

**American Literature
Personal Choice Book
Essay and Project Directions**

I. Essay

Choose **three** of the questions below to create a five-paragraph essay about what you have learned from the novel you selected. The **introduction** paragraph will be a brief summary of the plot of the novel. It must include the title and author, as well as your thesis statement. The three body paragraphs will answer each of the three questions you have chosen from this list. The final paragraph will be your conclusion/thoughts/opinions about the novel.

1. Write an analysis of one of the main characters in the novel you are reading right now. In your analysis, answer questions such as the following: What are the defining characteristics of this person? What do the character's words, actions, and relationships with other characters reveal about him or her? Does this character seem true to life? Can you sympathize/relate to/admire this character? Support your ideas and opinions with evidence from the novel.
2. Discuss three or four important similes/metaphors/examples of personification from the novel (quote them in the essay). How does the author use this language to convey setting and/or characterization? What images from the novel linger in your mind? Choose two or three that were the most powerful to you (quote them in the essay) and explain why/how they affected you.
3. What would you have called the book if you had written it? If you think the title chosen was fitting, what makes it an especially good title for this book? Support your ideas and opinions with evidence from the novel.
4. Flat characters remain the same from the beginning of a novel to the end. Round characters undergo changes as a result of the conflicts they face and try to resolve. Discuss two of the main characters from your novel – are they flat or round? Support your opinion with evidence from the novel.
5. A symbol is a person, place or thing that represents something beyond itself (think of the raven in Poe's poem). Choose a symbol from your novel and analyze it. Suggest what it means in the novel and explain why it is an appropriate symbol for the meanings the author assigns to it. Support your ideas and opinions with evidence from the novel.
6. Verbal/situational irony is the use of words/situations to express something other than, and especially the opposite of, the literal meaning. A person says one thing but means another. Discuss two or three examples of irony from the novel. Were they effective? Why were they used?
7. What is the mood of the novel? Give especially effective examples that evoke the mood and explain how they affected you.

II. Conclusion Paragraph

Choose **two** of the questions below to create the final paragraph of your essay, which will be your thoughts/opinions about the novel. Connect your thoughts to create a cohesive conclusion (which means choose two that will be able to flow well together).

1. What event (or scene) did you find the most surprising, memorable, or inspiring about your novel? Explain your choice.
2. Did reading this novel change you in any way? How?
3. Discuss/judge the conclusion of your novel. Would you have ended it the same way? Why or why not? Is it consistent with the characters you came to know? Does it resolve the major conflicts in the novel in a satisfactory way?
4. When you reached the end of the novel, how did you feel about the main characters? Why? If you could, would you want to trade places with one of them? Which one and why?
5. Choose an important quote from the novel and discuss it. Why was it placed in that particular part of the story? What does this quote mean to you? Do you agree with its sentiment? Why or why not?

III. Project Directions

Next, you will create a personal choice project that depicts a key event or scene from your story. You may use parent-approved websites or apps to assist you with your project, but the design and the final product need to be your own original work. You will share your project and a summary of your novel during a 5-10 minute presentation to the class.

Project ideas include, but are not limited to:

1. Design a comic strip that depicts the major scenes from your book.
2. Create a movie with friends and/or family that depicts a scene or an overview of the beginning, middle, and end of the book.
3. Use your photography skills to create a collage to illustrate the theme, the main characters, or symbols from the book.
4. Make a stop motion picture that depicts a major scene or an overview of the beginning, middle, and end of the novel.
5. Create a podcast or pretend radio broadcast where you interview someone or have someone interview you about your novel (for example, you could interview the main character about the story). You will need to have specific questions and answers ready for the interview.
6. Create a meal that depicts something the characters ate in the story, and describe the scene in which they ate it.
7. Write a poem, write a song, or draw or paint a picture that depicts a scene from the novel. Be creative!
8. Create a poster to advertise your book to persuade the public to read it. (Think movie posters, but with more details.)
9. Create a replica or model of the characters and/or a scene from your novel.
10. Create a puppet show to act out a scene or summary of your book.

***If you have an idea that is not listed here, please have your idea approved by Mrs. Wright before beginning the project.**

You must let Mrs. Wright know what you have chosen for your project no later than **March 8.**

Grading and Due Dates

- *Your essay is worth **25** points.
- *Your presentation is worth **25** points.
- *Your project is worth **40** points.
- *Completing/turning each assignment in on time is worth **10** points.

Your essay is due on **March 8. This is the Friday before spring break.**

You will present your project and a brief summary of your book **March 22 or 25. We will draw numbers on March 22, so everyone must be prepared that day. This is the week after spring break.**

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