

Dear students,

It may sound funny, but I believe the more you read, the more you'll read. In other words, the best way to gain and improve one's literacy skills is by exercising one's literacy skills. The act of reading builds background knowledge, contributes to being a more well-rounded person, leads to strong and critical thinking, bolsters empathy skills and....improves one's ability to read.

So, as your language arts teacher, I'm charged with improving your reading skills (and maybe even your interest in reading which often evolves from an increase in reading skills). Therefore I've carved out class time devoted to your reading enjoyment. Yes, I want you to read what you're interested in and just keep reading. Perhaps, you'll even develop an appreciation for what reading can do for you and how it can literally change your life! This daily personal reading where the purpose for reading is primarily enjoyment will not take the place of other readings and literacy activities. It will be in addition to our coursework and language arts studies.

Now, keep in mind literacy doesn't only mean having the ability to read. Writing is the other half of literacy and if the goal is for you to be fully literate you must also practice writing/communication. Thus there is a writing component connected to your choice reading. After you have finished reading your novel of choice (at your own pace) I expect you to choose and complete one of the options listed on the other side of this paper. This will not disrupt your choice reading in class. A new novel should be chosen within two days of finishing the previous book. Please don't feel pressured to hurry your reading. I am most concerned with measuring progress and I will intervene and problem-solve with you if you are not getting through a significant number of pages each day over a period of time. Many times it's just a matter of finding the "right" book.

Lastly, please keep these reading choice guidelines in mind:

- Avoid books that are "too easy". Often times the content of these simple texts can't keep your interest nor hold your attention. You now have more sophisticated tastes than when you were in elementary school. Trust me.
- Avoid books that are "too difficult". If you find yourself questioning the meaning of every other word, and you're rereading each sentence 3 - 4 times in an effort to understand what's happening, the story will be lost and well... what then would be the point of reading?
- You can absolutely read a book you've already read. Just ask yourself if you're reading it again because you LOVE the story or if you're trying to get out of work and "pull one over on the teacher". If your answer is related to avoiding work my reminder to you is, "Being able to read what you want shouldn't be work, it should be fun!"
- Be open to trying different authors and different kinds of stories (genres)
– add some variety.

ENJOY!!

TIMELINE FOR READING CHOICE PRODUCTS

I expect all of my students, at the BARE MINIMUM, to independently read 3 choice novels by the end of the school year by using the class time provided. I hope you will read more (many more) than 3 books and that you will read outside of class, but I will only require 3 reading choice products (RCPs). I suspect that ALL of you will end up reading more than 3 books this year but I don't want the reading to be turned into "work". ☺

Here is a general timeline, keeping in mind the different reading paces, the different lengths of stories being read and the different reading times being put into the novels (some of you also read at home while others only use the 10 - 12 minutes provided in class).

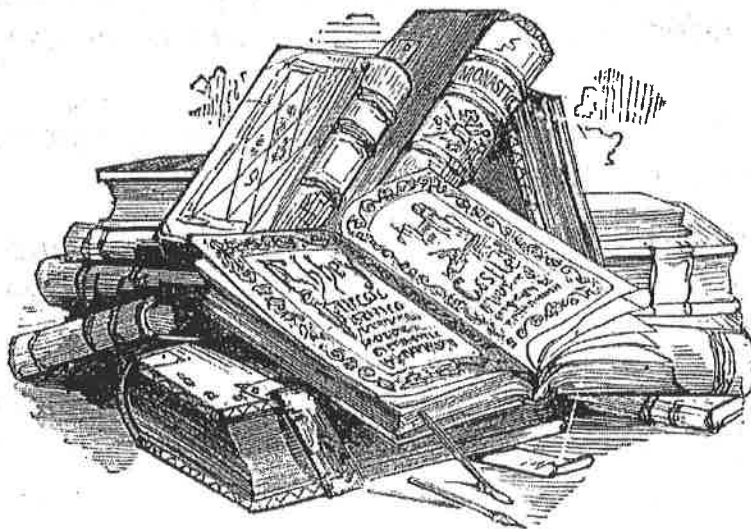
RCP #1: DUE BY MONDAY, DECEMBER 2nd

RCP #2: DUE BY MONDAY, MARCH 10th

RCP #3: DUE BY MONDAY, JUNE 2nd

☆ *For every book you complete reading you will need to fill out an information sheet. I will be keeping track of your progress and reward your efforts in various ways (I'm going to surprise you).*

☆ *At the end of each trimester there will be a time set aside to discuss the novel(s) you read and give your personal commentary (Book Talk).*



Reading Choice Project Options

1. Write a **letter** to:
 - the author, (evaluate, discuss story and ask questions)
 - a friend, (give a review and summary, recommend or discourage reading the book)
 - a teacher, (give a review and summary, include info. a teacher would appreciate) OR
 - a character from the book (discuss elements of the story with the character as if he/she were real)
2. **Compare/Contrast:** Read a book that has been made into a movie. (Caution: it must have been a book FIRST. Books written from screenplays are not acceptable.) Write an essay comparing the movie version with the book.
3. Draw a **portrait** of one of the characters and fill in a personal survey as if it is about that character. Provide at least two excerpts from the novel that support your interpretation of the character traits. (paper provided)
4. Create a **timeline** of the events in the story. Provide details and specifics. A minimum of ten events is required on the timeline.
5. Create a **Book Jacket**. Must be in color. Include the author's name. On the back write a one paragraph teaser about the book and include quotes that promote the book. (paper provided)
6. Provide a **summary of the story in the form of a comic book**. You may use ComicLife but may also freehand your drawings. In keeping with the style of comic books, color and ink is required.
7. **Write a critique of the novel**. A critique partly analyzes the author's techniques and comments on whether or not the author was successful. A critique also reviews and evaluates the story.
8. **Record an Oral telling** of the story. Using Garage Band or a personal recording device, prove to me that you've read the book. 2 – 5 minutes in length.
9. Create a **collage** of the themes, setting, and action of the story. On the back of the collage write an explanation of how the images and words represent the story. (base paper provided)
10. Create a **Keynote Presentation** or **iPhoto** slideshow summarizing the plot of the story and your review/commentary.
11. Construct a **Diorama**: (three-dimensional scene which includes models of people, buildings, plants, and animals) of one of the main events of the book. Include a written description of the scene.
12. **Feature Article (with a headline)**: Write a feature article that tells the story of the book as it might be found on the front page of a newspaper in the town where the story takes place.