

Independent Reading Projects

(Adapted from K.Reynolds' ideas for independent reading projects)

Objective: Each student will read an AR book of his/her choosing and complete a project or book review related to the literature. This chosen book must be approved by the teacher and meet the required lexile score (This score indicates your reading level and comes from your MAPS and MCA scores). *Books made into movies are not allowed. You cannot read a book your friend is reading or has already read.

Requirements:

1. You may choose any high-interest classic novel or young-adult novel as long as it is reading level appropriate, on our AR list, and not part of an earlier, current, or future curriculum. Additionally, books made into movies are not allowed.
2. Once you have decided on a book, you must "register" it by writing the title, the author, and the total number of pages with your teacher. Once you have "registered" your book, the project you turn in must be on that book. *Projects submitted on books that have not been registered and/or approved will NOT be graded. A late penalty of ten points a day will be deducted from the overall grade for the project.
3. For each book you read, you will complete a project outside of class. You will receive a list of a wide variety of projects from which to choose.
4. You will also keep a daily journal in which you record the pages you read, a statement of what happened, and also a statement of your opinion.
5. Include the following information on your final project:
 - your full name, date, and class title (Reading 8)
 - title of the novel you read and author
6. Projects will be based on the following:
 - Timely registration (10pts)
 - Physical Appearance (neatness, organization, color, etc.) (70 pts.)
 - Content and Detail (To what extent does this project prove to me that you read this book? Does the final product reflect well thought-out ideas and demonstrate your understanding of the novel?) (70 pts)

7. When choosing projects which involve drawing, you absolutely may NOT copy, Xerox, or trace the book cover or any pictures found in the book. This involves no creative thinking on your part whatsoever and will not be given credit.
8. Projects which require a performance or presentation of some sort such as creating a video need to be between 4-7 min. in length. Written projects need to be 5 pages in length.
9. Even though certain projects may really appeal to you, remember to make sure the project you choose will work well with the novel you read.
10. You will also be required to take the AR test. Your score will be registered in percentage points (Separate grade worth 100 pts.)

Important Dates to Remember:

Registration form logged in Writing Notebook by: _____

AR Test (bring book) _____

Project Due Date: _____

Book Projects

*Projects which require a performance or presentation of some sort, such as creating a video or cassette tape, need to be between five and ten minutes in length. Written projects need to be between three and five pages in length.

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1. Children's Story: Turn the novel you read into a children's story by retelling the plot in a simple way with vocabulary appropriate for youngsters. Make sure your creation looks like a children's book, complete with a hard cover, an appealing book jacket with the title and author, and colorful illustrations above and below your writing. DO NOT use lined paper, and make sure all writing is either typed or written neatly with a black marker. Your children's book should be 12-15 pages in length and capture the key elements of the novel.
2. Write Your Own Scene: Write a scene that could have happened in the book you read, but didn't. Be sure to write in the same style as the author. Your rewritten scene should be between 3-5 pages in length, double spaced, 12 point Times or Palatino. Additionally, on a separate page, include a brief explanation of what has occurred up until this point in the

novel and give a general description of the characters. In a second paragraph, explain why you made the changes you did and how they would have affected the outcome.

3. Rewrite the Ending: If you did not care for the way your book ended, here is your opportunity to change it. Rewrite a new ending to the book you read. Be sure to write in the style of the author, but DO NOT include any of the original language. Your rewritten ending should be 3-5 pages in length, double spaced, and in 12 point Times or Palatino. DO NOT explain how the ending should be changed. Write as if you were writing the story. On a separate page describe the original ending and the changes you made and then explain why you made these changes. Include a xerox copy of the last three pages of the novel you read.
4. Podcasts: Leveraging the recording capabilities of most computers and mobile devices, you could explore the role of tone and sound by creating podcasts in the fashion of old-school radio shows. Using Garageband, Audacity, AudioBoo or any other sound recorder, you can retell portions of stories, complete with background music and sound effects, to demonstrate your understanding of tone, setting and theme, as well as practice your reading fluency
5. Timeline: Brainstorm a list of all the major events in the plot from beginning to end and then organize them, not in the order they are written, but in the order they would have happened if the events actually took place in real life. Create a timeline using a long strip of butcher paper or poster board. On your timeline, write a short description of what happens for each event and, if possible, try to identify the time of each event with dates, seasons, etc. Add pictures and symbols to make your timeline colorful. All writing should be done in black magic marker or typed and then taped neatly onto the butcher paper or poster board.
6. Test: Create a test for the book. Include a variety of kinds of questions such as true/false, multiple choice, matching, short answer, essay, or any other kind of question (include at least three different types of questions). Be creative, but you must have a total of fifty (50) questions, one of which must be an essay. Be sure to write clear directions for each section. Attach a completed answer key which must also include a sample essay. (Do this by xeroxing or printing out a second copy of the test and filling in your answers on the test). Your test must be typed.
7. Model of the Setting: If the place where the story takes place is a significant part of the story, create a model of the setting. Create your model in either a large box, on a piece of cardboard or piece of wood. Be sure to make it as realistic as possible. Include lots of details in your model which demonstrate events that occur in the novel you read. You may also want to include characters from your novel on the model you create. Label each place. On a piece of paper, write/type at least a one page description of the setting and its significance to the rest of the story.
8. Comic Book: Create a comic book based on the novel you read. It should have an illustrated cover with the title and author, and be comic book size. Inside, retell the story using dialogue and descriptions of the setting and characters. Put your writing in bubbles. Create colorful illustrations that help tell the story. The comic book should be at least 10-12 pages in length.

9. **Diary:** Choose one main character from the novel you read and create a diary from his/her point of view that reveals all the major events in his/her life as well as this character's feelings about these events including his/her hopes, dreams, problems, concerns and frustrations. Fill the diary with entries spread out over the entire period of time from the beginning of the novel to the end. Begin with "Dear Diary," and write from the first person point of view (ex: Dear Diary, today I went to see my best friend and we. . .). For each entry, if possible, write a date. Remember many dates of holidays can be checked on a calendar. If no dates are given, but seasons or other clues are given, then guess an approximate date. Place your entries into a cover that you create, organizing them in the proper order. On the first page, include an information sheet identifying the full name of the character, his/her age (guess if you don't know), birthdate (if known), where he/she lives, and any other important information. The diary project should be at least 15 pages in length.
10. **Magazine:** Create a magazine which depicts the major events, controversial issues, and significant themes developed in the novel you read. Your project should realistically portray a professional magazine. All articles in your magazine must be typed and arranged into columns. If you cut and paste the columns onto the page, xerox the final product. You will need a colorful front cover with the name of your magazine, date of edition, a picture which relates to your most important article, and short descriptions of the kinds of articles featured in your magazine. Remember, EVERYTHING in your magazine needs to be related to the novel you read. You can have a "Dear Abby" section with letters from characters asking for advice about their problems and then responses of advice, articles related to significant events in the novel, advertisements, and anything else you might find in a magazine. The magazine should be 3-4 pages in length.
11. **Newspaper:** Create a front page to a newspaper that is devoted entirely to the book you read. The front page should look as much like a real newspaper as possible with writing in columns, headlines, a newspaper title, etc. You can include a variety of different kinds of features including horoscopes for each character, "Dear Abby" letters, comic strips, news articles, advertisements, personal ads, an obituary section, or anything else you might find in a newspaper. Everything you include; however, must be based on events and characters in the book you read. Articles must be typed. The newspaper should be 3-4 pages in length.
12. **Scrapbook:** Create a scrapbook for one of the main characters that reflects the many events that occur to him or her in the novel you read. You can include photographs, letters, postcards, telegrams, a family tree, newspaper article clippings, memorable items, or anything else you can think of that you might find in a scrapbook. If you include objects or photographs, be sure to write captions below describing what they are or what's going on and their significance to the character. Create a nice cover for your scrapbook. On the inside, paste an information sheet identifying the full name of the character, his/her age (guess if you don't know), birthdate (if known), where he/she lives, and any other important information. The scrapbook should be 10-12 pages in length.
13. **TV Talk Show:** Suppose the major characters from the novel you read are guests on a TV talk show like Ricki Lake, Oprah, or Montel Williams, only you are the host. Develop a

"hot" topic which these characters can all relate to (ex: for *The Princess Bride* you could use, "My husband tried to kill me"). You may want to even include the author as one of your guests or perhaps a counselor who can give advice to each character. Gather your friends to take on these roles and tape the show "live" on video. Remember to advise your friends to stay in role. Be sure to have a theme song to go with your show and mention the topic for your program. You will also need to introduce each character and ask probing questions that reveal who he/she is, how he/she is related to the other character(s), his/her beliefs, motivations (reasons for doing certain actions), and anything else of importance to your topic. Be sure to take questions from your audience or callers. Include at least one commercial break in your show (all commercial(s) must somehow relate to the novel you read). You are required to write a script and make sure each person who is in your video has a copy to study. Turn the script in with the videotape. 5-7 minutes in length.

14. Photo Album: Seek out friends, family, teachers, and classmates with a camera, ask them to pose in positions and places that reveal events in the novel you read, then shoot! Make sure your pictures are not just of people smiling and saying cheese, though. Your pictures need to reveal EVENTS that occur in the novel. Use small props and costumes in your pictures to help identify who each character is and what is going on, and try to choose models who resemble the characters. Once you have your pictures, arrange them in a photo album in the order the events occur. Below each, write a caption that explains who the people are, what is going on and, if possible, the approximate date. Write the captions from the point of view of one of the main characters (ex: This is my best friend and I when we...). On the inside, paste an information sheet identifying the name of the character, his/her age (guess if you don't know), birthdate (if known), where he/she lives, and other important information about this person. 10-12 pages in length.
15. Tour: Imagine that you have been given the task of conducting a tour of the town in which the book you read is set. Make either a video or cassette tape describing the homes of the characters and places where important events in the book took place. Plan to include brief chats with the novel's characters along the way. Fill your audience in with any local rumors, town gossip, or any other interesting tidbits about the people that live there. Prepare by creating a script. Turn this script in along with your tape. 3-5 minutes in length.
16. Movie Preview: The book you have read has just been made into a movie and you have been hired to create an interesting, attention-getting, preview that will make movie-goers all across the country want to come see this new release. Prepare a script, practice, and then videotape short scenes to be used for a preview. Remember previews should not reveal whole scenes, but instead, give us quick glimpses of what the movie is about. Use an attention-getter at the beginning of your preview by having a narrator ask a question, describe a situation, etc. (just like when you write an attention-getter for the introduction of an essay). Add appropriate background music which fits the mood or atmosphere of the overall movie. Be sure to videotape an interesting visual design of the title (to be shown at the end of the preview) and mention actors and actresses who star in this feature film. (Turn in the script with this project!) 3-5 minutes in length.

17. Storytelling: Turn the novel you read into an oral story which you tape on cassette. No NOT read from the novel, but instead, retell the story in your own words. On your tape, before you actually begin your story, introduce the title and author. Be sure to use appropriate tone and volume as well as special sound effects to help make your story more exciting! You might even want to use music. Develop a different voice for each of the main characters who "speak" in your story. (ex: If you were telling the story "Little Red Riding Hood," when you came to the part where Little Red says, "My what BIG teeth you have" you would speak in a high pitch voice and then switch to a much deeper, rough voice when the wolf responds, "All the better to eat you with.") You will obviously have to skip parts of the story because a novel is very long. Create a script to use when you tell your story. Turn the script in with your tape. 5-10 minutes in length.