

Dear Students,

Your letter-essay is a place for your teacher, your friends, and you to write about books and authors. You will think about your books and write informal letters addressed to your teachers and friends, and they will write back to you commenting on your ideas and observations. Our letters will become a record of the thinking, learning, and reading done together.

Letter-essays should be 1-2 pages long (1.5 spaced) and written as a personal, critical response to one book. In other words, this is not a sequence of paragraphs about a series of books, but a long look at a book that has made an impression on you. You will write one letter to either me, or a classmate each trimester.

Before you write, look back over your reading record. Which completed title would be most enjoyable to revisit as a fan? Once you have decided, return to the book and skim it.

Then, select at least one passage you think is significant, in terms of how you reacted to the book's theme, problem, character development, plot, or author's style. Choose a chunk of text that you think shows something essential, but make sure that the passage does not comprise the major part of your letter. In your letter essay, copy the passage you chose, putting it in italics, and write what you think it shows about the book, the author, or your response to either.

What else might you do in a letter essay? Tell about your experience as a reader of the book. Describe what you liked and/or did not like about the book and explain why. Tell about the book's message and what it meant to you. Describe what surprised you, your questions about the characters, plot, setting, the author, and/or yourself as a reader. Explain what the book reminded you of, other books or experiences from your own life. What did you notice about the author's style?

As you are writing your letter, remember to use the author's name, underline the title if handwritten or italicize the title if word processed, and capitalize it correctly. Use friendly letter form. This should include: the date, a greeting (Dear ____), and a closing (Sincerely, Yours truly, Your friend), all correctly placed.

I will tell you in class to whom your first letter should be written (me or a classmate). When you write to a classmate, send it as an attachment via email and be sure to copy me on the email so

I can read it, too. When a classmate sends you a letter, you must reply with at least one full bodied paragraph in an email message within 24 hours. Again, copy me on that email. Write back about their ideas, feelings, experiences, and questions. When you write to me, print a word processed copy or hand-write it and give it to me. I will write a reply letter to you.

The book which you select for your letter essay should be a different one that you chose for your book talk.

I cannot wait for your first letter, for the chance to learn more from you, learn with you, and help you learn more about the power and pleasures of books.

Sincerely,

Mr.Warshaw