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FALL 2020

**LIT1000: INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE**

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**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

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“Your Next Novel Should Be\_\_\_\_\_” Book Report Guidelines

**I. Purpose:**

As a result of our discussions throughout the course, the main purpose for this book report is to apply your critical perspective to this question: **Why should the book you’ve read be the next book your classmates must read?**

First, I want you to choose a novel (work of fiction) that catches *your* interest. It can be a classic, something that just came out, young adult, etc. I’m pretty much open to *most* ideas. These are the first two steps that are mandatory:

1. Choose something that you want to read and feel you will enjoy reading!
2. It must be approved by **ME**. Once you have chosen your novel, I would like you to email me for approval:  
[depaolos@palmbeachstate.edu](mailto:depaolos@palmbeachstate.edu) If you would like any suggestions, or have any questions, please feel free to email me as well!

ii. **Outline:** Here's how I would like you to organize your report. I like simple outlines because that means that your own thoughts and ideas will be the bulk of your paper. Also, because there are **6** sections you need to cover, your paper can definitely have **more** than **6** paragraphs.

1. Introduction
2. Summary of the Novel
3. Characters' Details
4. Plot Details
5. Evaluation
6. Conclusion

1. Your introduction: This is where you write the title of the book, the author's name, and the main idea of the story. Make sure to include the genre, publication date, number of pages, and publisher information. If the book has won any major awards or broken sales records, mention those as well. You can also include a biographical sketch here (a brief sketch of the author's life). What can you tell us about the author that might be of interest to us as we read this novel? Also, if there was a certain reason you chose this particular book to read?
2. Summary of the Novel: Include a broad overview of the story here. Specify the time period, setting, overall plot, and main characters. Describe the atmosphere or tone/style of the story and the point of view of the narrative. (pp. 1279-1282 of our textbook)
3. Characters' Details: List the main characters and identify any major conflicts that exist between them. Highlight if there is a particular problem that the characters are trying to solve. details including character's background, age, likes, dislikes, and everything else that impacts the story, including their relationships.
4. Plot Details: This section includes an overall description of the plot. No need to add too many details; tell the overall story and the major plot twists. Any element that propels the story further should be included here. Think of it as

highlights of a game or match; no play by play, just **important events**. Be sure to include how the plot picks pace, what conflicts arise, how they are eventually resolved, and how the book ends. In this section, you should also mention any literary themes and plot devices you observed in the book. You are welcome to flex your literary criticism muscle and include a theoretical overview here.

5. Evaluation: This is the section where your own observations and opinions belong. Offer your own unique critique of the book. What did you think the strong points and weak points were? Describe how easy it was to sustain interest in the book. Write about what you learned while reading the book, and especially focus on how it affected you on an emotional level. Make sure you include your answer to the question, "Is it Literature?" Explain why or why not.
6. Conclusion: Finally, include a paragraph in which you write your honest opinion on the book. Why you would recommend that your classmates read it? Make sure you ask yourself, Why did I enjoy this book? What was it that made it appealing? This is your sales pitch and this paragraph will be posted to the discussion board. Have fun here as you convey your enthusiasm for your book to your classmates!

### III. Format:

1. MLA Formatting (use the word template found on Black Board).
2. Include a Works Cited page, too, for the source of the biographical information you use. You might have just one source.
3. 1500 – 2000 words (3-4 pages)
4. For help with editing please visit our friends at the **SLC**.

**DUE DATE: Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm**

Once you've chosen your novel, here are some things to think about:

**Plot:** Why does this novel hold your attention? Why do you want to stop everything you're doing just to read a few more pages? Does the plot focus on some sort of conflict or struggle, such as in John Grisham's *The Firm*? In this legal thriller Mitch McDeere is trying to stay alive when he discovers that his Memphis law firm is actually part of an organized crime family. If he tries to leave the firm, he will most certainly die like several other attorneys have in the past.

**Characters:** Good novels hold our attention because the characters are riveting in some way. Maybe they are intriguing or inspiring or romantic or mysterious or comical or frightening or heroic. Maybe we identify with them. What is it about the characters that holds our attention?

**Setting:** The time and place of a novel can add a great deal to its appeal. Is the novel set in the present or in some fascinating historical period? Westerns often rely heavily on realistic descriptions of scenery and locale and historical events. Perhaps the novel is set in some exotic locale—a tropical island, the Saharan desert, the mean streets of New York, or a quiet hamlet in New England. We often take pleasure in escaping to a time and place that is completely different from our own.

**Theme:** This is the last criterion perhaps. Does your story contain a theme? In other words, does the novel make a comment on society or on some aspect of our human experience? Does the novel comment on race or gender or politics? Even crime novels comment on human nature in some way. Detectives are always trying to restore order as they solve crimes and in doing so, they may comment on greed or corruption or some other evil.