciate what you read, but will aid you in improving your own writing as you move toward high school. In addition, you will be encouraged to broaden your understandings of a particular work of literature in order to extend your understanding into what you see every day in your community and the world at large.

Procedure:

Once a trimester you will select a novel to read and write an analysis on. You will decide on a question from your question sheet to answer once you have finished the novel. Each student will write an insightful essay about what they read.

Expectations:

Questions are to be answered in essay form, with an introductory paragraph, supporting paragraphs, and a conclusion. An effective, well-constructed essay with detailed support should run approximately one single-spaced page (with normal margins and 12 point type, single spacing). Handwritten analyses are discouraged, as well as abnormally large fonts and spacing.

THIS IS NOT A BOOK REPORT! Your aim in writing your book analysis should not be to simply tell your reader what happened in the book. Book analysis questions are designed for and evaluated on:

- 1) Original thought
- 2) Clear and convincing support
- 3) Effort

Original thought means that you take personal stand on some aspect of your book. Clear and convincing support will require specific details and examples drawn from the book, including relevant quotations.

Effort means that this writing will involve a commitment of time on your part – with at least two drafts (sloppy and final). I encourage you to get a peer edit. You may even want to get an adult edit in addition.

THIS IS NOT A ONE-NIGHT QUICK ASSIGNMENT. DO NOT PROCRASTINATE!

Helpful tips:

- Read your book with care.
- Take careful notes as you read either in your own copy of the book or on Post-it notes.
- Make sure you clarify anything you misunderstood prior to trying to write your essay.
- For this type of writing, I (your teacher) am your main audience.
- Since I may not have read the book you're reporting on, give some information about the content of the book.
- Be sure to interweave the information about the content of the book within your critical and evaluative remarks.
- The more effectively you can integrate the two (book content/original ideas), the better your analysis will be.

The Introduction

The introduction paragraph is, perhaps, the most important part of your entire analysis. It is this paragraph which will determine whether a reader will continue reading what you have to say. This paragraph should be vivid, stimulating, and state the importance of what you will support in the rest of your paper. It should also set up the "map" of the paper, telling the reader what your paper will be about.

Grading

You will receive a grade in Reading as well as Writing for this assignment.

You will be scored holistically on your ideas and content for your Reading grade. Are you weaving your own analysis with some content from the book? Are you using relevant quotes that support your analysis? 100 points.

In Writing this assignment is out of 100 points as well. For writing you are graded on organization, sentence fluency, word choice, voice, and conventions (20 points each). Hopefully by now you know what these categories mean, but if you have questions, just ask.

Tips: Spellcheck is your friend, but it is not the only thing that can correct mistakes – humans can catch homophone errors that Spellcheck can't, for example. For Voice remember who your audience is – the teacher. This is a formal paper and should be written with that in mind.

BOOK ANALYSIS QUESTIONS

EXTENDING UNDERSTANDING

1. How are the people in the book shaped by the particular times in which they live?
2. What new ideas or clarification of old ideas came to you from reading this book?
3. If the main character kept a diary, what would be his/her entry on the most crucial day of his/her life? (Write as a diary entry – should include thought and feelings.)
4. "Like people in life, the characters in a book sometimes make us proud, sometimes ashamed of the human race." Comment using specific details to support your points.
5. Compare and/or contrast one of the characters in your book with a contemporary person – one you know something about or know personally.
6. Did what you read change your ways of thinking or influence you in any way? Explain with specific details and examples.
7. A nonfiction work may seem stranger than fiction. Explain how this is true in relation to your book.
8. Why was the hero (protagonist) able to accomplish what he/she did in this book?
9. How do the patterns of life in the time frame of your book differ from our own? How are they similar? (Try to move beyond superficial analysis here!)
10. The good or evil in a person's life sometimes grows out of the strengths or weaknesses in his/her character. How is this true of any major character in your book?
11. A person's character is revealed by the way he/she deals with a crisis. Give a detailed analysis of any major character in your book using this perspective.
12. In what way did you get any unique understanding of human psychology, that is, how and why people act and think the way they do?
13. Is any light thrown on moral, ethical or spiritual problems? Do you agree or disagree with the author's stand?
14. What would you do differently – how would you feel differently from the main character?
15. What does this story mean?
16. What character would you like to be? Why?
17. Why do you approve or disapprove of people's behaviors and attitudes towards life as seen in this book?
18. What larger understanding of the world – geographic, scientific, political, historical – can be achieved by reading this book?
19. Does the author give any specific attention to social problems or evils? Explain with details and examples.
20. What kinds of knowledge can this book give the reader? Be specific.
21. Choose a character you liked and would like to know better. Explain the reasons for your choice in detail.
22. How do the persons in the story influence the actions of other characters. Be specific and support in detail.

READING CRITICALLY: Text Analysis

23. What was the author's probable reason for writing this book – to teach, entertain, or make you think about a problem? (Give direct support with examples.)
24. How did the time and place affect the plot and characters? Could the story have happened in another time and place? How would the author have had to adjust for this change? (Don't belabor the obvious – this question calls for serious thought!)
25. You are the author trying to sell this book to a publisher. What would you say? (Remember – a publisher is in business to make money, so he/she needs to be convinced this book will sell a lot of copies.)
26. How does the action of plot of this book make either good or poor reading? (Again – examples are critical to effective support.)
27. Are there any features of this book of which you strongly approve or disapprove?
28. How well or how logically do the parts of the story fit together? What seems out of place? How well does the ending work?
29. Did you note any interesting details: language, dress, etc.? How did these details contribute to the effect the author was trying to create?
30. What part does setting play in this book? Look beyond the superficial here- how does the setting aid the author in his purpose?

COMPREHENSION:

31. Describe the relationship between the characters in the story using specific examples.
32. What might happen next – after the conclusion of your book?
33. Did you like the ending? Why or why not? How would you have it turn out?
34. Is any character changed by his/her experiences? How does he or she improve or deteriorate? (Be sure to connect these changes directly with the character's experiences.)
35. How did the author feel towards his main character? Admiration? Liking? Disapproval? Other? How do you know? Support with examples.
36. What did you like best about this work? Support with specific examples.

Book Analysis Outline

Name _____

Book title _____

Author _____

What is the question that you will strive to answer in your book analysis essay? (choose this from the list of questions I've provided for you)

Paragraph 1: Introduction

Thesis (the thesis clearly answers the question you chose and it sets a "road map" for your essay. You should have at least three ideas that support your thesis, because you have three paragraphs after this one, in which to prove your point):

Paragraph 2: Your first point

Topic Sentence (what can I expect this paragraph to be about? I should be able to trace this idea back to what your thesis said):

Quote (this should help you prove what your topic sentence says):

(pg. ____)

Paragraph 3: Your second point

Topic Sentence (what can I expect this paragraph to be about? I should be able to trace this idea back to what your thesis said):

Quote (this should help you prove what your topic sentence says):

(pg. ____)

Paragraph 4: your third point

Topic Sentence (what can I expect this paragraph to be about? I should be able to trace this idea back to what your thesis said):

Quote (this should help you prove what your topic sentence says):

(pg. ____)

Paragraph 5 (this is probably your conclusion, unless you feel the need to have six paragraphs)

Restate your thesis in a different way, using different words:
