

Summer Reading Project

6/7/8 Grades

Summer Reading Instructions:

Choose a book from the following list. No other choices will be accepted. If available, an online copy of any of the titles will be posted on Google classrooms.

6th grade code: du7thfq

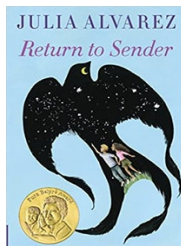
7th grade code: dxvefca

8th grade code: k5pw3tt

You will be required to complete **one** of the two projects listed:

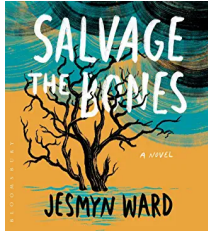
- Character Analysis for Novels (Fiction) ONLY
- Book Review for NON-Fiction ONLY
- Projects will be due the first two weeks of school and will count for your first Project/Test Grade
- Please email gdempsey@cccharters.org with any questions (7th and 8th) or kmontanez@cccharters.org (6th)

Book Choices

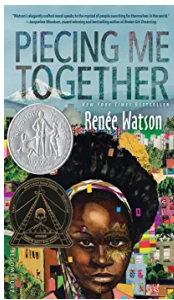


Publisher: Yearling

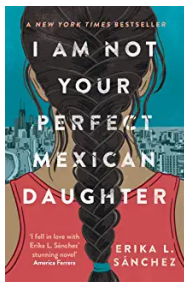
ISBN-13: 978-0375851230



Salvage the Bones- Jesmyn Ward **Publisher:** Bloomsbury
ISBN-13: 978-1608196265



Piecing Me Together - Renee Watson **Publisher:** Bloomsbury
ISBN-13: 978-1681191072



I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter - Erika Sanchez
Publisher: Rock the Boat **ISBN-13: 978-0861543496**

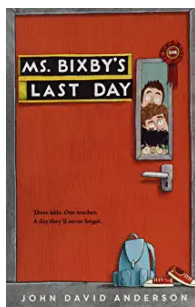


Ghost- Jason Reynolds **Publisher:** Atheneum **ISBN-13: 978-1481450164**



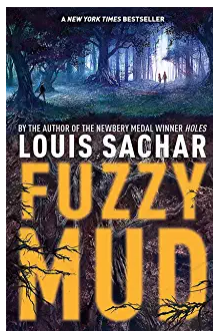
Daughter of the Deep- Rick Riordan

Publisher: Disney Hyperion **ISBN-13:** 978-1368077934



Ms. Bixby's Last Day - John David Anderson

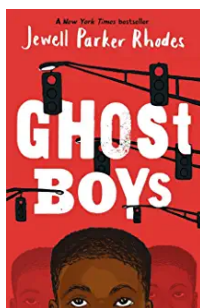
Publisher: Walden Pond Press **ISBN-13:** 978-0062338181



Fuzzy Mud- Louis Sachar

Publisher: Yearling

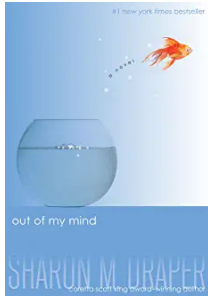
ISBN-13: 978-0385370226



Ghost Boys- Jewell Parker Rhodes

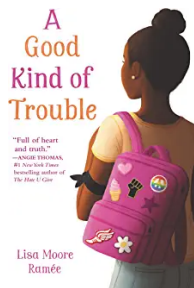
Publisher: Little Brown

ISBN-13: 978-0316262262



***Out of My Mind - Sharon Draper* Publisher: Atheneum**

ISBN-13: 978-1416971719



A Good Kind of Trouble- Lisa Moore Ramee

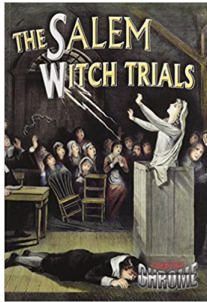
Publisher: Balzer and Bray ISBN-13: 978-006283669



Game Changer- Tommy Greenwald

Publisher: Harry Abrahms ISBN-13: 978-141973697

Non-Fiction Titles



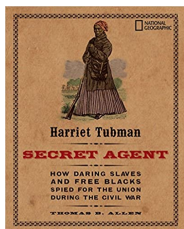
The Salem Witch Trials- Robin Johnson

Publisher: Crabtree Classics ISBN-13: 978-0778714071



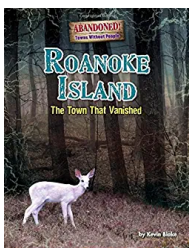
Terrible Typhoid Mary: True Story.... Susan Bertoletti

Publisher: Clarion Books ISBN-13: 978-0544313675



Harriet Tubman: Secret Agent- Thomas Allen

Publisher: National Geographic Kids ISBN-13: 978-1426304019



Roanoke Island: The Town that Vanished by Kevin Blake

Publisher: Bearport ISBN-13: 978-1627245210

Project Sections - Pick ONLY one

Instructions for Character Analysis Paper

TO BE ONLY USED WITH NOVELS! MAY NOT BE USED WITH NON-FICTION !!

In your novel, some of the *characters are given positive or negative portrayals*. You must *choose one of the characters* and include the following elements in your essay.

1. Tell the details of your novel, including the **setting and time period**.
2. Tell the **actions and details** of why this character is a **positive or negative character**.
3. Tell me **what the character says** or **what others say about the character** to support your identification of positive or negative portrayal.
4. Explain what the **character looks like** and how this **relates to the conflict**, interactions, or even the **positive/negative portrayal**.
5. Explain **why/how the character changes** (Static or Dynamic) over the course of the story plot.
6. Tell the **conflict** the character faces in the novel and how they chose to **solve** it.
7. Explain your **opinion** as to what you would do in this same situation. (No "I" statements)
8. Show me the **negation** in your essay (what the character is NOT) and use text to support your comparison.

Specifics for your *Character Analysis Paper*:

- Must have appropriate quotations and/or spelling
- Be at least 700 words
- BE TYPED- 12pt. font Time New Roman or Arial ONLY
- Follow grammar and punctuation rules and requirements of well-written essay
- Heading on the right side of page (Name, Date, Assignment Name)

Book Review Assignment -- TO BE USED ONLY WITH A NON-FICTION BOOK

What makes a good book review?

After reading and evaluating the **non-fiction book choice**, please complete your “review” taking in account the following guidelines. Your paper must be Times New Roman or Arial Font-double spaced and have appropriate heading (Name, Date, Class)

I have given you a “sample” to read and formulate yours in the same way!

A Brief “How To” Guide

Begin with a short summary or background of the work, but do not give too much away. This should be no more than two paragraphs. Many reviews limit themselves only to the first couple of chapters or lead the reader up to the rising action of the work. Reviewers of nonfiction texts will provide the basic idea of the book’s argument without too much detail.

The final portion of your review will detail your opinion of the work. When you are ready to begin your review (your opinion) , consider the following:

- **Establish a Background, remember your Audience:** Remember that your audience has not read the work; with this in mind, be sure to introduce characters and principals carefully and deliberately. What kind of summary can you provide of the main points or main characters that will help your readers gauge their interest? Does the author’s text adequately reach the intended audience? Will some readers be lost or find the text too easy?
- **Minor principals/characters:** Deal only with the most pressing issues in the book. You will not be able to cover every character or idea. What principals/characters did you agree or disagree with? What additional things did the author have to research? (This is your 1st body paragraph)
- **Organize:** The purpose of the review is to critically evaluate the text, not just inform the readers about it. Leave plenty room for your evaluation by ensuring that your summary is brief. Determine what kind of balance to strike between your summary information and your evaluation. Often the ratio is half and half. (This should be your second body paragraph)
- **Your Evaluation:** Choose one or a few points to discuss about the book. What worked well for you? How does this work compare with others by the same author or other books in the same genre? What major themes, motifs, or terms does the book introduce, and how effective are they? Did the book appeal to you in an emotional or logical way? (This should be your last body paragraph)
- **Publisher/Price:** Book reviews include the publisher and price of the book at the end of the article. Some reviews also include the year published and ISBN. This is located either

on the first page of the book or you may look up this information on Amazon website.
(This should be the very last paragraph of your review paper.)

Revising

When making the final touches to your review, carefully verify the following:

- Double-check the spelling of the author's name(s), character names, special terms, and publisher.
- Try to read from the point of your audience. Is there too much/enough summary? Does your argument about the text make sense?
- Should you include direct quotes from the reading? Do they help support your arguments? Double-check your quotes for accuracy.

Overall Procedure

1. Analyze book
2. Write your review (I expect at least one draft).
3. Submit your final review and excerpt on Google Classroom.

Sample Book Review for a sample book called Monster

Sometimes a book hits all the right notes, but not in quite the right manner. **Monster**, a Michael L. Printz Award winner and Coretta Scott King Award and National Book Award finalist, has a whole lot to say and does so in a striking and unusual format, but ultimately falters with a large segment of its intended audience. Walter Dean Myers is an accomplished author and **Monster** has been a controversial book from the time it was published - challenged by The Censors for its violent content. For me, neither awards nor potential banning can convince me that the book works for most middle and high schoolers.

Monster tells the story of sixteen-year-old Steve Harmon. Steve is on trial for felony murder, standing accused of taking part in a robbery that led to a shooting death. He is in jail awaiting trial as we enter the story and he tells us about the experience through journal entries and a screenplay he is developing to help him cope with his ordeal. We see the trial and jail through his eyes and words only.

I have no issues with realistic Young Adult fiction. In fact, I think it may represent the best we have to offer teenagers in regard to dealing with their own lives and experiences through literature. Classics are all well and good, but if they don't engage, they are of limited value in helping kids through the minefield of middle and high school. **Monster** is realistic. Steve comes across as a scared kid - not a hardened criminal as the prosecution asserts. His descriptions of jail are frightening, and we do feel sorry for him being in such an adult institution.

Steve also questions how those around him are seeing him now that he's in jail. His parents, siblings, the other inmates - who is he now? Do they see him as just another black kid destined to get in trouble? Do they see him as just another criminal now that he sports the jail jumpsuit? Does he look just like everyone else in that place? His questions of self image are probing and heartbreaking. His journal entries show us a child, confused and scared and wondering exactly who he is now in the eyes of the world.

The format of using journal entries and Steve's screenplay make for an interesting read. The journal entries are most revealing, for that is when he seems to let his guard down. He talks about the awful things that happen in jail - the beatings - and how much he hates it there. He talks about who he has become during his time there. He talks a lot about himself. He only talks about himself.

The movie script that Myers uses to document the trial as well as various flashbacks to the time around the crime is seemingly more objective. We hear from people other than Steve - lawyers, witnesses, kids and adults from the neighborhood, admitted participants in the crime. But we must remember that Steve is writing this as well - no matter how factual it seems with its screenplay lingo and traditional font usage, this is still Steve talking. He's more detached, but the words remain his alone.

Monster is violent, but there are kids out there who live in this world, where violence is commonplace. The idea that kids need to be shielded from this reality is ridiculous and as usual it's the censors who are to blame. Yes, there are a lot of kids who will be shocked by the images that Steve's descriptions create. But that's reality and the sooner they understand that their own sheltered existence does not apply to the whole world, the sooner they can get on with the business of becoming compassionate and complete adults. No one, no matter the color of their skin or the income of their family, is immune to reality.

So where does **Monster** fail its audience? I mentioned that it hits all the right notes, but not in quite the right way. And clearly, I think it does hit some important and poignant notes. But where Myers ultimately stumbles is in his expectations of his young audience. The book is ages thirteen and up. Junior Socket read it at fourteen and did not like it - unequivocally did not like it. A friend of my daughter who is in middle school tried to read it and gave up; he couldn't get into it.

The problem is that the story is far too nuanced for most young teenagers. Not all, but a lot. In the reading, Steve does little but describe his misery and self-doubt...over and over and over. The screenplay is dry and feels clinical in its recounting of the trial. We switch from all emotion to none. As a result, the book gets bogged down in its own structure.

As an adult, I found it repetitive almost to the point of becoming uninteresting. Not until the end is there a small but significant occurrence that makes the reader look at the whole of the story and start asking questions about Steve and his narrative. By the time kids reach that point, they are likely to miss it - if they've even gotten that far. Myers would have been wise to cut the 281 pages by 25% and give us some clues to the ultimate complexities that lead to Steve's massive identity crisis earlier on. As it stands, he loses his audience before he has a chance to really make his point about moral ambiguity, the justice system and scared minors dealing with a terrifying unknown.

Monster is in no way a *bad* book. As realistic fiction it can either illuminate a world that some kids already know about or introduce a world that some kids have never even imagined. Either way, it doesn't shy away from what it really means to be in jail and have your entire life be placed in the hands of disinterested strangers. But the real nuance, the real crisis faced by this child is one of self. He has no idea who he is during or after his trial. The subtleties of why he is so tortured are very likely to be missed by young readers lulled by the repetitive meandering of the bulk of the book. I would increase the suggested age to at least sixteen - not because of the violence or harsh situations but because the less sophisticated, younger reader is simply not going to get everything the book has to offer. Four stars for content, but I'm going to take one off for unrealistic target audience expectations on the part of the author.

