

General Novel Study Guide

Title of Book:

Author:

Illustrator (if applicable):

Date of First Publication:

Due _____ A. Look at the front cover and read the back cover and inside sleeve, if there is one. List the facts that you know, or think you know, about the book without having read it. (1/2 page written response)

Due _____ B. At first glance, how do you feel about the novel? Why? (1/2 page written response)

Due _____ C. **Author Biography:**
Conduct brief research on the author. Choose two internet sources, or one internet source and one printed source from the library. Learn some basic facts about his/her life, including a brief account of his/her life, when/why/how s/he started to write, and the major events in history, politics and/or the writer's personal experience that impact his/her works of literature. Write a one-page report.

Quiz _____ **Basic Components of the Novel:** These components are skillfully interwoven by the author. Each component feeds or supports the other three to create a unified whole, and your understanding of each component will grow as you read. By the end of your reading, you should be able to speak on each of these in detail. Check your understanding of each of these as you read. Take notes if necessary to prepare for the **oral quiz** on basic components of the novel that your teacher will give you at the end of the novel unit.

Setting: Describe the details of place and time. What is the atmosphere and mood during the course of action, including during the conflict and at the climax?

Plot: Tell what happens in the novel such by highlighting the main events and experiences of the characters.

Character: Describe the main character(s) and his/her traits.

Theme: In your own words, explain the author's message for this book. What point about human values or experiences is s/he trying to make? What are readers to come away having learned or to still be thinking about as they close the book?

Due _____ D. **Word Study:** As you read, find a minimum of **25** words that are new or unfamiliar to you. For each word, write:

- a) the page number on which you find it
- b) the context in which you find it (copy the sentence or phrase from the book and underline the word)
- c) your best guess of the word's meaning based on the clues available
- d) the dictionary definition of the word and any other common forms of the word
- e) your own original sentence using the word (or form of) that demonstrates an understanding of the meaning

Due _____ E. **Level 1 Questions** (for the early chapters of the book):

1. What is the time and place of the book? What evidence in the book tells you this?
2. Name and describe the main character in the book. Describe him/her physically and describe his/her personality and history, if known. Then give your impression of him/her.
3. Name and describe a minor character. Describe her/him physically and describe her/his personality and history, if known. Explain how s/he is important to the story and the ideas of the book.
4. Describe the nature of the relationship between two characters. Include their history together and details of their relationship. Explain the significance of their relationship to the book.
5. Describe one important event in the book and explain why it is significant to the story (to the plot, the characters, the ideas of the book).
6. Explain one specific aspect of the culture described in the book. Tell how it compares to a specific culture you are familiar with.
7. What are your feelings and thoughts about the novel based on one or more specific things you have read?
8. Find one specific idea, event, or behavior in the book that relates to real life. Explain the relationship you see.

Due _____ F. **Level 2 Questions** (for the middle chapters of the book):

1. If the time or place switches around during the book, explain how and give examples. How does this switching serve the story?
2. What is the general feeling or mood of the book? Give specific examples of how the author creates that feeling or mood.
3. Compare and contrast two characters psychologically (the way they think and make decisions). To do this, consider their behavior and personality. Consider whether their physical selves support or contrast with their psychological selves.
4. Give an example of a significant conflict or conflicts between two characters (external conflict) or between a character and his/her conscience (internal conflict).
5. Who is the narrator of the story? Is s/he inside or outside the story? What is her/his relationship to the story?

6. Is the book written in the first or third person (I or s/he)? How does that affect the story?
7. Explain the organization of the book. How is it important to the story?
8. What is your reaction to a relationship, event, socio-cultural behavior or message/theme of the book? Be clear about what you are reacting to and exactly what makes you respond as you do.
9. Choose a sentence or phrase that attracts you. Explain why you chose it, its value in the book and its value to you.

Due _____ **G. Level 3 Questions** (for the final chapters of the book):

1. If there is any special language used (dialects, foreign words, slang, etc.) give examples and explain its use and purpose. What is its effect?
2. Does the author use humor, irony, symbolism, or metaphors? Give at least two examples and explain the effect.
3. What is the peak event, or the climax, of the novel? What major conflicts lead up to it and what is the resolution afterward?
4. What is the theme or themes in the novel? How does the author show this idea? Give evidence. Comment on how this theme fits in the novel and how it applies to life outside the book. What does this theme mean to you?
5. What did you learn from this novel? In answering this, you may comment on any aspect of the novel, including how it is written.

Due _____ **H. Choice Activities** (choose two):

1. How is the main character of the novel similar to a person that you know? Discuss your answer in an essay.
2. Can you see any similarities between the main character and an animal? Discuss.
3. Pretend that you are the author and you have been asked to explain which parts of the novel were the easiest and the hardest for you to write.
4. Have you had an experience similar to that of one of the characters in the novel? Write about this experience.
5. Write a poem that describes the plot of the novel.
6. Pretend that one of the characters in the novel has died. Write an obituary that will describe the character.
7. Write an essay describing any changes that the main character underwent throughout the novel.
8. Design a map showing the locations of the novel.
9. Write a different ending for the novel.
10. Write a description of events (real or imagined) that took place before the novel started.
11. Describe the problems the main character encountered in the novel and tell how this character solved these problems.
12. Pretend that you are the main character of the novel. Choose one of the other characters and write a description of that person based on your thoughts and experiences.

13. Interview one of the characters and ask him/her to explain some of the actions in the novel.
14. Compare the novel to another novel on a similar topic that you have read.
15. Create a list of 15 words from the story and illustrate them to show their meaning.