

1<sup>st</sup> Semester Project: Novel

Choose one novel that you have read for your outside reading assignments (Short Forms) and complete the following. You will gather together the following information into a packet. This is a major project that cannot be done the night before it is due. Please use a folder (not a binder) and follow the format given below. All pages must be typed and all rules regarding plagiarism apply. We will be having after-school tutorials at various times during the semester during which you can bring in any questions you may have and I will help you.

1. Biographical information (1 page) 10 points: When he/she was born/died, biographical background important to understanding the novel; important family, community, national/world events that influenced the author and novel; other artistic influences; literary and critical responses received during life and/or posthumously.
2. Point of View (1 page) 20 points: Narrative perspective. Is the novel written in 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> person style? Is it a reminiscence or recent perspective written in present tense or past tense? If in the 1<sup>st</sup> person, is he/she the protagonist or an observer? If in 3<sup>rd</sup>, is he/she omniscient, limited omniscient, or objective? Are there any shifts in point of view during the novel? (Shifts may come from the changed view(s) of the narrator or from different narrators). What effect does the author achieve with point of view and what seems to be his/her purpose?
3. Setting (1 page) 20 points: Where and when does the novel occur? How is the environment described? Any symbolic meanings in the setting? How does the author use the setting? What atmosphere is created by the setting? How important is the setting to the novel?
4. Diction (3-4 pages) 50 points: Analyze the author's word choices. First discuss the work in general: is the diction informal, formal, neutral, colloquial? Explain and give an example. Does the author use imagery? Metaphoric and/or ironic devices? Is the language plain or flowery? Concise or strong or lyrical? Does diction indicate social status, education, region? How much dialogue is used? How different is the dialogue from the narrative voice? How distinct is the dialogue from character to character? Select three passages each about ½ page featuring different plot segments. Copy the segments and include in your Long Form. Closely read the passages and discuss the diction and explain how the diction helps define the character, set the tone, and further the theme.
5. Syntax: (3-4 pages) (word order, pattern) 50 points Analysis of sentence and phrase patterns.
  - a. Make some general observations: are the sentences predominately simple or complex? What about length? Level of formality? Any fragments? Rhetorical questions? Parallel structure? Repetitions? Are sentences loose, periodic? Is there much variety to the sentence pattern? How does the author use syntax to create rhythm and flow of the language? How does the author use syntax to enhance effect and support meaning?

- b. Using one of the same passages from the diction section above, focus on the author's syntax. What effect is he/she creating? Comment on how these choices help define character, set tone, further theme, etc.
6. Concrete Detail/Imagery (1 page) 20 points: Words or phrases that appeal to the 5 senses-most often visual. Look for recurrent images. What function does the imagery seem to have? Use direct quotations.
  7. Symbolism (1 page) 20 points: When an image is used to suggest complex or multiple meanings (ex: hawk for war, dove for peace, etc) it becomes a symbol. Is the novel highly symbolic? Allegorical? Point out images used as symbols. What function does the symbolism seem to serve? Use direct quotations.
  8. Tone (1 page) 20 points: Author's attitude toward subject, characters, and reader. Could be playful, serious, angry, ironic, formal, etc. Generally, an author uses a limited variety of tones, often two or three complimentary ones. Discuss the book's tone and observe how the author creates it through plot, diction, syntax, imagery, figurative devices. Use direct quotations.
  9. Theme (1 page) 20 points: The theme refers to the book's controlling idea or central insight. Express as statements with subject and predicate not as a word or phrase (i.e. Wrong: "loyalty" or "loyalty to country"; Right: Loyalty to country often inspires heroic self-sacrifice." Wrong: "The futility of evil" Right: "Evil is futile.") Discuss any motifs you can identify. (Motifs are dominant ideas in a work of literature, part of a major theme. It may consist of a character, a recurrent image or a verbal pattern) Discuss the author's intention.
  10. Significance of title (1/2 page) 10 points: Comment on the book's title. What message does the author want to convey with the title? Does the meaning of the title change for the reader as the novel unfolds?
  11. Memorable Quotes (1 page) 20 points: (5-8 total) passages, sentences, fragments that capture the essence of the story and style. Briefly discuss the significance to the work.
  12. Research/literary criticism (2 pages) 40 points : read at least 2 critiques or literary review. Be sure these come from substantial and reputable sources such as *The New York Times* or an academic source. Cliffs Notes don't count. Read and digest the information and write a short summary of what you gained from the reading. Please note that you are summarizing your reaction to the article, not the article itself. For example, you might want to think in terms of three important insights you gained for the article. Include as an attachment to the bibliography a copy of each article that shows your notes and any highlighting, etc.
  13. Additional comments (1 page) 20 points : Did you enjoy the novel? Strengths, weaknesses, lingering questions? Can you relate it to any other books you have read? Any insights into human folly or triumph? Do you expect any lasting effects on how you think or feel about something?
  14. Bibliography (1 page) 30 points: attach a bibliography of any outside sources you use. Also, if using quotes, paraphrases, etc. within the Semester Project you must use appropriate citations.