

**ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
ST. JOSEPH'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL
SUMMER WRITING OPTIONS**

Directions: While completing one or more of the following activities, be sure to:

1. Include the title and author of the work
2. Double-space and word process your responses
3. Turn in your work to your teacher on the first day of class

1. Select a major or central character from one of the novels read this summer and do each of the following:

Prepare a two-page character sketch written in the first person voice, elaborating on the following items:

- a. All about me: In addition to a general description of the character, have him/her discuss locations special to his/her life. Be sure to include any special activities, either of work or relaxation, that the character does.
 - b. Significant relationships: Explain and describe significant relationships that your character has with two or three other people in the novel.
 - c. Problems in life: Spend a paragraph discussing the problems or conflicts the character faces in life and how he/she copes (or fails to cope) with them.
 - d. My future: Spend a paragraph speculating what the future holds for this character. Base your speculation upon evidence built from your reading of the novel. Where is the character likely to go next? What will happen to him/her?
 - ** e. If by chance your character is deceased at the end of the novel, discuss how he/she will be remembered by those surviving. What legacy did he/she leave behind for others to learn from or model after? How will those left continue without him/her?
2. What would the “movie version” of one of your summer reading books look like? Write a piece in which you script a section of your version. Choose the kind of movie you will film: the big Hollywood blockbuster, the Disney movie, the PBS version, the made-for-TV movie, etc. Choose actors, settings, so and forth.
 3. Write a newspaper/magazine report of the events that occurred in one of your readings. Choose the newspaper or magazine in which your story will appear and the time period in which you are writing. Obviously there are differences between a newspaper report on the events in *The Scarlet Letter* today and those that would have been included in a report written in a newspaper at the time.
 4. Write a letter to the author of one of your books or to one of the characters. If you are writing to the author, you could discuss what you admired about the work

and/or how you think the story could have been different. If you are writing to a character, you can give advice about his/her situation, decisions, etc.

5. Consider the genders of the characters in your novel. How are male and female characters portrayed? How does the work portray their roles in society? How does gender influence the choices that are available to the characters and the decisions they make? Write a paper that explores how gender affects the plot and character development of the novel.

Alternate Topics: Discuss how the novel would be different if the genders of the main characters were reversed or discuss how the novel would change if the events were to take place today, how the influence of gender on the choices and decisions that the characters make in the world of the book compares to the influence that gender might have on those same decisions if made in the present time.

6. In the novels you've read, some of the characters are given positive, sympathetic portrayals. Others have negative, perhaps even villainous portrayals. Still others may begin with negative qualities and gradually become more positive. Rarely does an author rely on the reader's personal sense of morality to determine which characters are positive and which are negative. Instead, there are details, actions, and characteristics that help define who is "good" and who is "bad". It's easy to know the difference in old westerns – the good guys wear white hats and the bad guys wear black hats. But even then, there are other details to help you know what's going on, details that even help you to construct hierarchies (e.g. slightly bad to fully evil). Think about your novel. How does the author indicate which characters are positive and which are negative? Explain how you can tell the difference.