

Study Guide for all of Ms. McCain's English Classes:

For each work studied, fill out the following Study Guide. You must include annotations in your text (highlight/make notes) to support your answers. I've used bold print below for questions requiring annotations. Use the numbers of the questions below beside all annotations.

- Title:
Author:
Date of Publication:
Genre: Be specific (i.e. If a novel, specify whether it is a psychological, historical, initiation, etc. work).
 - Author's Biographical Information:
 - Historical information about the work's setting and place of publication if different: (For example, *The Crucible* was set in Puritan New England but written in response to the McCarthy witch-hunts of Miller's era.)
 - Plot summary: (synopsis written at end of each chpt/highlighting and notes throughout)
 - Describe the author's style:
 - Give an example that demonstrates the style: (Must be marked in your book)
 - List at least five memorable/important quotes and explain the significance of each. (Include at least one quote that reveals the essence of each character and at least one or two that epitomizes the these of the work.) **MUST be marked in your book.**
 - In columns, list the following: (highlighting and notes in your book to back up these answers)
- | Character Name | Role in the story | Significance
(Function) | Adjectives |
|----------------|--|---|------------------------------|
| Willie Loman | Father/Salesman fighting to keep his job to provide for family | Represents modern tragic hero/man with wrong "American Dream" | stubborn, explosive, deluded |
- Setting (highlighted/notes in book)
 - Point of View—why chosen (highlighted/notes)
 - Significance of Opening Scene (highlighted/notes)
 - Significance of Closing Scene (highlighted/notes)
 - Symbols (highlighted/notes)
 - Themes (highlighted/notes)
 - Significance of Title

***For help with the study guides, refer to the information below. You are not required to answer anything below but must answer the questions on the DCA website listed for summer reading.**

What is a Classic?

A classic will **SEAR** you. Webster's defines "sear" as "to burn" or "to brand." Thus, a classic leaves its mark on you.

A classic will:

Stimulate our minds (appeal to our heads)—exercise our critical thinking

Entertain us

Align all elements with theme (see outline below)

Relate to our lives (appeal to our hearts)

Analyzing the Elements of a Novel

Novels, like essays, begin with a thesis/purpose. The elements an author chooses should be selected to illustrate the theme. Thus, every element unifies the novel.

I. Plot

A. Unity: Every event and scene has a purpose to help bring out the theme. Thus, nothing in a classic is

irrelevant. No scenes of violence, sex, or vulgarity are thrown in for sensationalism.

1. Symmetry: repetition of key scenes/events
Ex: 3 scaffold scenes in *The Scarlet Letter* & 2 falls in *A Separate Peace*
 2. Foreshadowing
 3. Flashback, if past is significant
- B. Dramatic structure leads to suspense:
1. Stages: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, resolution
 2. Conflicts: (no conflict = no story)
 - a. Types: external conflict: man vs. man, nature, or society/ internal conflict: man vs. himself
 - b. Is conflict sufficient for length of novel? Is it too predictable?
- C. Realism/Plausibility
- a. Realistic events (unless fantasy literature)?
 - b. Believable ending that is logical (Author hasn't resorted to chance or unlikely character transformation)?

II. Setting

A. Physical setting

1. Time
2. Place – city, country, climate, unusual weather conditions

B. Social setting

1. Customs
 - a. Attitudes
 - b. Values
 - c. Could the setting be changed without seriously affecting the work? How does it contribute to shaping the characters' lives?

III.

Character

A. Significant traits

*Determine traits by actions, words, thoughts, other characters' opinions, author's opinions

B. Dynamic or static

* Characters should stay "true" to themselves; act according to motivations, but not always act predictably

C. Function

*Determine types: round, flat, antagonist, protagonist, stereotype/stock

IV. Point of View

A. Types

1. 1st person
2. 3rd person dramatic: "The Lottery" – totally detached
3. 3rd person omniscient: narrator reports characters' thoughts
4. 3rd person limited: thoughts of only major character revealed

B. Evaluation

1. Is narrator trustworthy? Naïve?
2. Is this point of view the best choice? Why or why not? (Consider losses and/or gains of using each of the other points of view.)

V. Theme: To find the author's purpose, ask the following:

1. What happened to the central character and why?

2. Was what happened the character's own fault or due to forces beyond his/her control?
3. Are people portrayed as basically evil or good, selfish or unselfish, kind or cruel?
4. Do the characters find happiness? If not, why not? If so, why? How?
5. Does the work make any statement about religious, economic, ethical, social, or political matters?
6. Does the work provide any insight into psychological problems about sex, love, death, guilt, alienation, etc.?