

# Honors Modern Literature

## Leading a Class Discussion

For each novel we read during the semester, you will be assigned a portion consisting of one to three chapters. You will be responsible for preparing and leading a 15-20 minute class discussion on this section of the novel. Sometimes you may be assigned a section with another student, but **each** of you will be responsible for meeting the following requirements:

### Summary

Begin the discussion by briefly summarizing your assigned section. This provides an introduction to the discussion, setting a frame of reference for the class and preparing them to talk about the novel. The following considerations are very important for this part:

- Keep in mind that we have read the novel with you. Your job is simply to remind us what happens in the part of the novel you are discussing. Do not get bogged down discussing in detail everything that happens.
- You must plan ahead of time and be prepared. Do not try to come in and simply talk your way through the book. Know what you are going to say before you come in!
- Organize. Tell us where your section picks up, where it ends, and what the key plot points are in between. You may present your summary all at the beginning, or you may summarize up to a point and then present a discussion question before continuing with the discussion. Either way, your summary should be **brief**.

### Discussion Questions

You must have at least three prepared discussion questions. They need to be open-ended, intended to prompt a few minutes of discussion. You must also have a prepared, detailed response of your own to contribute to keep the discussion on track and to take it deeper.

### Theme

At some point in the discussion, you must present a specific theme that is developed in your section of the novel. Be able to support this theme with specifics from the novel. It can be an explicitly stated theme, or it can be one that you develop.

Remember a theme needs to meet the following requirements:

- It needs to be a complete sentence making a statement about life in general. A theme asserts a truth about life. For instance, a theme could be: Impatience and impulsiveness often lead to disastrous decisions in romantic relationships.
- A theme should AVOID the following:
  - “you” in any form
  - commands (includes an implied “you”)
  - the words “should” or “must” (morals suggest how we should behave while themes assert that something is true)
  - clichés

Keep in mind the overall purpose: discussion. We cannot discuss anything if you are spending the whole time summarizing every detail or providing only your own opinion the whole time. You must provide time for others to answer and be prepared to ask follow up questions to encourage others to talk. Remember that everyone else is receiving a grade for participating in the discussion, so they must be given the opportunity to do so.

One last point: just because these are formal requirements does not mean the discussion has to be formal. We all want to have **a fun, meaningful discussion**, and these requirements are only in place to make sure you are prepared, because if you are not prepared, the discussion is likely to be neither fun nor meaningful. So, come in ready, and let’s talk!

# Class Discussion Rubric

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Novel: \_\_\_\_\_

Section of Novel: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Summary

- accurate
- brief

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## Discussion Questions

- open-ended
- follow-up questions and commentary keep discussion moving

Q1: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Q2: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Q3: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Theme

- makes an assertion about life
- avoids: “you”, “should” or “must”, commands, clichés
- supported by specific evidence from the novel

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## Other Considerations

- leader is organized and prepared
- keeps the discussion moving forward
- does not allow discussion to stray too far off topic

Grade \_\_\_\_\_