

## Not Your Typical Book Report Book Report Options



Select a different “report” each trimester. Remember, there are other options posted in the room, on my website, and on Google Classroom.

Make sure that on your work you clearly label the **title** of the book, the **author, genre, and which option it is**. Your name **must also appear clearly on either the front or back**.

- 1. Character astrology signs.** After reading brief descriptions of the astrology or sun signs, figure out which signs you think three of the main characters from your book were born under. Write an explanation of why you think they fit the sign, drawing on their actions, attitudes, and thoughts from the book.
- 2. Heroes and superheroes.** Select two or three people your character would think of as a hero or superhero. Describe the characteristics of the hero and why those characteristics would be important to your character. Also describe which characteristics your character would most want for himself/herself that the hero or superhero possesses.

- 3. Create a childhood for a character.** If your main character is an adult, try to figure out what he or she would have been like as a child. Write the story of his or her childhood in such a way that shows why he or she is the way he or she is in the novel.
- 4. Critique from the point of view of a specific organization.** Select an organization that might have a lot to say about the actions or portrayals of characters in the novel you read, and write a critique of the book from its point of view. For example, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals might have a lot to say about Lennie's treatment of animals in *Of Mice and Men*, The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the portrayal of Crooks, and the National Organization of Women on the portrayal of Curley's wife and the fact that she was never given a name.
- 5. Social worker's report.** If the events in the novel merit it, write a report as a social worker would on the conditions in the home and whether or not it's a good environment for a child. For example, if a social worker went to the McNabs' house in *Maniac Magee* by Jerry Spinelli (1990, Little, Brown) how would she describe the home and parenting style of Mr. McNab? What would her recommendations be?
- 6. College application.** Create the application that a character you have just read about could write and submit to a college. Use all the information you know about the character and infer to create the rest of it. On the application include *Name*, *Academic Rank in Class*, *High School Courses Taken and Grades*, *Extracurricular Activities* and *Personal Activities*, and *Work Experience*. Choose one of the following questions to answer in a one-page essay from the character's point of view: 1) what experience, event, or person has had a significant impact on your life? 2) Discuss a situation where you have made a difference. 3) Describe your areas of interest, your personality, and how they relate to why you would like to attend this college.
- 7. School counselor's recommendation letter.** Write a summary appraisal from the school counselor's point of view that assesses the character's academic and personal qualities and promise for study in college. The college is particularly interested in evidence about character, relative maturity, integrity, independence, values, special interest, and any noteworthy talents or qualities. Why do you feel this student would be well-suited to attend college?
- 8. Talk show invitation.** Select a main character, think about his or her involvements and experiences, then figure out which talk show would most want your character on as a guest. What would they want the character to talk about? Who else would they invite on the show to address the issues the character is involved in? Write the correspondence between the talk show host and the character in which the host explains what the character should focus on while on the show. After the show, have them exchange one more letter mentioning how they felt about what happened.
- 9. Radio exchange.** Your character calls into a radio show for advice. Choose which show your character would call in to and then create the conversation he or she would have with the radio advice giver.
- 10. Movie recommendations.** From all the movies you've seen in the last couple of years, pick five you would recommend that your character see. Give a brief summary

of each movie and a detailed explanation as to why you think the character should see it, making certain to connect your character to the types of movies you've chosen.

- 11. Create a home page.** Select several characters and design a home page for each of them, picking out appropriate backgrounds and pictures and then creating information that would tell a viewer about your character. Also, create links to at least five different sites that you think your character would be interested in. Then write up and post on the page an explanation of how you made the decisions you did and what you believe this tells us about the character. See *Fakebook*.
- 12. Title acrostic.** Using construction paper, tag board, etc., write the title of the book down the side of the paper. For each letter in the title, construct a sentence that begins with that letter and that tells something **significant** about the story. Be detailed.
- 13. Cartoon squares.** Create a series of six drawings in six squares that shows six significant events in the novel. Under each picture or cartoon, write detailed sentences explaining the drawings and their importance.
- 14. Letter exchange.** Create a letter exchange between a character and the author or write a series of self-reflective letters from several characters on what the character learned about himself, others, and life.
- 15. Awards.** Create an award for each of the main characters based on their actions in the novel. One might be awarded "most courageous" for fighting peer pressure, another might be awarded "wisest" for the guidance he or she gave other characters. For each award, write a paragraph that explains why this character deserves this award. *Minimum of four awards.*
- 16. Talk show on issues in novel.** Create and perform a talk show around one of the major issues or themes in the novel. For example, after reading *The Crazy Horse Electric Game* by Chris Crutcher (1987, Dell) you might want to discuss the issue of running away from home. Include people to represent several points of view on the issue. You might include characters from the book, a social worker, a police officer, a gang member, etc.
- 17. Dream vacation.** Where do you think your character would most like to go on a vacation? Pick a spot, describe it, and explain why he or she would want to go there or download information from the Internet on the place. Then write a day-by-day itinerary of what the character would do each day and why you think the character would enjoy this activity.
- 18. Scrapbook.** Think about all the kinds of mementos you would put in a scrapbook if you had one. Then create a scrapbook for your character, cutting out pictures from magazines or drawing the mementos he or she would have in a scrapbook. For each item, write a caption describing the scene and the "memories."
- 19. Music.** After reading a novel, figure out how you would divide the book into sections. Then select a piece of music that you think captures the feel or tone of each section. Record the pieces and if possible do voice-overs explaining what is

happening in the novel during the piece of music and why you felt this piece of music fit the section of the novel.

- 20. Poetry.** Write three poems in response to the novel. The poems can be about the characters, where the book took place, or the themes in the book. Poems must be a minimum 10 lines each.
- 21. File a complaint.** Adapt the persona of one of the characters who you feel was portrayed in a sexist or racist manner. Write up a complaint explaining what you feel was unjust in your portrayal and explain the actions you would like the author to take to remedy the biased portrayal.
- 22. Tangible or intangible gifts.** Select a character and figure out what two or three things you believe your character most needs or wants. Draw or cut out pictures to represent these “gifts” and write to your character an explanation of why you picked these things out for him or her.
- 23. Talk to the author.** Write a letter to the author of the book explaining to him or her why you think he or she wrote the book and what he or she was trying to show through the book. Be sure to explain what you got out of the book. If the author is still alive, send the letter to the author via the publisher of the book.
- 24. Point of view column.** Write an opinion column like those that appear on the editorial page of the newspaper. Choose a theme or topic from the novel you just read and write the column from the point of view of one of the characters. Your character might write about the importance of education or why we should accept people who are not like us.
- 25. Character monologues.** Select an event in the story that characters have different views on. Then write up two or three characters’ opinions on the same event in the form of monologue (one person talking to him or herself).
- 26. Found poems.** Select a chapter from the novel you have just read that you consider powerful or interesting. Then select words, lines, and phrases that you think project strong images and show the impact the chapter makes. Arrange this material into a poem AND write a paragraph giving insight as to why you chose the lines you did and what they mean to you.

The following example comes from Chapter Twenty in *Spite Fences* by Trudy Krisher (1994, Delacorte):

#### **Violence at the Lunch Counter Sit-in**

*Fist slammed into George Hardy’s face  
Glasses slid to his chin Shattered into a spider’s web. River of red blood  
Running from his nose.  
It was the red color of the fence The red color of the earth  
on which I stood It was red  
The color of my life this summer The color of Kinship.*

- 27. Name analysis.** Select a few of the characters from the novel. Look up each of their names in a name book to see what the name means. Write all the meanings down and then write a short essay for each character explaining in what ways

the name is suitable and in what ways the name does not fit the character.

**28. A character's fears.** One way we get to know characters is to think deeply about them and make inferences based on their actions and on what they and others say about them. Through a person's actions we can learn what they fear and what they want to avoid the most. Select several characters from your novel and write short essays on what you believe they fear the most and what evidence you used to come to this conclusion.

**29. Current events.** Select five current news or feature stories from television or news magazines that you think your character would be interested in. Then explain how your character would respond to each of the stories and the opinions your character would have about what was happening in the story.

**30. Advertisements.** To show your understanding of a character, go through several magazines and newspapers looking for advertisements of goods you think your character would like. Cut out the pictures, mount them on a poster board, and under each picture write detailed lines about why this product would appeal to your character.

**31. A pamphlet.** Think of an issue that was very important to your character. Then create a pamphlet aimed at persuading others of the importance of the issue. Include factual information, testimonials, pictures or graphics, etc.

**32. New acquaintances.** Select two characters. Then think about three to five people, living or dead, that you would like your characters to meet. Write about how you selected these new acquaintances and what you'd like the character to learn from the people you

introduced him or her to. For instance, after reading *The True Confessions of Charlotte Doyle* you might want Charlotte to meet Sojourner Truth so she can see other women who do important work, Madame Curie who worked in a field not many women ever entered, and so on.

**33. Book choices for character.** Select a character and then choose five books for him or her, thinking about what he or she might like and what you think they need to know more about. Scan library shelves and the Internet. Why did you select the nonfiction books you did? What do you hope your character will like about or get out of the fiction?

**34. Community resources for characters.** After looking in the phone book and on the Internet, create a file of community resources that would help a character in your novel cope with an issue. If the main character has alcoholic parents, you could collect pamphlets, names of self-help groups, and any agencies that address the problem. Then create a display board so others can see what is available.

**35. Family history.** Create the history of the family of one of the main characters in your novel. For instance, in *Spite Fences*, what would Mama's life have been like? What major events affected her family? How were such things as holidays and birthdays celebrated? What is important to this family?

**36. Detective work.** If a detective or police officer suddenly showed up in your novel, who or what would they be investigating? Write about what the detective is looking for, how he or she knew something was awry or needed investigating, and what was recommended. For example, in *Spite Fences*, a detective could show up at Maggie's home to investigate the physical abuse or an undercover police officer could be in town investigating civil rights violations.

**37. The Dating Game.** Imagine that some of the characters are writing resumes so they can appear on the "Dating Game" show. What would they say about themselves and what would they say they would like in a significant other? Give detail and explanation.

**38. Create a character's room.** We learn a lot about people by what they keep in their closets, what they have on their walls, what they select to put in a room. Select a character you know well and create a living room, bedroom, kitchen, or some other room that would mean a lot to the character. Draw it and write about it, making sure to include an explanation of why you designed the room as you did and how it connects to your character.

**39. CD collection.** Design a CD collection for a character you know well, being sure that the collection includes music that expresses as many aspects of the character as you are aware of. Explain the connection between the music choices and your character.

**40. Photo album.** Think about the events that happened in your novel. Decide which scenes or pictures from the novel a character would want to remember. Then draw several (at least five) of these "photos" for an album page or write about which pictures the character would want in his or her album. Example: in *Freak the Mighty* by Rodman Philbrick (1993, Scholastic), Max would want a picture of himself opening the Christmas present Kevin made for him, a picture of Kevin on his shoulders, and a picture of Kevin bursting in to save him from his brutal father. For each picture, include a caption describing the scene and its importance.

**41. A novel alphabet.** Create sentences based on the alphabet scheme that demonstrate your knowledge of the characters, setting, plot, and themes of the novel.

Ex: After reading *Spite Fences*, you decided to it could start like this:

A is for the ABUSE Zeke took at the hands of a racist mob.

B is for his BENDING OVER BACKWARDS to make sure the visiting civil rights activist could work in obscurity.

C is for the CAMERA he gave Maggie so she could begin to look at the world in new ways.

*The more detailed you can be with each sentence, the more insight you give the reader of your work.*