English I CP

Summer Reading Assignment

Choose one of the following texts and complete the following assignment.

Choice 1: John Knowles’ “ A Separate Peace”

Choice 2: Jacqueline Woodson’s “ Brown Girl Dreaming”

**A Separate Peace**

**By: John Knowles**

“Gene Forrester, a man in his 30s, returns after 15 years to the preparatory school attended as a teenager, the Devon School in New Hampshire. While attending the school, Gene Forrester is a quiet, intellectual student. During the summer session of 1942, he becomes close friends with his daredevil roommate Finny, whose innate charisma consistently allows him to get away with mischief. Finny prods Gene into making a dangerous jump out of a tree into a river, and the two start a secret society based on this ritual. However, a single moment in the summer of 1942 changes everything leaving an emotional aftermath that drives the narrative.”

**The following assignment is due on the first day of class.**

**Your Task**

1. Read the novel.
2. Read the Characterization worksheet below.
3. Complete the Gene and Finny characterization charts. Directions are located on the chart page.
4. Complete the **prompt**.

**Understanding Characterization**

Characters are important in a novel and they serve many purposes. They are important because they drive the story as a whole. The types of characters that are involved in a story create different types of conflicts and tensions as well as different types of resolutions (Penandthepad.com).

To understand a character there are several things to consider. For example:

★ A character’s name.

★ How the character dresses.

★ The character’s occupation/interests/hobbies/obligations.

★ What the character’s home life and family life are like.

★ The character’s actions and habits.

★ What other character’s say about him/her.

★ What the character thinks or says about others.

★ Recognize and consider physical characteristics and behavior.

★ How do characters change during the course of the story?

★ What causes characters to change?

★ How are changes demonstrated in what characters do and say?

★ Are there any similarities/differences between or among characters?

★ Values: What people, places, or things are most important to the character’s life?

What does he or she value most?

★ Feelings: What emotions does the character feel most strongly? (Anger, fear, love,

hate, etc.)

★ Goals: What are the character’s greatest hopes? What is he or she working to

accomplish?

★ Problems: What other characters or circumstances are keeping the character from

achieving his or her goals?

The way authors present characters is through **direct** **characterization** and **indirect**

**characterization**.

With **direct characterization**, the author identifies such details as physical traits, specific thoughts the character might have, and other explicit details needed to understand motivation—why a character does what he or she does.

**Indirect characterization** means just what it says—the writer provides information from which the reader **infers** what the author wants to convey about the character— speech, thoughts, effects on other characters, actions, motivations, intents, and other inward character traits in order to understand the character with respect to the conflict(s) that arise in the work of literature.

Look at the **direct characterization** and **indirect characterization** examples below. They are both about the narrator, Gene. In the left column, a quote from the novel is given that reveals something about Gene’s characterization. In the right column, a brief commentary is given analyzing what the quote means in regards to Gene’s character.

**Your Task:** You are to locate **4** quotes in the novel. Choose 2 quotes that define Gene’s character and 2 quotes that define Finny’s character. Select quotes that reveal something **meaningful and significant** about each character. You must have one direct characterization for each character and one indirect characterization for each character.

**Gene Examples**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Quote:** | **What YOU think the quote reveals about Gene** |
| **Example of Direct Characterization**:  “I felt fear’s echo, and along with that I felt the unhinged, uncontrollable joy which had been its accompaniment and opposite face, joy which had broken out sometimes in those days like Northern Lights across black sky.”—*A Separate Peace* by John Knowles  **Notice** how the example provides **physical** details that help the reader **visualize** something about the character. | Through the narrator’s own words, the author tells the reader directly that Gene feels conflicting emotions of fear and joy not only as he visits the school now but also as he experienced them when he attended Devon fifteen years ago. The first person perspective is revealed when the narrator says “I”. The reader sees the story through Gene’s eyes. |
| **Example of Indirect Characterization**:  “Now here it was after all, preserved by some considerate hand with varnish and wax. Preserved along with it, like stale air in an unopened room, was the well-known fear which had surrounded and filled those days, so much of it that I hadn’t even known it was there. Because, unfamiliar with the absence of fear and what that was like, I had not been able to identify its presence.”—*A Separate Peace* by John Knowles  **Notice** how the example provides details from which you **infer** more than just visualizing something about the characters. | Possible **inference**: The narrator, Gene, is very aware of how he feels when he visits Devon. He now consciously recognizes that all the while at Devon he never really understood his own fears about his ability to conform to the private school environment. He recognizes how time and distance change the way he sees his own emotions and change the way he looks at what happened while at Devon. |

**GENE**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Quote** | **What YOU think the quote reveals about Gene** |
| 1.  **Example of Direct Characterization**: |  |
| 2.  **Example of Indirect Characterization**: |  |

**FINNY**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Quote** | **What YOU think the quote reveals about Finny** |
| 1.  **Example of Direct Characterization**: |  |
| 2.  **Example of Indirect Characterization**: |  |

**Writing Prompts**

Welcome to high school! You are about to embark on an exciting journey. One of the best parts of that journey will be making new **friends**.

Think about what **friendship** means to you. What qualities do you look for in a friend? What kind of friend have you been to others? Do you accept your friends’ flaws? Do they accept yours?

Look at the characterization chart you completed. Then think about the friendship between Gene and Finny, the two main characters in *A Separate Peace.* They have an interesting dynamic. They are best friends, and—according to Gene—they are at times, enemies (yes, they’re frenemies). Gene and Finny are different in many ways as your characterization charts may reveal (rules, spontaneity, sports, academics, beliefs, jealousy, backgrounds), and yet they are drawn together in a special bond. Examine their friendship.

**Prompt**

Write a well-developed paragraph explaining what the friendship is like between Gene and Finny.

Your paragraph must have at least **two quotes** from the novel that pertain to Gene and Finny’s friendship. One quote should reveal something about Gene and one quote should reveal something about Finny. Consider using information from the direct characterization and indirect characterization charts you completed.

Type your response on either a Google Doc or a Word document. Use Times New Roman font, 12 point, double space. Your response should be at least three-quarters of a page in length.

***Brown Girl Dreaming***

**By: Jacqueline Woodson**

*“Brown Girl Dreaming* tells the story of my childhood, in verse. Raised in South Carolina and New York, I always felt halfway home in each place. In these poems, I share what it was like to grow up as an African American in the 1960s and 1970s, living with the remnants of Jim Crow and my growing awareness of the Civil Rights movement.  
It also reflects the joy of finding my voice through writing stories, despite the fact that I struggled with reading as a child. My love of stories inspired and stayed with me, creating the first sparks of the writer I was to become.” ~Jacqueline Woodson

**The following assignment is due on the first day of class.**

**Your Task**

1. Read the verse style memoir.
2. Read the Conflict worksheet.
3. Complete the Jacqueline Woodson conflict chart. Directions are located on the chart page.
4. Complete the Civil Rights Movement chart.
5. Complete the **prompt**.

**Understanding Conflict**

**Conflict** is defined as a struggle between characters, ideas, or emotions. It helps to create the plot. Conflict exists to understand or solve a problem or to reach or to satisfy a goal.

Conflicts can be classified as either **internal** or **external.**

**Internal Conflicts:** Struggles that take place within a character’s heart/mind. They typically deal with emotions, difficult choices, or feelings.

**External Conflicts:** Struggles that occur outside the character’s physical body. Typically external conflicts deal with characters in conflict with each other, forces of nature, or society in general.

Conflicts can further be classified as:

**Man vs. Man:** A problem between characters. Characters fight each other physically, emotionally, or philosophically (beliefs).

**Man vs. Self:** This is an internal conflict. This is a problem or struggle within a character’s own mind and body. This is a good test of a character’s values.

**Man vs. Society:** The values and customs by which everyone else lives are being challenged. The character may come to an untimely end as a result of his or her own convictions. The character may, on the other hand, bring others around to a sympathetic point of view, or it may be decided that society was right after all.

**Man vs. Nature:** A run-in with the forces of nature. On one hand, it expresses a character’s place in the cosmic scheme of things. On the other hand, it tests the limits of a person’s strength and will to live.

**Man vs. Fate (God):** A problem or struggle that appears to be well beyond a character’s control.

The 1960s were one of the most tumultuous and divisive decades in world history, marked by the Civil Rights Movement. It was during this time the author, Jacqueline Woodson, was born. In fact, Woodson was born six months before Martin Luther King, Jr’s. “I Have a Dream Speech”. She recognizes that while external conflicts were taking place on the national level, she was experiencing her own internal and external conflicts.

**Your Task:** Select **3** different conflicts that Woodson writes about in her memoir. Choose one man vs. man, one man vs. self, and one man vs. society. On the left column of the chart explain her conflict and how she handles it. Does the conflict get resolved? If so, how? If not, why? On the right column choose a few lines from her memoir that serve as evidence of the conflict.

**Jacqueline Woodson Conflict**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Conflict** | **Evidence from Memoir** |
| 1. **Man vs. Man** |  |
| 2. **Man vs. Self** |  |
| 3. **Man vs. Society** |  |

**Civil Rights Movement**

Jacqueline Woodson mentions several significant people from the Civil Rights Movement in her memoir signifying that their legacies live on. She mentions: Martin Luther King, Jr., Rosa Parks, Ruby Bridges, Langston Hughes, James Baldwin, Malcolm X, and Angela Davis to name a few.

**Your Task:** Choose two of the people listed above. Research their notable and significant role in the Civil Rights Movement. Then, make a connection between them and Woodson’s memoir. Consider why Woodson mentions them in her memoir at particular moments.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Civil Rights Movement** | **Connection to *Brown Girl Dreaming*** |
| 1. |  |
| 2. |  |

**Writing Prompt**

Look at the Conflict and Civil Rights Movement charts you completed. Then think about how Woodson’s experiences and struggles are similar to those of the Civil Rights Movement.

**Prompt**

Write a well-developed paragraph comparing **two** of Jacqueline Woodson’s conflicts to the Civil Rights Movement.

Your paragraph must have at least **two quotes** from the memoir that pertain to Woodson’s conflicts. Consider using information from the Conflict and Civil Rights Movement charts you completed.

Type your response on either a Google Doc or a Word document. Use Times New Roman font, 12 point, double space. Your response should be at least three-quarters of a page in length.