

ELA Literary Focus 40S Book Clubs

Voices and Choices

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Due to the wide range of students, and interests in our class we are setting up the reading portion of our course to provide some choice on your part. Rather than all of us reading the same book at the same time, you will select from a variety of books which all explore the ways in which people confront dilemmas, make decisions, and come to understand who they are in the world. It is my hope that this in turn will shed some light on your own process of defining yourselves at this point in your lives.

There will be many books to choose from; you should try to read as many as possible to broaden your understanding, but at a minimum you should complete at least three. Our purpose in this is to help you gather ideas for your multi-genre project which will be completed in June as a major part of your evaluation for this course. This project will allow you to develop and demonstrate your own voice as an author. The following is an outline of the various ways we will explore these texts, share ideas with each other, and finally express our own understanding. More detailed handouts will follow.

Collecting Our Thinking: Journals

To help you prepare for your book club meetings, you will collect your thinking about your book in your reader/writer's notebook. Use post-its while you are reading to mark places that caused you to stop and think, question, look up new words, etc. On Thursdays we will spend some time in class creating journal entries from these post-its. You can use double entry journals (one column for a reference to the text and one for your thoughts) or unified journals where you combine the two in paragraphs.

Getting together: Book Club meetings

You will meet weekly with other students reading the same book to discuss various elements of the book you are all reading.

Book club etiquette

1. Everyone needs to come to the meeting having read some part of the book and ready to ask questions and enter into a discussion with others.
2. Spoiler alert: be aware that some of you may have read further than others- do not reveal details that will spoil the ending for your classmates.
3. Choose one member to be a time keeper/moderator. This person will keep the meeting in order.
4. Respect the group: do not monopolize, take the conversation off topic, engage in other activities, etc.
5. Listen actively and make notes in your reader's/writer's notebook.
6. Remember that good groups are not just about sharing information. You need to be able to ask questions, challenge others' ideas, mediate disputes, keep the group focused, build on others' ideas, and invite others to speak as well.

Sharing your Creativity: Book Club Projects

For each book you finish, will create a written/ multimodal (graphic, short story, podcast, video, photo-voice) piece using that text as a springboard. You may explore a similar theme, alternate reactions to the choices made in the book, similar genre, etc. These are due one week after you finish your book, or, at least by April 5, May 3 and June 5.

Digging deeper: Inquiry project

In May, we will spend some time researching an issue of interest to you, or a group of you, that comes out of your readings. You will show your learning in two ways: a research essay and a creative piece.

Showing off: Multi-genre Project

While this project will be completed in June, it will contain pieces that you will have worked on throughout the semester. It is a compilation of a minimum of 4-5 pieces of a variety of genres stemming from and exploring your ideas on the books you have read and pieces we have looked at together in the writer's workshop portion of the class. This is your opportunity to showcase your best skills in creating and communicating.