

High School -- Directions to students for reading and note taking:

You will be asked to write about the required books as soon as you return to school. Taking notes in a journal on the books will help you remember what you read and will give you something to look for as you read. Use the items below to make notes of essential information on each book to help you write about and discuss the book in the fall. You will turn in these notes during the first week of school.

Title:

Know the exact title of your book. [Titles of a novel are punctuated by either underlining or italics, never by quotation marks!]

Author:

Know the author's name and how to spell it. [Authors are referred to by their full name or by their last name after their full name has been given. Never use just a first name.]

Setting:

Where and when does the story take place? If the book describes a particular historical period, what is relevant about that period as the background of the book?

Characters:

Who are the main characters? Consider how the author portrays each. Choose at least three different words or phrases that will give a succinct profile of the character. The words should not all be synonyms of the same trait. For each descriptive word, provide at least one example or detail that led you to decide that the word suits the character.

Plot:

When you write about the book, you will NOT be asked to give a summary of the plot. To help you remember what you read, however, it might be helpful to make a diagram, a story map, or a plot summary of the major episodes in the story. What, in your opinion, is the high point (climax, or turning point) of the story? How do you feel about the way the story resolves after that turning point?

Theme:

Literary works may have more than one theme. Prepare a statement about what seems to you to be the author's most important message in the novel.

Relevance:

Even though this book may be about a different time and place than your own, or about characters different from you, what ideas did you gain from reading this book? In what way does this book (through characters, setting, or theme) have anything to do with your own life?

Quotes:

Close reading of a book often engages our attention through a sentence or passage that stands out for us in a meaningful way. Maybe it seems funny, or ironic, or instructive, or just beautiful for some reason. Write down at least two quotes that captured your attention. Prepare to explain why you chose them.