



Summer Reading Project Ideas

Hello, students! This summer, the language arts department would like to encourage you to read. We would like you to enjoy a novel (or more) assigned to you in the grade level that you are entering. Your future English teachers will be offering you extra credit as an incentive for reading and completing one of the assignments below. Each teacher will be collecting your work when the school year begins, so have it ready! There are many different categories, and you are sure to find one that interests you. Statistics show that, on average, students lose 20% of the reading gains they made over the school year if they do not continue to read over the summer. Do not let yourself become a statistic!

1. Interview a character from your book.

You might interview a character from your book. Write at least ten questions (probably more) that will give the character the opportunity to discuss his/her thoughts and feelings about his/her role in the story. There are many different ways you can choose to present your interview. You can present it in written format, record it on video, perform it live – or come up with another way.

2. Create a diary kept by a main character in your story.

- Write a diary that one of the book's main characters might have written surrounding the book's events.
- It should be done from that person's point of view revealing all the major events in his/her life and his/her feelings about these events. Include their hopes, dreams, problems, concerns and frustrations. Remember that the character's thoughts and feelings are very important in a diary.
- The entries in your diary should stretch out over the entire period of time that the novel covers -- from the beginning of the novel to the end.
- Write dates for the entries, if possible.
- Create a cover for your diary.
- Organize the diary – make sure it is in proper order.
- On the first page, include an information sheet identifying the full name of the character, his/her age or birth date (if known), where he/she lives, and any other important information. Don't forget to include the title and author of the book here.

3. Rewrite the Ending

Say I don't like the way that book ended! Well, here is your chance to change it. Rewrite a new ending to the book you read.

- Be sure to write in the style of the author. Don't explain how the ending should be changed. Write as if you were writing the story.
- On a separate page, describe the original ending and the changes you made and then explain why you made these changes.
- Include a Xerox copy of the last three pages of the novel you read.

4. Dramatic Scene

Like to be dramatic? Want to be an actor? Here's your chance. This especially works out well if you're reading the same book as one or more of the others in your class. You can work together and write a script and have several rehearsals before presenting it to the class. If you're alone but have a lot of confidence, you can also dress as one of the characters and act out a characterization. Think about being a TV or radio reporter and give a live broadcast report of an event in the book.

5. Create a Book Jacket

Try making a book jacket. You can include everything a regular book jacket has: the title on the spine and front, including the name of the author. Include artwork or photos throughout, a section on the inside book jacket flap for a brief description of the book, and a section covering the author. If you can, include reviews from students who have read that book. You can use computer graphics, clip art, and try to have access to a color printer and a variety of colored paper.

6. Ye Old Oral Report

Prepare an oral report of 5 minutes (or ask the teacher how long you have). Give a brief summary of the plot and describe the personality of one of the main characters. Make sure you come prepared for questions from the class.

7. Map It

You can try this if the book you read contains a number of locations within a town, country, or geographical area. You can create a map. One student I had did an entire map of Narnia (*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*) and all the locations mentioned in the book.

- Make a list of all the locations - houses, stores, streets, parks, lakes, or whatever else that is revealed in your book.
- Draw the map showing a bird's eye view of the area. Label each location.
- Include a legend with a list of all the locations.
- Include a description of important events that occur at each location.
- Make sure your map has lots of details and is both colorful and large.

8. Comic Book (That's Graphic Novel to the Young Adults)

If your talent is art, create a comic book based on the novel you read.

- It should have an illustrated cover with the title and author and be comic book size.

- Inside, retell the story using dialogue and descriptions of the setting and characters.
- Look at other graphic novels or comic books to get ideas.
- Put your writing in bubbles.
- Create colorful illustrations that help tell the story.

9. Write a Letter

- Write a letter and address it to one of the characters in the book. There are many things you can include in the letter. You might ask that person questions, object to a situation, or make a complaint or a suggestion. You could include advice about his/her personal life.
- The book you're reading becomes a #1 best seller on the *New York Times* list. You will write a letter to Universal Studios Production Company trying to get them interested in making your book into a movie. Describe why the story would make a good film. Use the characters, conflicts, events, tragedies, adventure, or other notable items to enhance your description. Include a location for filming and list the actors you believe would be best to play the various roles. For this assignment, you should only use books that have not been made into films.

10. Use Venn Diagrams

- Make a Venn diagram of the people, events, or settings in your story.
- Make a list of character traits each person has and compare them to one another.
- Use the ways you are like and unlike one of the characters in your story.
- Compare your environment to the setting in the book.

11. Newspaper or Magazine

Create a newspaper that is dedicated entirely to the book you've read. It should represent the major events, controversial issues, and significant themes developed in the novel you read. The newspaper should look as real as possible. Use columns, headlines, a newspaper title, and photos (if possible). You can incorporate various newspaper features including the following:

- News articles
- "Dear Abby" letters (asking for advice)
- Comic strips
- Editorial
- A horoscope for each character
- Advertisements – a collection of ads that are relevant to the story.
- Weather forecasts (especially if there are storms in the novel)
- Personal ads
- Obituary section
- Movie or entertainment section

- Or anything else you might find in a newspaper.
- Everything you include must be based on events and characters in the book you read. Articles must be typed.

12. Timeline

Think through and come up with a record of all the most important events in the plot from the beginning of the novel to the end. Then you can organize them in the order they would have happened if the events had taken place in real life. You can create a timeline using a long ribbon of butcher paper, a poster board, or index cards (think of more). For each event on your timeline, write a brief description of what happens, and if possible, try to distinguish the time of each event with dates, seasons, special occasions, holidays, or anything else you may come across. Add pictures, clip art, word art and symbols to make your timeline more lively and colorful. All writing should be typed and then glued or taped neatly onto the butcher paper, poster board or whatever you've chose to use.

13. Scrapbook

Did you ever do a scrapbook? A scrapbook is an album of important objects that tells about or relates an event. You can put together a scrapbook for one of the main characters in your novel. The scrapbook should reflect the many events that occur to that character in the novel. You can include photographs, letters, post cards, telegrams, a family tree, newspaper article clippings, memorable items, or anything else you can think of that you might find in a scrapbook. If you include objects or photographs, be sure to write captions below describing what they are or what's going on and their significance to the character. Create a nice cover for your scrapbook. The first page inside should have the full name of the character, title of the book you read, and the author's name. You could also include some pertinent information about the character, such as his/her birth date, age, or where he/she lives.

14. Photo Album

This is sometimes difficult to do. You'll need to find different people (friends, family, and others) and get them to position themselves in places that could be related to the events in the novel you read. Then take a picture! Make sure your photos are not just of people smiling -- your pictures need to reveal the events that occurred in the novel. See if you can get some props and costumes in your pictures to help clarify who each character is and what is going on. Once you have your pictures, arrange them in a photo album in the order the events occurred. Below each photo, write a good caption that explains who the people are and what event is occurring. If you can, try to include the approximate date, especially on historical novels. The captions should be written from the main character's point of view. The first page inside should have the full name of the character, title of the book you read, and the author's name. You could also include some pertinent information about the character, such as his/her birth date, age, or where he/she lives.

15. Movie Preview (Movie Trailer)

You know that book you just read? Well, it's going to be made into a movie! What's even more exciting is that you've been hired to create an appealing, attention-grabbing, preview

that will make the public want to come and see this latest release. You'll need to do the following:

- Write and arrange a script for your production.
- You'll need to practice the script.
- You will need to videotape the brief scenes that you scripted for the preview.
- Attention: a preview or movie trailer should not show whole scenes. It should, however, give the audience a quick look at what the movie is about.
- Just as with any writing assignment, use an attention-getter at the beginning of your preview.
- Include background music that fits the novel, mood, or character of the movie as a whole.
- Include the actors and actresses who will be starring in this film – maybe even which star will portray which character.
- Turn in the written script with the project.

16. Literary Comic Strip: Students will create a comic strip with illustrations and dialogue. The comic strip **MUST** tell an original story or be based on a literary work (which must be named). The strip may be hand-drawn or created digitally. Illustrations must be the original design of the creator. Do **NOT** use patented characters (i.e. Donald Duck) or pre-made computer-generated pictures (i.e. clip art). Hand-drawn comic strips must be outlined in black ink. All stray marks must be erased. This project should be 3-10 panels and should fit on one page.

Happy Reading!

