***Independent Novel Task Sheet***

* Now that you have chosen your independent novel, you must complete the following weekly activities as you read.
* Each of these tasks should be a minimum of two pages in length – one page for the summary of pages read, and one page for the designated task.
* All work must be submitted to me via Google Docs by 11:59 p.m. the day the work is due.

**Fill out the information below and the “anticipated number of pages” column.**

*Name:*

*Title of novel:*

*Author:*

*Total number of pages in novel:*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Week / Due Date** | **Anticipated Number Of Pages** | **Tasks Due** |
| 1 November 2 |  | Summary of pages read  Explanation of exposition |
| 2 November 9 |  | Summary of pages read  Discussion of character |
| 3 November 16 |  | Summary of pages read  Explanation of author’s style |
| 4 November 23 |  | Summary of pages read  Discussion of “complications” |
| 5 December 3  (Monday after Thanksgiving) |  | Summary of pages read  Analysis of setting and theme |
| 6 December 7 |  | Summary of pages read  Critical book review |

**Weeks 1 – 6: Summary of pages read (you must do this in addition to the weekly tasks):** summarize the events that occurred within the pages that you read. These summaries should be detailed (more detailed than the final summary that you will hand in with your final report). Be certain that the summary is yours – not the product of a “cheat site.”

**Week 1 - Explanation of exposition:**  As you’ve learned throughout your English classes, most plots follow a set formula: 1.) Exposition, 2.) Rising Action, 3.) Climax, 4.) Falling Action, and 5.) Resolution. The exposition of a narrative sets the tone and introduces the setting, characters, and gives the circumstances or background information necessary to understanding the story. Explain how your author develops the exposition of your novel and use direct quotes from your novel to support your writing.

**Week 2 - Discussion of character:** At this point in your reading, you should be introduced to most, if not all, of the major and minor characters. For this task, you should identify the protagonist and antagonist (remember, the antagonist does not have to be human)and give a 1-2 paragraph introduction of each*.* Include their major attributes (traits) and include direct quote evidence to support your description. Remember that authors use both direct and indirect characterization when introducing characters – pay attention to both. In addition to the two characters above,ask yourself what the function and significance of each minor character is? Make this determination based upon the character's history, what the reader is told (and not told), and what other characters say about them. Pick two of these minor characters that stand out to you as especially significant and explain your choice (about a paragraph for each).

**Week 3 - Explanation of author’s style:** Style is the verbal identity of a writer, oftentimes based on the author's use of diction (word choice) and syntax (the order of words in a sentence). A writer's use of language reveals his or her **tone** or the attitude toward the subject matter. Style is often conveyed not in what is said, but rather in *how* it is said. Find three examples from your book so far where your author’s style is obvious, and explain why you chose them. Be sure you type out the passages and include page number citation.

Note: Key aspects in styles of writing include:

1. sentence length, structure, variation, and position
2. the use of sensory details, [figurative language](http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/24626.aspx), and other literary devices
3. the use of [sound devices](http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/24133.aspx)--alliteration, onomatopoeia, rhythm, repetition
4. [the use of little, or a great deal of dialogue](http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/12897.aspx)
5. Interesting or specific word choice
6. [tone](http://www.brighthub.com/education/k-12/articles/11687.aspx)
7. the use of local color or slang
8. the use of irony

**Week 4 - Discussion of “complications”:** Throughout the story there are scattered incidents, or complications, that keep up your feeling of curiosity as to what will happen next. These elements of suspensehave been used to keep the plot moving, and most importantly to keep you reading. List a minimum of five “complications” your author introduces to the novel and explain both why you chose them and how they add to the overall suspense of the novel. Be sure you are choosing events that occur at different points throughout the novel so far.

**Week 5 - Analysis of setting and theme:** Setting can add an important dimension of meaning, reflecting character and embodying theme. Explain how the physical details of the setting become linked with the values, ideals, and attitudes of the characters in your novel and help to suggest the message or theme of your novel.

**Week 6 – Book review:** A book review is a description, critical analysis, and an evaluation on the quality, meaning, and significance of a book, **not a retelling**. It should focus on the book's purpose, content, and authority. A critical book review is not a book report or a summary. **It is a reaction paper in which strengths and weaknesses of the material are analyzed**. It should include a statement of what the author has tried to do, evaluate how well (in the opinion of the reviewer – you!) the author has succeeded, and **presents evidence** to support this evaluation.

**Things you may want to include in your review:**

1. **Give the essential information** about the book: title, author, first date of publication, type of book, and general subject matter.
2. **State the author’s purpose** in writing the book. Sometimes authors state their purpose , when they do not, you may arrive at an understanding of the book’s purpose by asking yourself these questions:
3. Why do you think the author write on this subject rather than on some other subject?
4. From what point of view is the work written? Does that matter?
5. Was the author trying to give information, to explain something, to convince the reader of something?
6. Does the author seem biased in any way? Why might that be significant?
7. Who is the intended audience?
8. **Evaluate the book** for interest, accuracy, objectivity, importance, and thoroughness.

**You may want to…**

* + Respond to the author's opinions. What do you agree or disagree with? And why?
  + Respond to the author’s use of character. Were they well developed? Compelling? Realistic? Explain.
  + Discuss the quality of the plot. Did the author follow through on plot points? Did anything leave you unsatisfied? What has the author omitted or what problems were left unsolved? What specific points are / are not convincing? Explain.
  + Discuss the importance of the writing itself. Does the author’s use of language stand out to you in any way? Is it artistic? Poetic? Dry? Tedious? Did the author set up the structure of the book in an unusual or specific way (short chapters, sections, as a diary or letters, etc.). If so, how does this impact the readability of the book? Explain.
  + Discuss the success or failure of the book. Does the author seem to have accomplished his/her purpose? Explain.

1. **Relate the book to larger issues.** Can the author’s ideas be applied to issues outside the immediate/obvious subject area? What possibilities does the book suggest? Are there hints that the author is using this book to address/parody/symbolize some larger topic? If possible, compare it with other books on similar subjects or other books by different authors.
2. **Explain** how did the book affect you? Were any previous ideas you had on the subject changed, abandoned, or reinforced due to this book?
3. **Comment on the value of the book**. Would you recommend this book to others? Why?

***But why do I have to read a “classic” piece of literature??***

1. **You’ll increase your vocabulary.** Whether you want to impress your in-laws, boost your ACT scores, or deliver more effective presentations at school, it’s worth familiarizing yourself with words that instantly reflect your intelligence.
2. **While you’re at it, you’ll also improve your social skills**. A 2013 study showed that reading the classics, in contrast with commercial fiction and even non-fiction, leads to better social perception and emotional intelligence.
3. **You’ll be reading something of value.** The classics, and their typically universal themes, have stood the test of time; these are books in which we still find characters, experiences, emotions, and perspectives relevant today.
4. **The classics provide an opportunity to understand history and culture in context.** In his 1970 Nobel Lecture in Literature, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn said that “the only substitute for an experience we ourselves have never lived through is art, literature.”
5. **The classics challenge the brain… in a good way.** Linguistic functions used by Shakespeare have been demonstrated to stretch the brain, and researchers believe that a thorough reading of Jane Austen is associated with a level of cognitive complexity beyond that involved in solving a difficult math problem!
6. **Knowledge is power.** IQ is the best predictor for job performance, educational attainment, income, health, and longevity—and reading is still considered the best way to improve intelligence.

***That’s why!***