

American Literature: Banned Books Independent Reading Book Review Assignment

For this assignment, you will write a book review for the book you chose for the Independent Reading Assignment this trimester. After revision, your review will then be published for sharing with the class. Make sure to follow the guidelines to keep any required revisions to a minimum. There are a few steps to the assignment:

1. **Due by class time Thursday 11/6:** Compose a first rough draft of your review for peer workshop groups in class. Also jot down any questions for peers if there's any particular type of feedback that would be helpful.
2. **In class on Thursday 11/6:** Participate in peer workshop groups to help each other further develop the reviews. Guidelines and protocols will be discussed in class.
3. **Due by class time Thursday 11/13:** Polished, finished review: Follow all assignment guidelines and polish up your review the best you can. Be creative and proofread carefully.
4. **Due by class time Tuesday 11/18:** Final CREDIT DEADLINE for ALL work
5. **Due by class time Thursday 11/20 (Last day of trimester):** Final revisions on reviews based on teacher comments. Reviews will be published for sharing at the beginning of second trimester.

GUIDELINES: Your book review must ...

- Be between 350-450 words in 12-point Times New Roman double-spaced font with standard 1-inch margins. Short doesn't mean easy—you want a polished, engaging, and informative piece.
- Have an original, attention-grabbing title.
- Start off with an engaging hook.
- Introduce the title of the book *in italics* and the author.
- Include a brief explanation of the premise of the book, including why it's been challenged or banned. Also consider the book's social context in the time in which it was published as well as its relevance today.
- NOT contain any spoilers! Feel free to explain significant events in the beginning/first half of the book, and you might allude to an ending or plot twist as being predictable or riveting or what-have-you, but don't give away what actually happens.
- Clearly explore your opinion of the book. It's up to you if you want to write a positive, negative, or mixed review. Support your opinion(s) with evidence and be specific. This communicates your subjective experience and reaction to the book (intellectual, emotional, and visceral).

- Review your response papers and guiding questions for tips on content and your angle. There are also some good further tips/questions in the article [“How to Write a Book Review” from BookTrust](#).
- Pay attention to detail. Include specific, accurate, and relevant details that give a good flavor of the book and the author’s style, such as quotes and specific examples and descriptions.
- Consider your audience. In an immediate sense, your readers are your classmates, but write it as if you were writing a review for a broad audience. Pay attention to the narrative style and voice of your review—be both clear and creative. This should not be stodgy and boring. You might add that you would recommend the book for a certain type of reader and/or indicate specific trigger warnings. Summarize your thoughts in the conclusion for a strong takeaway. You can also explore some sample reviews [here](#) and [here](#).
- Be proofread and polished for grammar, spelling, and punctuation.