

## **Evaluation Options for independent reading book(s)**

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## Option A. Book Review

Write a three to four page book review of the book. A book review acquaints readers with a book's content and makes judgments about its value. The writer's role is to guide the prospective reader, providing both general information and some specifics about the book. The following five step format is to guide you.

1. Create a brief introduction of a few sentences with specific information: title, the author's full name, type of work (novel or fiction, nonfiction, poetry collection, historical, memoir, etc.) author's general purpose, and your attitude toward the book. (Avoid overused words such as like, dislike, boring, and interesting.)
2. Write an overview of the book giving the reader a general feeling for the book. This needs to be about  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1 page in length, not more than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the entire review. If fiction give a brief description of setting, atmosphere, and historical time along with a summary of the plot. Keep this objective, like a précis, and avoid getting bogged down in details. If the book is nonfiction or a collection of poetry or essays, present important background and identify high points. For a collection you may summarize representative pieces.
3. Compose a close examination of the book. This is two to three paragraphs that examines specific aspects of the work. Characters, situations, or central ideas of the book can be examined here in more detail. Use quoted passages from the book to show the reader ideas, style, or other specific qualities that are significant for understanding the book. Be sure to introduce and comment on any quoted passages presented.
4. Evaluate the book. Make judgments about the work noting strengths and weaknesses. Support your comments using quoted passages. A good review has a balanced evaluation noting positives and negatives. Be sure to be direct and make fair judgments about the book. Is it a worthwhile read? If so, why? If not, why not?
5. Write a conclusion in which you make a recommendation and identify the potential reader. Is the book of value? Why or why not? Give reasons. If recommended, who would be most interested in reading the book? Your attitude and final comments are to be in the conclusion of four to six sentences.

## RUBRICS FOR BOOK REVIEW

### /10 **Introduction:**

Author's full name and title of book given  
Intent or purpose of book identified  
Type of book identified  
Your attitude about book presented.

### /25 **Overview**

Acquaints the reader with whole book

### /25 **Close examination**

Specific aspects of book examined

Examples used

Quoted passages used

### /20 **Evaluation**

Strengths of book noted

Weaknesses of book noted

Examples used

Quoted passages used

### /10 **Conclusion**

Restate full author and title  
Opening attitude and evaluation restated  
Identify potential reader and make recommendation

### /10 **Mechanics and Style**

Good grammar, spelling, sentence structure, transitions, and word choice

## Option B. Critical Essay using Secondary Sources

1. After reading your book locate **three to five secondary sources** (you can always read more, but it is best to have more than not enough.) and read them. These may be critical reviews and commentaries by experts in the field. Each critical source needs to have an author (not an encyclopedia or general commentary by anyone) who discusses the author and book with a critical eye, probing and exploring the book in depth. These sources are to help you better understand and make sense of the book you have already read, and are not to be a replacement for reading the book.
  
2. Write a **two to four page thesis driven critical essay** examining a significant topic about your independent reading book. (An introduction and conclusion as well as a minimum of three body paragraphs are to be created.)  
Some topics may be:
  - style of author's writing
  - conflicts
  - character development
  - key idea or insights
  - point of view
  - use of irony, humor, or other attitude
  - key components making author and book unique
  - contributions of author via this book
  - author's value and unique outlook
  - significant cultural topics about Asia or particular country
  
3. In writing the essay use MLA format. Be sure to cite proper secondary sources in the body of the paper as well as create a works cited page. The book you read is the primary source and needs to be cited in the paper as well as works cited page.

## RUBRICS: CRITICAL ESSAY WITH SECONDARY SOURCES

**/10 1. Original and clear thesis:**

**/10 2. Unity of essay:**

a) Clear introduction and conclusion /10

b) Transitions used to connect sentences, paragraphs, and key ideas of essay /10

**/20 3. Effective use of critical commentaries:**

- at least two used and smoothly worked into essay /10

- effectively supports ideas of writer /10

**/10 4. Correct use of MLA format:**

**/20 5. Knowledge of independent reading book evident.**

- Use quotes and examples from book (primary source) in discussion. /10

- Quotes and examples are clearly discussed to defend thesis /10

**/20 5. Content of essay:** Reveals depth of thought - writer thinking about book with effect insights into author and book with sufficient length to defend thesis

**/10 6. Style of writing is effective:** spelling, grammar, effective word choice and clear paragraphs and sentences

## Option C. Comparative (compare and contrast) essay.

1. After reading your particular Asian, independent book select another significant book you have previously read and write a comparative essay on the two books. Be sure the two books have some significant elements in common so the comparison is worthwhile. The second book does not need to be an Asian book, but could be a book you have read for an English class, another class, or read on your own. The purpose of a compare and contrast essay is to gain greater insight and understanding of the two things being compared. By doing the exercise the writer and reader see the two more sharply and have greater clarity in what each book offers.
2. In preparing your essay creating a diagram of similarities and differences is recommended. Surprisingly, what may initially seem to be very different can turn into seeing some remarkable similarities. Brainstorming and visualizing the similarities is a good start for this writing.
3. Write a **two to four page essay** comparing the two books. Compare the two books on three topics. Some topics to consider are:
  - styles of writing
  - conflicts
  - characters
  - setting
  - tone of book
  - author's purpose and outlook
  - point of view
  - time period(s)
  - major insights of books
4. Guidelines for developing a comparative essay:
  - a. Create a strong thesis that establishes your judgment or opinion, and includes three topics you are comparing. Create an introduction leading up to your thesis at the end of the first paragraph.
  - b. Discuss similarities and differences in each body paragraph. Remember, differences are easy to locate, but examining and discussing degrees of similarities in the body paragraphs are to help illuminate both books. Don't be afraid to make comparative judgments in pointing out subtle differences.
  - c. Topic sentences at the beginning of body paragraphs include a comparative statement about the two books.
  - d. Avoid overusing words "similarities" and "differences" in your discussion. Overuse of comparative words creates a sing/song effect without digging into an in depth look of the two books.

## RUBRICS FOR COMPARATIVE ESSAY

/10 clear **comparative thesis**

/10 original, lively **introduction** leading to thesis

/15 three clear **comparative topic sentences**

/20 specific **quotes and examples** from the two books used to support ideas

/20 **depth of thought** in comparison. More than superficial similarities and differences are discussed in the essay.

/10 **writing, grammar, spelling, and organization** of essay are effective

/5 **transitions words, paragraph hooks** utilized to unify essay

/10 clear **conclusion** to effectively end the essay Be sure to restate your thesis to start the conclusion

## Option D. Creating a Test on Book

1. After reading your book **create a test on the book** that includes an **objective** section as well as an **interpretive essay** section. The test is to total 100 possible points. In creating your test, provide a separate answer sheet as well as the regular test. Create the test as if you were the teacher giving the test on the book to the class. Draw on your experience of eleven plus years of taking many a test. Some guidelines are provided below.
2. **Guidelines for creating a test** on reading book. In creating the test have a variety of methods for assessing the book. You can determine how many items for each evaluative method and how many points each type of item is worth, but you want a range of difficulty, easy to challenging. Please include directions for each section of the test, divide the test into different parts, and give the number of points each item and section of the test is worth. Work at creating a fair test. You are assessing whether a person has: 1) read the book, 2) some degree of understanding the book beyond simple recall, and 3) the ability to accurately interpret the book. Here are some methods of assessing the book objectively:
  - true/false – these are good for basic plot events for checking close reading
  - matching of characters and descriptions – these are valuable for clear identifying of major and minor characters and their values and contributions to the book
  - fill in blank – for major events, key concepts, major settings, or other topics of significance these are worth creating
  - putting key elements of plot in order – a jumbled arrangement of key events and having to chronologically order them shows an understanding of cause and effect and reveals a clear reading of a text. Be careful to choose key events and not insignificant details that are repeated in the text. Clarity of time is important in creating and responding to these test items.
  - significant “new” vocabulary – these test items can be created by way of matching, multiple choice, or definitions. There may be vocabulary that is unique to the book, cultural items or ideas, or simply more sophisticated words that are worth knowing in order to better understand the book. These would be words identified and taught by the teacher prior to the test.
  - multiple choice – these test items are often worth more points than other objective sections because, if well made, they call for higher level thinking, not just recall of information. A good multiple choice question calls for the best answer with usually four choices (a-d). Two items are usually fairly easy to eliminate as incorrect and two items call for distinguishing the best answer from an okay answer. The **best answer** often calls for some degree of interpreting characters and events, not simply a recall of what happened.

Not all of these above methods need to be used. You may also come up with other methods. Again, the goal is to have a fair assessment of the book. The objective part of the test would be somewhere between 50% and 80% of the total test.

Option D. Creating a Test continued

3. For the **essay component of the test**(worth anywhere from 20% to 50%), you may create one to three essay questions. Determine how significant you want this part of the test to be. The question(s) ought to be on some interpretive aspect of the book. Usually, more than one essay question is given to provide students options for responding to various key ideas of a book. A good essay question gives clear clues to construction of a thesis sentence and calls for defending the essay question via different topics and detailed support from the book. Providing some guidelines of how to organize a response is also necessary to help students in writing their essay.

For the answer sheet for the essay question(s) create a possible thesis and brief phrase outline for what would be a good possible response to the question.

Some tips for creating a good essay question:

- reread essay test questions from tests you have taken (particularly in English and Social Studies courses)
- practice writing several essay questions
- think of the author's purpose and what has been conveyed directly or indirectly  
Writers of novels usually create their key ideas or insights indirectly while nonfiction writers usually reveal a key insight directly, and is often repeated.
- Practice your response to the question. Could you develop a strong and clear response in a traditional five paragraph essay? If yes, the odds are high you have created a decent essay question.
- Ask yourself, "Would I want to answer this essay question?" Again, if yes, you may have a decent question
- Give enough clues or tips to help the student write a thoughtful and clear response to the question. Sometimes, a quote from the book is a helpful guide or starting point to generate thinking.

**NOTE: ONE ADVANTAGE OF USING THIS METHOD OF EVALUATION IS THAT YOU COULD CREATE MUCH OF THE TEST WHILE READING THE BOOK.**

## RUBRICS FOR ASSESSING TEST CREATION

/10 **Organization** of test with points and directions are easy to follow

/10 **Guidelines** for creating a test are accurately followed

/20 **Objective test questions** are effective and clearly presented

/20 **Essay question(s)** makes sense and is clear and captures significant idea of book

/20 Accurately **reflects key components** of book read

/10 **Clearly presented** – no typing, spelling, grammar, and sentence errors

/10 Appears to be **fair** and is not too easy or too difficult

## Option E. Précis, Essay Question, Outline response, and Essay.

1. After reading your book write a one page **précis**. Remember you are not interpreting the book, but are summarizing the key components of the book.
2. Create your **own essay question** about the book you read. Be sure the topic is one in which you can develop a full essay response. A topic related to significant aspects of the novel are recommended. Some possible topics are:
  - author's writing style
  - development of character or characters
  - develop of key ideas or insights of book
  - significant cultural aspects of the book
  - the significance of particular literary techniques such as irony, symbolism, point of view, flashbacks, satire, setting, characterization, conflict, or poetic techniques, imagery
  - author's unique outlook as shown through the book
3. Create a phrase outline response to the question. Put your complete thesis sentence at the topic of the outline.
4. Write a **two to three page critical essay** defending your thesis. Three body paragraphs besides an introduction and conclusion are recommended. Use a minimum of three quotes to help support your topic sentences and thesis. Be sure to discuss the quotes.

## RUBRICS FOR PRÉCIS, ESSAY QUESTION, OUTLINE, AND ESSAY

/10 **clear précis** of approximately one page

/10 **essay question** is complete with background information provided to help create effective thesis

/20 **phrase outline with thesis** - topic and organization is clear with 6-12 subtopics following proper format

/10 **essay introduction** is developed with thesis at end of introduction

/15 a minimum of **three effective body paragraphs** are fully developed

/15 a minimum of **three quotes** are used in body paragraphs to defend topic sentences and thesis

/10 a **clear conclusion** is created helping to make a unified essay

/10 **spelling, grammar, sentences, and writing style** are accurate and effective

## Option F. Creating Chapter Titles, Selecting Three Quoted Passages, and Writing a Persuasive Essay Response

1. Provided your book has chapter numbers, but **does not have chapter titles**, **create chapter titles** for each of the chapters. The titles are to help the reader remember what they read and make it easier to later locate particular passages.
2. **Select three quoted passages that you consider to capture the essence of the book.** Each of these passages ought to be a minimum of three sentences long, but not more than ten sentences in length. Type these up and give the page number(s) for each of the quoted passages. **Create a title for each of the passages**, capturing a key concept the quote reveals. Be sure you can explain why these passages are important for explaining the entire book, in the essay portion.
3. Write a **persuasive essay** of two to three pages defending why these **particular passages reveal the essence of the book**. In the body of the essay give three reasons, from least important to most important, in defending why these passages best capture the essence of the book. In your essay be sure to:
  - explain what is important about the quotes
  - explain how each of the quotes is important and related to other aspects of the book
  - show the main ideas of the book

## RUBRICS FOR CREATING CHAPTER TITLES, SELECTING THREE QUOTED PASSAGES, AND WRITING A PERSUASIVE ESSAY

/10 **chapter titles** are clearly created

/10 **selected quoted passages capture important ideas** and have clear, **effective titles**

/10 persuasive essay has a **clear thesis** and **an introduction**

/30 **three clear reasons presented** in effective manner from least important to most important in defending the thesis – all reasons are discussed and defended using the quotes themselves

/20 besides the interpretation of quotes the **quotes are discussed in context of the rest of book**; the relation to events in the rest of the book are made clear

/10 an **effective conclusion** restates the thesis and sums up the arguments to effectively end the essay

/10 **effective writing** – spelling, grammar, sentences, connecting of ideas with transition words and paragraph hooks

## Option G. Book Club Questions and Responses

1. **Create fifteen questions** for a group of people who may wish to discuss the book you read. You will respond and write out responses as noted below in #2. In creating these questions based on your book, write five questions from three categories. The purpose of all the questions is to provoke a more in depth look of the book leading to greater understanding. The three types of questions are:

- **Factual:** These are questions that help to recall the events in the book. The response to these questions are all based on the text and can be verified by locating the answer to the question in the text. These questions are best when asked about more complex aspects of the book rather than simplistic questions about obvious facts; for example, “What is the name of the character who is generous?” is a weak factual question .

(Example of factual question based on Harper Lee’s novel

*To Kill a Mockingbird*: What does Mrs. Dubose do, causing Atticus to consider her the bravest person in the world?)

- **Interpretive:** These questions probe and serve to arrive at meaning for the particular book. They are not opinion questions, but use a variety of places in the text to piece together a better understanding of the book. These questions get to the core of meaning for a particular book.

(Example of interpretive question based on *To Kill a Mockingbird*: What does the author tell us about the nature of prejudice, innocence, courage, and maturation? Note: these are big ideas or insights of the novel; an entire essay could be written about each of these three topics. Interpretive questions probe into a book, causing deeper thought and a search for evidence to support an idea.

- **Evaluative:** These questions provoke a judgment about the book. In writing these questions you are pushing for an opinion based on evidence in the book.

(Examples: In *To Kill a Mockingbird* why does the author create the first whole section of the book about the children growing up in the neighborhood? Is the author effective in creating the two different sections of the book? Is Harper Lee effective in showing the deep seated nature of prejudice?

2. Answer the following questions for each of the three types you created on a separate sheet from the question sheet:

**factual:** answer all five

**interpretive:** answer any two of your five questions

**evaluative:** answer any two of your five questions

## RUBRICS FOR EVALUATING BOOK CLUB QUESTIONS

/5 clear factual questions – all five are valuable facts leading to greater understanding of book

/20 clear interpretive questions – all five provoke a response leading to greater understanding and probing at the deeper meanings of the book

/20 clear evaluative questions – all five lead to valuable understanding and are based on deepening understanding of the book

/5 questions are clear and grammatically correct

/10 factual question responses are accurate

/20 two interpretive questions answered are done in fully developed paragraph for each one, with evidence from the book given

/20 two evaluative questions answered are done in fully developed paragraph for each one, with support from the book and clear reasoning evident

