

## 20 Ways to Respond to a Book

by Maureen Marchetti Martin

Of course, you can still write the usual book report. The book report hasn't changed since your grandmother wrote hers, but there may be more interesting ways to respond to a book. When you want something different, try some of these.

1. Extra! Extra! Read All About It!

Write the front page (or more) of a newspaper that might have been published about the events in the book. Included could be news items, human interest stories, birth announcements or obituaries, advertisements, and letters to the editors, all based upon the characters and action in the story.

2. What a Character

Representing the point of view of one of the characters of the book, you may want to write a first-person account of some of his/her experiences in the book. In fact, the character may not agree with what happens to him/her in the book, and may want to give some alternative suggestions as to what the author could have written.

3. Hallmark Hall of Fame Presents....

In this option, you could write a TV script (perhaps using favorite characters from an existing TV show) of the events in the book. Be sure to include stage directions, and a narrator may be useful to fill in the gaps.

4. Hello, this is Mike Wallace from "60 Minutes," and I have a Few Questions for You...

Mike Wallace is known for his hard-hitting, no-holds-barred approach to getting to the bottom of a story. You could become an interviewer like Mike Wallace, and interview a character from the book, asking about the motivations for his or her actions and about certain episodes from the book.

5. Test Time!

After reading a book, you may wish to create a test or quiz about the book (including an answer key with answers). Types of questions may include true and false, multiple choice, essay questions, matching.

6. Chapter "X"

Did you wish the book had never ended? This option may be just for you! Write the chapter after the end of the book. For example, if a book had 14 chapters, write chapter 15. Try to be consistent with the writing style of the original author, but here is your chance to write what YOU really wanted to happen to the characters.

7. Autobiography with Timeline

Taking a main character in the book, create a timeline of his or her life and an autobiography of the major events pertaining to this character in the book. Be sure to use the first-person (I) voice.

8. In the Eye of the Beholder

Taking two or more characters from the story, select one central episode from the book and write about it from the perspective of each character. This would compare different versions of the same event, based upon the view of the different characters.

9. Dear Diary

Upon finishing a story, take the first-person perspective of a main character in the book and write at least 3 separate diary entries of at least 150 words each, describing important events from the story. Try to include emotional reactions and motivations of the character. Some may be explained in the book, and some you may need to infer.

10. Once Upon a Time...

Would your book adapt well as a children's book or fairy tale? Write and illustrate such a book using the main characters and events from your story. You may use a computer graphics program.

11. What a Character II

Taking a central character from your book, write a character sketch. Include all the details given about the character provided by the author: physical appearance, clothing, family, interests, hobbies, sports, ... You may also include items not in the story that you think this character might have enjoyed (favorite color, favorite type of car, ...), being sure to give reasons that support your ideas.

12. Rave Reviews

Write a review of your book, one that would be appropriate for a newspaper or periodical. To get a good idea of how reviews are written and what important details to include, read reviews from a newspaper and try to imitate the same style.

## 13. Publicity Package

Put together an advertising package to entice others to read your book. Include newspaper ad layouts, radio ads, any special events that you feel would be appealing. Be sure to actually tape your radio ad, using sound effects if appropriate (and be sure to send us a copy!).

## 14. Dear Author

Write a letter to the author of your book. This will not really be sent, but use this option to really let the author know what you think of the characters, setting, plot development, and even tell the author what might have worked better, or what you would have preferred to have seen happen in the story.

## 15. Research Report

This option is especially useful if the book is historical in context. If there is a particular historical setting or event in the story that was especially intriguing, research this topic and write a report on what you discovered about it.

## 16. Book Jacket

Design a new book jacket for your book. Include the cover (yes, you may use computer graphics), write a summary of the book for the inside cover, write a brief biography of the author, and you may even include quotes on the back cover from others that you know (even you!) who have read the book and are willing to share what they thought of it. If you think you might enjoy this writing option, take the original book jacket off the book without reading it so that it will not influence your creation, then compare yours to the original after yours is completed.

## 17. They Don't Call Them Comic Books Anymore!

For those who enjoy animation, create a graphic novel of your story, being sure to include all the important details of characters and plot.

## 18. And the Winner is...

Select a book that has won a literary award (for instance, a Newberry Award Winner), and write your opinion on whether it should have won the award. Be sure to back your opinion up with logical ideas and information from the book.

## 19. Booktalk

Pretend you are a librarian and are booktalking (trying to sell the book) to other young adults. Include a brief summary of the story, personal implications from reading the book, and specific reasons why it should be read. Remember, you do not want to give too much of the story away, just enough to get others interested and give reasons why it would be a good read for them.

## 20. So You Say

This option is taken from *100 Novel Ways with Book Reports* by Isabelle M. Decker (New York: Scholastic Book Services, ©1969, p.153). Select one of the following statements, and write a 200-300 word essay defending your opinions with evidence from the book and rational arguments.

For a recently written book:

- a. This book should be included in a time capsule for this period of time.
- b. This book is one of the best books written in the last 10 years.
- c. This book should win an award.

For any book:

- d. This book should be read by all students before they graduate from high school.
- e. This book should be read by all young adults and their parents.
- f. This book should be removed from library shelves.
- g. This book should be read by every student who hates to read.
- h. This book does not deserve its popularity.

# Preparing the Written Book Report

by April Thome

The written book report should have four parts: the introduction, the body, the conclusion, and the evaluation.

## PART 1: The Introduction

The first sentence should include the title of the book, the author's name, the type of literature read, and a phrase that describes the general message of the story. In addition, a well-written introduction will describe the setting (time, place, mood).

Expect to write 3-6 sentences in your introduction.

**Example:** Hind's Feet On High Places, an allegory written by Hannah Hurnard recounts the journey of a girl named "Much Afraid" as she attempts to follow her Shepherd on the path to the High Places. At first the story takes place in a valley village somewhere in the world. But then, the action and mystery builds as the main character begins her journey on a mountain path headed toward experiences rich with doubt, worry, fright, joy, understanding, and ultimately the mountain top experience. Throughout the varied sequence of events, the reader will identify with Much Afraid's reactions, thoughts, and lessons.

## PART 2: The Body

For a biography, relate the chief incidents and tell their importance. For a fiction, write a summary of the plot, in other words, the sequence of actions which make up a story. When telling about the plot, begin with the conflict that involves the main character. Sometimes the conflict affects two people, or it can influence the main character and a variety of people and circumstances. In some stories conflict may be at work within the main character. It is important that the conflict be identified and explained. Then recount the events that develop the conflict to the point at which one of the opposing forces is about to prevail over the other. This is called the "climax" of the story. For a nonfiction, summarize the written information (include enough detail in the summary to convince the reader of the report that you have indeed read the book).

## PART 3: The Conclusion

For a biography, the conclusion may be a statement concerning the main significance of the person's life.

For a fiction, the conclusion follows the climax and tells the events that resolve the conflict.

For a nonfiction, the conclusion will be a summation of the main points in the body.

## PART 4: The Evaluation

For a satisfying conclusion, give your thoughts about the book, whether they are favorable or unfavorable. This might be the most important part of the report for the reader who is wondering if the book would be worthwhile to read. Be specific about what was most enjoyable and what could have made it better. Tell who you would recommend this reading selection to. Explain how the book influenced your thinking or your goals in life. The best way to make your point is by using quotes from the book to support and illuminate your statements. Try to end your book report with powerful wording that is designed to interest the reader into reading the book or agreeing with your opinion.

# Book Report: Grading Checklist

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Assignment Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Course Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Book Title and Author: \_\_\_\_\_

The written book report should contain the four parts listed below. Assign points as indicated.

(5 pts) Introduction

- \_\_\_\_\_ (1 pt) includes title of book
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1 pt) author's name
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1 pt) type of literature
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1 pt) setting
- \_\_\_\_\_ (3 pts) phrase that describes the message of the story
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1 pt) spelling, complete sentences, correct punctuation and capitals

1. \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL POINTS AWARDED FOR THE INTRODUCTION

(5 pts) The Body

- \_\_\_\_\_ (2 pts) relate the main events of the story
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2 pts) conflict described
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2 pts) plot / conflict is written in own words
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1pt) spelling, complete sentences, correct punctuation and capitals

2. \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL POINTS AWARDED FOR THE BODY

(5 pts) The Conclusion

- \_\_\_\_\_ (5 pts) appropriate conclusion depending on type of literature
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1 pt) spelling, complete sentences, correct punctuation and capitals

3. \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL POINTS AWARDED FOR THE CONCLUSION

(5 pts) The Evaluation

- \_\_\_\_\_ (5 pts) writer's opinion expressed in this section
- \_\_\_\_\_ (2 pts) a strong conclusion evident
- \_\_\_\_\_ (1 pt) spelling, complete sentences, correct punctuation and capitals

4. \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL POINTS AWARDED FOR THE EVALUATION

RAW SCORE: TOTAL POINTS AWARDED FOR LINES 1, 2, 3, 4 \_\_\_\_\_

Multiply points X 2 \_\_\_\_\_

FINAL GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Evaluator \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_