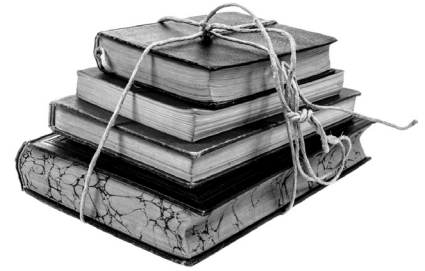




Task Shell Example 13—The Novel

Language Arts Assessment Activity

Perspectives on a Novel



Title of Novel:

Author:



Did you know . . . that Stephen King was a high school English teacher in Hampden, Maine, before he sold his first book?

What interesting fact can you find out about your book's author?

“A classic is not a *classic* because it conforms to certain structural rules, but because of a certain eternal and irrepressible freshness.”

–Ezra Pound

Introduction

In this assessment activity, you will select a novel from choices approved by your teacher.

These are your tasks:

- keep a chapter-by-chapter log of questions and brief notes;
- write a literary analysis paper, personal essay, or book review using your chapter questions and notes as a resource; and
- deliver a brief oral presentation about your book.

You will have various choices to make about what form your written work and your presentation will take. The details of the tasks and choices you have are provided below.

Language Arts Skills Assessed by This Activity:

- Trace the development of theme(s) or characters throughout the book
- Use effective oral communication skills in critiquing or reviewing the book
- Connect the experiences of the characters with current issues in our lives
- Analyze how the author uses literary elements or literary devices to develop a theme or plot

Part I: Keeping a Reading Log

(NOTE: Students will be assessed for the content of the log, but not for conventions, such as spelling, grammar, or punctuation.)

In your reading log, write:

1. One key question for each chapter that touches on a major theme you have identified running throughout the book, or about the development of characters, plot, or use of literary devices. (You will probably have to read several chapters before you are able to see themes beginning to emerge.)

Brief notes—only two or three sentences, direct quotes, or examples—of essential reminders to you about developments you notice in the chapter that shape the direction of the story, characters, or theme. You will use these notes in development of Parts II and III.

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Part II—Writing About the Book (select one)

Your teacher may require that your paper be done on a word processor. (Effective essays examining pieces of literature are typically between 500 and 750 words.) Follow the writing process and address the guidelines described by the rubric criteria.

Your choices:

- **Write a formal literary analysis** related to character, setting, plot structure, point of view, theme, or literary devices or techniques used. The paper should present appropriate support for the thesis of the text, properly cited, drawing a conclusion and commenting on the significance of the book.
- **Write a personal essay** about how a character or theme in the book is connected to your own life or to your thoughts and values. Make direct references to specific details in the book that illustrate the significance of the character or the theme. Remember that your chapter notes will be your best resource for developing your ideas.
- **Write a book review** of the assigned or selected text. Follow the format of professional book reviewers, found in various sources, such as the *New York Times Book Review*, or other media sources. You may want to investigate several book review examples before you begin to write.

Part III—Your Oral Presentation

Prepare and deliver a five- to eight-minute oral presentation that accomplishes the following:

- analyzes the plot, characters, and theme; and
- comments on the novel's personal and cultural value.

Your oral presentation may be a formal commentary on the story, its characters, and themes; or it may be a collection of scenes or episodes that you present dramatically (possibly with the assistance of others); or it might be designed as a question–answer session in a character or author role that you adopt.

The oral presentation may be accompanied by audiovisual aides appropriate to your plan (such as a PowerPoint, props, and/or costume for a dramatization).

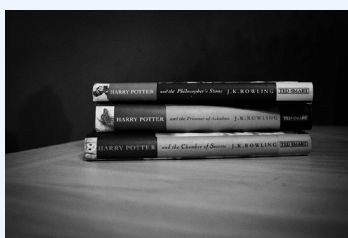


Image Source: [iStock.com/Carneadele](https://www.istock.com/Carneadele)

Did you know . . . that J. K. Rowling, the author of the Harry Potter books, was a divorced mother living on welfare in Edinburgh, Scotland?

She wrote the first book at a table in a cafe during her baby's nap times.

Source: This assessment was developed as part of the Wyoming Body of Evidence Consortium & Wyoming Department of Education Performance Assessment Project—Grade HS (2002–2004).



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