

The Annotated Book Review Project

The first step in this project is to read a book together in small groups. In your journal you will keep notes of your discussions and of important things you notice as you are reading.

Guidelines for Discussion and Journals

As you read and discuss your books in your groups, you will want to take notes in a journal to help you with ideas. You will use these ideas when you write your book review.

Keep track of your feelings and opinions as you read and discuss the book. Also keep track of things such as main characters, conflicts, settings, quotations that you think might be important, what you think the author's purpose might be, and whether or not the author achieves his or her purpose.

When you have finished discussion, the whole group should read through your discussion and journal notes and put a check next to the details you want to include in your review. Be sure that you don't give away too much of the story in your review.

Writing Your Group Reviews

After you have finished gathering details, you will write a group book review.

Look at sample reviews. Most reviews name the title and author, include a brief summary of the book without "spoiling" the book for the reader, comment on the book's strengths and weaknesses, and include a personal response.

A book review is different than a book report. In a book review, you express your opinion of the book. It isn't enough, however, to say that a book is good or bad. You have to support your opinion with explanations and specific references to the book itself, including quotations.

Working together, write your first draft. Use the details that you checked. Remember that reviewers comment on the important parts of the book but do not give away too much of the story. To see a sample book review and some ideas for ways to write one, go to <http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/bookrev/read.htm> and see how Rodman Philbrick writes a review of *To Kill A Mockingbird*.

After you have written your group draft, read through it carefully. Have you stated your ideas clearly and completely? Be sure that you have given the page

number in parentheses after any direct quotations from your book. Check for spelling and punctuation errors.

Once you have your final review written, copy and paste it into a Web page. You will be given directions on how to do this. This is the homepage that you will hyperlink to your annotations.

Annotating Your Review

You will each write short research pieces on the areas you want to annotate in your review. Possible topics could include: the author, the setting, connections with history, and other topics mentioned in your book. For example, if you were writing an annotated review over the book *Night* by Elie Wiesel, you might want to do research on the author, on Sighet in Transylvania (Wiesel's hometown), on the Talmud, on the cabbala, on Zionism, on Auschwitz, on the Resistance, on the liberation of Buchenwald, or on any other topics you notice while reading.

Use the notes that you took on topics for research while reading the book. Then read over your review to see which you included. Decide which parts of the review you want to annotate and assign topics to group members.

Use the Internet or library resources to research your topics. Take notes on index cards or in a note file on your computer. Be sure to get complete source information for all written sources and URLs of all Internet sites used.

Word-process your research topic. Be sure that you use parenthetical notation for any quoted or paraphrased sections of your report. Put the source information at the end of your report. Follow MLA style for the works-cited page. You will be given a sheet explaining this and giving you examples.

As a group, review and edit each piece. Copy and paste each report to a new Web page, then hyperlink your review to each report and hyperlink the reports back to the review.

Be sure that you check all of your links to make sure that they work before having your teacher grade your annotated review.