

Independent Reading Project #4  
Literature Circle Discussions

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Group Members \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the Book \_\_\_\_\_

Total # of Pages \_\_\_\_\_ Divide by 5 = \_\_\_\_\_ pages to be read each week.

The pages should be read by these dates.

- 1. Pg 1 - \_\_\_\_\_ Mon, Oct \_\_\_\_\_ (C-day)  
1<sup>st</sup> meeting. 4 questions due.
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_ Mon, Oct \_\_\_\_\_ (C-day)  
2<sup>nd</sup> meeting. 4 questions due.
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_ Mon, Oct \_\_\_\_\_ (C-day)  
3<sup>rd</sup> meeting. 4 questions due.
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Mon, Nov \_\_\_\_\_ (C-day)  
4<sup>th</sup> meeting. 4 questions due
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_ (end of book) Tues, \_\_\_\_\_ (A) and Wed, \_\_\_\_\_ (B)  
No questions due.

Entire Project Due Tues, Nov \_\_\_\_\_ (A) and Wed, Nov \_\_\_\_\_ (B)

**Literature Circle Discussions** (10 pts Participation for each meeting)

Each week you will be evaluated individually based on the criteria below. You . . .

- are prepared with 4 open-ended, text based questions about the pages you agreed to read.
- bring your book and use it during your discussions for further understanding, or to support or refute your ideas or the ideas of others.
- demonstrate active listening, ask additional clarifying questions about your peers' ideas and solicit ideas from others in your group who have not shared their thoughts
- use all of the time you are given for discussion related to the text you are reading (even after all questions have been talked about).
- take notes on the questions you wrote and discuss with your group
- on the back of each page, record a theme related to one of the questions you wrote

Independent Reading Book Project  
30 points Assessment

**Final Packet (staple in this order)**

- Cover page on top (see below)
- Type and number **your questions** for each week along with **your ideas in complete sentences**. You may revise these to add more context or better show your understanding of the text, but they should be based on the original question you wrote. At the end of each set of questions, type a **theme** related to one of the questions.
- Four sets of **original stamped** questions and notes taken during your Literature Circle meetings with a theme written on the back that relates to one of the questions you wrote. If you were absent, include any MEAT body paragraphs you wrote related to your questions too.
- The original assignment sheet with the page numbers filled out with the rubric facing outwards stapled to the back.

**Cover Page Requirements** - On a blank sheet of paper, create a cover with the following:

- The title of the book and author
- 3-4 major **topics** the book deals with (stereotypes, belonging, freedom, independence, etc.). More **advanced topics** are expressed as **phrases** (the evils of ambition at all costs, the struggle for individuality in a conformist society, how relationships with people from different cultures and races can help us recognize personal biases, the cost of relying on technology to live, etc.)
- See G-4: A **major theme** printed on the **front** of the cover – one sentence that describes a message the author is trying to convey about life or human existence (TIP: What message is the author suggesting about the topics you identified that applies to most people?). Remember theme is universal and speaks about groups – children, young adults, parents, leaders, women, men, friends, loved ones, strangers, society, humans, people who have suffered trauma, etc.
- A **colorful** visual that **includes multiple smaller pictures which work together to visually depict a major theme** of your book and takes up the **entire page**.
- Your visual must be one of your **own design**. Do **not** copy the book jacket, a still shot from a video clip, movie poster or **someone else's work** that already depicts scenes, images or characters from your novel.
- You may use computer graphics as a part of your design that you **cut out and glue** onto your paper, however, the design of your overall visual should be more than graphics glued to a page. Remember your goal is to find ways to visually communicate the theme and relationships between the topics. You may also use magazine cut-outs, photos, stickers, etc.
- Weave words, labels, and captions/ thought bubbles as well as additional features (arrows, boxes, small symbols, etc.) into the design of your visual to help communicate the theme.
- All writing on the cover should either be typed or written in ink.

## How will my questions be scored?

- BEFORE each question, **write a sentence** that establishes **context** (What part(s) of the text are you talking about? Or what background information do you want your peers to consider as they think about and answer your question?). This first sentence might also be an integrated quote or several quotes from multiple parts of the text.
- Closely related questions should be combined into ONE.
- Questions should be based on the IR-15 handout you have been given. You may change the sentence structure and language of the sentence frames. Write questions that
  - are about ambiguous parts of the text instead of what is already obvious
  - are about diverse topics
  - are not just about plot and character, but about symbols, stylistic devices, the structure of the text, etc.
  - require making inferences & connections between multiple parts of the text.
  - reflect a close reading of the text
  - use academic language
- Avoid questions that are factual (eg. you can look up the answer in the text), based on predictions (what do you think is going to happen next ...), are overly vague or could apply to any text. Examples: How does the imagery convey theme? What is the significance of the title? How does name of character change?

## Sample Questions

### *The Bean Trees*

The first five chapters rotate back and forth between focusing on Taylor growing up and leaving Pittman County and Lou Ann, and how her marriage fell apart. What similarities and differences do you see between the characters and why do you think the author tells the story from Taylor's point of view (in first person) but Lou Ann's in third?

There are several scenes describing the Arizona desert such as when Taylor first drives through the desert noticing the change in landscape and when Mattie takes Taylor, Estevan and Esperanza out into the desert for the first rainfall of the year. How does this desert imagery contribute to themes about resiliency and growth?

Taylor tells us when she is in high school that she had no wish to be "hogtied to a future as a tobacco farmer's wife" and that her "Mama always said barefoot and pregnant was not her style" (4) but then when she leaves Pittman and is on the road traveling to an unknown destination, she is given a baby. Why would she keep this baby when she did not want to be a mother in the first place and was it morally acceptable for her to do so when she has no home or job or support?

### *Night*

The author mentions studying the Kabbalah with Moishe the Beadle at night when he is a boy, then later he describes a vivid and horrific memory of being on a train traveling through the night listening to Madame Schächter scream; and finally, when he arrives to Birkenau, he describes the flaming pits in the darkness where children and babies are being burned. What do you think the title means so far given these references?