

Guidelines for Book Reports

All book reports for Required Reading will be two pages handwritten on college rule paper (blue or black ink), or one and a half to two pages typed, with one inch margins, double-spaced, using a serif style font no larger than 12 points in size. Book reports not meeting those basic layout requirements will be returned without being graded, to be redone and handed in again. Also, no title page is needed; use the MLA guidelines for manuscript form and the first page layout.

The book reports will be graded on a standard form, shown below. Note the balance in grading between content and mechanics. All book reports must earn at least an eighty percent (80%) to be accepted for Required Reading; those failing to reach that level must be redone.

Research on the book is allowed, but you must document it using MLA style as with any paper.

The content of a book report should emphasize developing a thesis concerning the book, and then providing evidence to support that thesis in the body of the paper. Specifically, here is how a book report should be developed:

Introduction

The introduction should give the title and author of the book and the subject or theme in the first sentence. Then material should be given to interest the reader in the book; an arresting quote, or a striking statement, or some back ground information on the book or author would work well.

Finally, close the introduction with a thesis statement that you will set out to prove in the rest of the paper. The thesis statement should be an opinion, something significant that is open to debate, not a simple statement of fact, though it is stated as a fact. For example, a bad thesis on Shakespeare's *Hamlet* might be, "In the end, Hamlet dies with many people of the court." That is fact, not something open to debate. A good thesis might be, "Hamlet dies in the end because of his indecisiveness, created by confusion over the truth of his father's death." Note that it is stated as a fact, though it is opinion, and it is a significant idea that is open to debate. Areas to develop a thesis on could be how a character develops in the story, or how a particular theme is shown, or how the author develops a particular motif or symbol.

Body

The body of the paper may start with a small, single paragraph that summarizes the plot if it is fiction, or a brief summary if it is non-fiction. This summary must not last more than a few sentences, creating a small paragraph.

The heart of the body is your support of your thesis. You must relate incidents, details, and quotations from the book that provide evidence that your thesis is valid. These paragraphs are the real point of the paper: to develop and support your insight into the book, as stated in your thesis.

Conclusion

The conclusion restates the thesis, not simply repeats it. Then you may provide personal thoughts on the book, favorable or unfavorable. Give your reaction to the content, as to the reality of the characters, the effectiveness of the author's presentation, and/or the correctness of the author's theme. Evaluate the book. Note that only here in the conclusion should the word "I" or "my" or "me" appear, nowhere else.

Short Report Evaluation Form

_____ Introduction (15 pts: statement of thesis)

_____ Body (15 pts: synopsis and support)

_____ Conclusion/Evaluation (15 pts: restatement of thesis, personal evaluation)

_____ Overall development of thesis (5 pts)

_____ Length (5 pts)

_____ Neatness and layout (5 pts)

_____ Spelling (1 pt off per word, up to 10 pts)

_____ Grammar (10 pts)

_____ Punctuation/Capitalization (10 pts)

_____ Style (5 pts: sentence structure variety, use of vocabulary)

_____ Paragraph structure (5 pts)

_____ Total

_____ Grade

_____ Name