Novel Study: Literature Circles

Assessment
- the quality of your contributions to your lit circle discussion
- the extent to which you keep up with your responsibilities to your group
- the quality of your ideas on your Lit Circle Notes
- the quality of your group's discussion

Assignments
Your group must:
- hold each member accountable for work, contributions to discussion, and respectful participation.
- rotate the assigned roles so that each session someone has a different responsibility; when you complete one cycle through the group, begin again as you think appropriate, rotating jobs.
- work on your Data Sheets as you go, giving an analysis in each section that applies to your study
- finish any daily assignments

Schedule
We will spend part of each session on your literature circle work. There should be 6-7 sessions in total, depending on quirks in the schedule.

The Process

1. Decide on the Assignment
   Decide as a group how many pages will be assigned for the session, bearing in mind the sessions available to complete your novel. Each session's assignment will be to complete the agreed-upon reading and to also complete at least two dialectical responses to the assigned pages.

2. Assign Roles
   Decide who will fill each role for the following session. You will rotate these roles each session. You must always have a Discussion Director, an Illuminator, and a Comparative Connector; however, the rest of the roles may be shared, mixed, or rotated out as needed. The roles are as below, and the specific duties of each will follow:
   1. Discussion Director
   2. Illuminator
   3. Comparative Connector
   4. Summarizer
   5. Illustrator

3. Preparation: Dialectical Journals and Discussion Questions
   1. Complete the reading, annotating as necessary.
   2. Write your dialectical journal responses. Each dialectical entry will include:
      1. the page numbers you are writing in response to (including quote; if a long quote use beginning and end of quote with ellipses in the middle), and a brief explanation of context (what is happening in this chapter)
      2. at least one paragraph of insightful analysis including quoted examples for evidence. Each dialectical entry should address, either directly or indirectly, at least one of the seven IB Literary Concepts:  
         1. Culture, Diversity, Perspective, Transformation, Representation, Creativity, Communication
   3. You will then prepare a series of discussion questions for your circle according to your specific role (see the attached forms for each role). Details about these questions will follow, but at least one of these prepared questions should relate to one of the seven IB Literary Concepts.
4. **In-class: Lit Circle Notes:**
   1. The session will be conducted according to each member’s role - each member will address the group and, using their prepared questions and notes, lead discussion in their particular area. Each member will participate in the discussion while taking individual notes, which they will turn in at the end of each session. These notes should...
      1. ...start with your job title, your list of questions and possible answers with support.
      2. ...reflect on what you read so far, the lit circle discussion, and the application of your comparative approach to the novel.

5. **Ongoing: Data Sheets**
   1. Each group member will be filling out a data sheet of your novel as your work progresses. This form will be due at the end of the unit. Don’t let it slide until the end - fill it in while your knowledge is fresh.

**Overview of the Lit Circle Roles**

You will rotate these roles each session. You must always have a Discussion Director and an Illuminator; however, the rest of the roles may be shared, mixed, or rotated out as needed.

**Discussion Director**

Your role demands that you identify the important aspects of your assigned text, and develop questions your group will want to discuss. Focus on the major themes or “big ideas” in the text and your reaction to those ideas. What interests you will most likely interest those in your group. You are also responsible for facilitating your group’s discussion.

*Sample Questions*

- Comment on the ways conflict is used in this passage to heighten the audience’s understanding of plot or theme.
- Discuss the role and perspective of the reader in the interpretation of this passage.
- Discuss the ways in which the mood or the atmosphere is created in this passage.
- Analyze how this passage reveals the state of mind of any of the characters at this point in the novel.
- Discuss the relationship between what a character (or characters) say and what they do in this passage.
- How does the passage reveal the relationship between two or more characters?
- What are the most important ideas /moments in this text / section?
- What was the most important change in this section? How and why did it happen?

**Illuminator**

You find passages your group would like to/should hear read aloud. These passages should be memorable, interesting, puzzling, funny, or important. Your notes should include the quotations but also why you chose them, and what you want to say about them. You can either read the passage aloud yourself or ask members of your group to read in turn.

*Sample Questions*

- Analyze how this passage reveals the state of mind of any of the characters at this point in the novel.
- Comment on the way language is used in this passage to establish setting.
- What do you think this text /passage was about?
- What one question would you ask the writer if you got the chance? Why?
- What are the most important ideas /moments in this text / section?
- What was the most important change in this section? How and why did it happen?
**Summarizer**
Prepare a brief summary of the day’s reading. Use the questions below to help you decide what to include. In some cases, you might ask yourself what details, characters, or events are so important that they would be included on a test, or are worthy of a commentary. If it helps you to organize the information, consider making a numbered list or a timeline.

*Sample Questions*
- In what ways is this a crucial moment in the novel?
- What themes are treated in this passage that are significant in the novel as a whole?
- Provide a thematic statement that applies to this section of the novel.
- What are the most important events in the section you read?
- What makes them so important?
- What effect do these events have on the plot or the other characters?
- What changes—in plot, character, or tone—did you notice when you read?

**Critical Connector**
Your job is to connect what you are reading to other literary works you have encountered. The connections should be meaningful to you and those in your group, and the form of the literature is not limited to prose fiction. Remember to consider differences as well as similarities when building your questions, and you are not limited to only one other work when preparing them.

*Sample Questions*
- How does the story unfold in comparison to another work?
- In what ways does the protagonist evolve in comparison to another work?
- In what ways is one of the Seven Concepts addressed in both works you are considering?
- What archetypal characters or situations do you observe in your readings?
- How does the presentation of a concept in the work compare to that of a work in another form (drama or poetry, for example)?

**Illustrator**
Your job is to both draw some kind of picture or thinking map, and to find and bring in one visual related to the passage. You can draw a sketch, cartoon, diagram, or any kind of graphic organizer. You can illustrate something that’s discussed specifically in the book or something that the reading reminded you of, or a picture that conveys any idea or feeling you got from the reading. For the visual you find, you can bring in a painting that connects to some aspect of the passage: a painting that uses one of the myths alluded to in the novel, a drawing or painting of how a particular character, setting, moment, or scene might be envisioned, a clip from a film version that you find interesting.

*Presentation Plan:*
Show your illustration without comment to others in the group. One at a time, they get to speculate what your visual means, to connect the drawing to their own ideas about the reading. After everyone has had a say, you get the last word: tell them what your pictures mean, where they came from, or what they represent to you.

*Sample Questions to Consider:*
- In what ways is this a crucial moment in the novel?
- What themes are treated in this visual that are significant in the novel as a whole?
- What makes them so important?
- What is striking or interesting about this visual?
- In comparison, what does this portrayal or visual reveal about the issues it relates to in the novel?
Lit Circle Notes: Discussion Director

Name

Date

Your role demands that you identify the important aspects of your assigned text, and develop questions your group will want to discuss. Focus on the major themes or “big ideas” in the text and your reaction to those ideas. What interests you will most likely interest those in your group. You are also responsible for facilitating your group’s discussion.

Sample Questions:
- Comment on the ways conflict is used in this passage to heighten the audience’s understanding of plot or theme.
- Discuss the role and perspective of the reader in the interpretation of this passage.
- Discuss the ways in which the mood or the atmosphere is created in this passage.
- Analyze how this passage reveals the state of mind of any of the characters at this point in the novel.
- Discuss the relationship between what a character (or characters) say and what they do in this passage.
- How does the passage reveal the relationship between two or more characters?
- What are the most important ideas /moments in this text / section?
- What was the most important change in this section? How and why did it happen?

Write your discussion questions in here; write your response to them in the main note taking area to the right.

Today’s Assignment: Pages_________ to ___________

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Review and Reflection:
Lit Circle Notes: Illuminator

Name

Date

You find passages your group would like to/should hear read aloud. These passages should be memorable, interesting, puzzling, funny, or important. Your notes should include the quotations but also why you chose them, and what you want to say about them. You can either read the passage aloud yourself or ask members of your group to read in turn.

Sample Questions:
Analyze how this passage reveals the state of mind of any of the characters at this point in the novel.
Comment on the way language is used in this passage to establish setting.
What do you think this text/passage was about?
What one question would you ask the writer if you got the chance? Why?
What are the most important ideas/moments in this text/section?
What was the most important change in this section? How and why did it happen?
How should you present this passage?

Today’s Assignment: Pages____________ to ____________

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Write your discussion questions in here; write your response to them in the main note taking area to the right.

Review and Reflection:
Lit Circle Notes: Summarizer

Name

Date

Today’s Assignment: Pages___________ to ___________

Write your discussion questions in here; write your response to them in the main note taking area to the right.

Sample Questions:

In what ways is this a crucial moment in the novel?

What themes are treated in this passage that are significant in the novel as a whole?

Provide a thematic statement that applies to this section of the novel.

What are the most important events in the section you read?

What makes them so important?

What effect do these events have on the plot or the other characters?

What changes—in plot, character, or tone—did you notice when you read?

Prepare a brief summary of the day’s reading. Use the questions below to help you decide what to include. In some cases, you might ask yourself what details, characters, or events are so important that they would be included on a test, or are worthy of a commentary. If it helps you to organize the information, consider making a numbered list or a timeline.

Review and Reflection:
Lit Circle Notes: Critical Connector

Sample Questions:
How does the story unfold in comparison to another work?
In what ways does the protagonist evolve in comparison to another work?
In what ways is one of the Seven Concepts addressed in both works you are considering?
What archetypal characters or situations do you observe in your readings?
How does the presentation of a concept in the work compare to that of a work in another form (drama or poetry, for example)?

Your job is to connect what you are reading to other literary works you have encountered. The connections should be meaningful to you and those in your group, and the form of the literature is not limited to prose fiction. Remember to consider differences as well as similarities when building your questions, and know that you are not limited to only one other work when preparing them.

Write your discussion questions in here; write your response to them in the main note taking area to the right.

Today's Assignment: Pages________ to ____________

Write your discussion questions in here; write your response to them in the main note taking area to the right.

Review and Reflection:
Lit Circle Notes: Illustrator

Name

Date

Your illustration should be on a separate page. Write your discussion questions in here; write your response to them in the main note taking area to the right.

Presentation Plan - Show your illustration without comment to others in the group. One at a time, they get to speculate what your visual means, to connect the drawing to their own ideas about the reading. After everyone has had a say, you get the last word: tell them what your pictures mean, where they came from, or what they represent to you.

Sample Questions to Consider:
In what ways is this a crucial moment in the novel?
What themes are treated in this visual that are significant in the novel as a whole?
What makes them so important?
What is striking or interesting about this visual?
In comparison, what does this portrayal or visual reveal about the issues it relates to in the novel?

Today’s Assignment: Pages____________ to ____________

Review and Reflection: