

Fictional Character Biography
Independent/Contemporary Fiction Project
Mrs. Bugman/Ms. James

Overview: A biography is the study of another's life. Biographies have different emphases. Some focus on what a person accomplished; these biographies might emphasize Benjamin Franklin's different inventions and contributions to our country's principles. Other biographies concentrate on what influenced the subject most profoundly; such a biography about Eleanor Roosevelt might look closely at the people she met, books she read, and experiences she had, and how all these shaped her thinking. This assignment asks you to write a short biographical essay about a character from a novel you are reading.

Objectives: While our primary objectives are to read the book and have great discussions, I also want you to:

- Make inferences about the main character based on what they do or say
- Identify, collect, and use appropriate quotations from the book to support your statements about the character
- Choose and use details and examples to illustrate and further support what you say about the character
- Organize your essay and paragraphs around main ideas
- Develop a compelling thesis about the character which your essay supports
- Use embedded quotations from the text
- Use transitions to make your ideas flow
- Take organized Cornell notes you can use when writing your essay

Directions: When you are finished reading this novel you will write an essay (see format guidelines below) about the protagonist (or, if there is adequate information about them, some other character in the story). Complete the following steps in order:

1. Identify the character you will study

2. Take notes (*indicate the page number for easy reference*)—using the Cornell Notes format—about the following aspects of the character:

- Physical features traits (i.e., what they look like)
- Personality traits (i.e., how they act, think, respond)
- Values and their sources (i.e., what they think is important)
 - , Concentrate on cause-effect relationships.
- Crucial decisions (i.e., What the character decided—and *why*)
 - , Discuss *why* the character made each decision
 - , Discuss the consequences and/or implications of each decision
- Others' perspectives (i.e., What others think of this person)
 - , Discuss *why* these other characters think or feel this way
 - , Explain why these other characters' opinions matter
- Your perspective (i.e., What *you* think about this person)
- Themes in this person's life

3. Use your notes to write a biographical essay about this character. The essay should be:

- Three pages long
- Double-spaced
- Typed
- Twelve-point font (either Times Roman, or some other serif font)
- Properly formatted