

Independent reading project



Name:

Class:

Independent reading project

Your chosen book ...

1. What is the name of your book?
2. Who wrote the book?
3. Have you read any other books by this author before? If so, what are they called and why did you enjoy them?
4. What attracted you to this book initially?
5. What genre (type) of book do you think this is going to be? (Murder mystery, romance, thriller, horror, comedy, science fiction etc...)
6. What makes you think that this is the genre that your chosen book will be?

The cover story

Task one:

When you first look at a new book in a library or bookshop the first thing you see is the front cover. Think about the front cover of your book. Discuss the following questions in your groups and log your ideas below.

1. What information does the front cover give you?
2. What genre does the front cover remind you of?
3. How much does the front cover influence the books you choose to read?
4. What else influences your choice of book e.g. book reviews, recommendations from friends, films, television?

Task two:

Paying attention to your choice of graphics and typography, design an alternative front cover for your book on a piece of plain paper. Make sure that your version conveys information and grabs the readers' attention effectively. Make some notes to explain how and why you have designed your front cover in the way that you have.

The word on the blurb

All books have a 'blurb' (a plot synopsis usually placed on the back cover). The 'blurb' is important for several reasons. In your group, discuss the purpose and effect of the blurb then answer the following questions.

1. Why do books have a blurb?
2. Why do you think it's called the blurb?

Now read the blurb on the back cover of your book. Discuss, then log your ideas on the following...

3. Pick out five pieces of information given in the blurb.
4. Identify at least five words that make your book seem like an interesting or exciting book.
5. How does the blurb give you a clue about the main character(s) in your book?

How do they hook us?

The first chapter is sometimes as far as some readers get. How can a writer ensure that the reader is hooked from the start?

1. Think of the books you enjoy reading. Is there a particular type of story that is guaranteed to grab you? How important is the first chapter?
2. Can you think of an example of a book that has grabbed your attention from the first chapter? Give details.
3. Briefly summarise the main events of the first chapter of your book.
4. How has the author ensured that we want to read on from the few events that we witness in the first chapter?
5. Does any character intrigue you yet? If so then who... and why...?

Plot log

While you are reading your book, keep track of what's happening and why it's important using a plot log. To complete your plot log you should use a learning style that is most effective for you. You could create a flow diagram, visually represent the events or write your own response to the events of the book. It's up to you! Just make sure you continue with it throughout your reading of the story.

Who's who?

Books often centre on a small number of key characters and the events that they are involved in. Sometimes there are good characters, sometimes baddies and sometimes there is conflict between the characters. Think about the characters in the book you are reading and answer the following questions.

1. Who is the main character in your book? How do you know this? Think about the narration of the book (1st or 3rd person?), the events surrounding the character and how much of the story is centred upon them.
2. Who is close to this character and what is their involvement in the story?
3. Does the main character have any enemies? Is there any conflict (problems) between the main character and any other characters? If so, say a bit about what the conflict is about.

Characterisation

We find out about people in lots of different ways – what they say, what they do, what others say about them. It's exactly the same in a book! How does the author of your chosen book build up the main character?

1. What does the main character look like? Find a description in your book and put this into your own words.
2. What does the main character do and what does that say about him / her?
3. What do other people think about the main character? How does this affect what you think of them?
4. What does the main character say and what does this suggest about him / her?

Themes

Often in a book there are one or two ideas that tie the whole book together. We call these ideas the *themes* of the book. A theme is simply a recurring idea or issue in a book. For example in *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, belonging is a theme as Harry doesn't feel that he belongs in the muggle world and finds that he does in the wizarding world. Can you think of any other themes from *Harry Potter*?

1. What theme do you think is the most important in your book and why?
2. Give three examples of where your theme is important in your book.
3. Find three quotations (where you copy directly from the book) which show the importance of your chosen theme and explain why it shows the theme's importance.

Review

Your task is to review the book that you have read. You must give information about the characters, events, themes and you must also rate how good the book is. The purpose of this review is to give potential readers a good overview of the book and help them to decide whether or not they would like to read it. Below is a guide to help you structure your review.

Section 1:

- Get your reader interested!
- Give a clue about what's juicy and exciting about the book but *don't give too much away!*
- Give a brief outline of the story. Concentrate on the beginning so you don't give too much away. Try to get your reader interested in what happens next.

Section 2:

- Who is the main character of the book?
- Describe the main character.
- What is interesting about the character? What makes them tick? What do they get up to?
- Try to give an idea of the type of person the main character is. Would your reader like them? Did **you** like them? Why/why not?

Section 3:

- What were the main themes of the book?
- What did the book make you think about?
- Were there any issues in the book that would be of interest to your readers?
- Did the book help you to deal with or think about any important issues in life?

Section 4:

- Did you like the book? Why/why not?
- Give your honest opinion of the book.
- Who do you think would enjoy the book?

Other sections:

- Give a rating for your book.
- Give a quick guide to the book. You could do this by having single word/phrase answers to brief questions or by having brief bullet points about important aspects of the book.