Rea 091 Library Research Project with Historical Novels

You will complete your project on one of these five novels:
1. A Lesson Before Dying - Ernest Gaines
2. The Secret Life of Bees - Sue Monk Kidd
3. The Painted House - John Grisham
4. The Resistance - Anita Shreve
5. The Reader - Bernhard Schlink

Through this project you will acquire some background information about the major topics that will be included in your paperback novel. When you read your novel, you may be unfamiliar with the location, culture, time period, and/or sets of beliefs and values represented. Developing some prior knowledge about topics covered in your book will create a more meaningful reading experience for you. The purpose of the assignment is to build your background knowledge about some subjects included in your novel while practicing your research, organization, and critical thinking skills.

Library Work:
This project will require that you do work in the Pima College Library. Most of the research for this project will take place during class time. If you are absent when our class visits the library, you will have to complete the research in the library on your own time. Be aware that doing this work on your own with limited support from a librarian will be much more time consuming than completing it with the class.

In order to be prepared for the library research, make sure you have the following materials: 1. a Pima College Student I.D. Card 2. an email address where you can send your research documents and/or 3. a Pima College ID card with a few dollars of credit for copy costs. 4. a flash drive.

The project will include the following:

a. two preparatory sections- 1) reading and highlighting articles 2) creating an outline/map
b. three major reports or assignments – 1) research on key topic 2) timeline 3) research on author
c. one short reader reflection activity

1. RESEARCHING A TOPIC

a. In order to focus your search for information, you will meet with other students researching the same topic. You will brainstorm ideas and compile a list of general questions you would like to answer about your specific topic.

b. You will go to the library as a class to begin your research. You are required to use a minimum of 3 sources of information for your topic. Skim over articles you find. Print ones you find useful. Look for answers to your general questions. Highlight key ideas and/or take notes from the articles. Write the correct citation for the articles you plan to use. Bring your HIGHLIGHTED ARTICLES to class. Your information will be reviewed by your instructor.

c. You will then design an INFORMAL OUTLINE or MAP that demonstrates your writing plan. This outline should provide a general idea of the content you will cover and the organization of the paper. Your instructor will review this plan and provide feedback.
d. You will write the research report on your topic. Explain your topics using the following questions as guides: who, what, when, where and why. Remember you can’t explain everything about the Nazis, French Resistance, civil rights etc. You need to use critical thinking skills to review articles and find what you think is the most important information readers needs to know.

- Your paper must be word-processed, double-spaced, one inch margins in 12 point font.
- Your report will need to be **450-500 words**.
- Include **citations in the correct format** for each article you used.
- Put ideas into your **own words**. Do not copy material in the article.
- If you find powerful comments, you may use them in your report, but it must be included in quotation marks and cited. **Do not use excessive quotes.**

Refer to the book you have selected. You will research one of the two topics listed below the title.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Before Dying</th>
<th>The Secret Life of Bees</th>
<th>A Painted House</th>
<th>The Resistance</th>
<th>The Reader</th>
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<tr>
<td>1940-60’s</td>
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2 **DESIGNING A THEMATIC TIMELINE**

a. You will go to the library as a class and explore appropriate data bases. You should take notes from articles or copy them to review later.

b. Bring your **HIGHLIGHTED ARTICLES** to class. **Your information will be reviewed by your instructor.**

c. You will meet with other students researching the same theme. You will share information with others, discuss and clarify information you have collected about specific historic events.

d. You will now design your own individual timeline. It should cover the major events in history that took place during the time of your book. Focus only on events related to the general theme assigned. You should have **10 major events** included. Name the **event, date and location** on your timeline. Give enough information that your ideas are clearly understood. This should be two to three sentences about each event. Use critical thinking skills to evaluate events and decide which were crucial things that greatly impacted this time in history. The specific themes for each novel are listed below.

1. **Lesson Before Dying**- Civil Right Movement 1950’s-1970’s
2. **The Secret Life of Bees**- Civil Right Movement 1950’s-1970’s
4. **The Resistance**- World War II in Europe, 1935-1945
5. **The Reader**- World War II and Post World War II 1935-1950
3. RESEARCHING THE AUTHOR.

a. You will be looking for information about the author’s life. Before you begin your research, write some questions you may want to answer. Ex. – Where was the author born and raised? What careers has he/she had? What are some of his/her crucial life experiences that may be reflected in the book? What are some issues important to the author?

b. We will go to the library to do research. You will need to find at least three articles.

c. You will review a few articles, taking notes and highlighting information. Bring your HIGHLIGHTED ARTICLES to class. It will be reviewed by your instructor.

d. You will then design an INFORMAL OUTLINE OR MAP that demonstrates your writing plan. This outline should provide a general idea of the content you will cover and the organization of the paper. Your instructor will review this plan and provide feedback.

e. You will write a report on information you have gathered. The first part of your paper should tell us facts you learned about the author and their life. The second part of the paper should tell us how you think the author’s life and personal experiences have impacted his/her writing. Consider the important issues you think the author wants us to think about. Reflect on why you think he/she may have written the book.

• Your paper should be word-processed, double-spaced, one inch margins in 12 point font.
• It should be 350-400 words.
• Include citations in correct format for the 2-3 articles you used.
• Put things into your own words
• If you find a powerful comment made by the author or about the author, you may use it in your essay, but it must be included in quotation marks.
• Do not list all the books they have written and/or the awards the author has received
• Do not critique the book. Don’t tell us what is good or bad about the book.

4. READER REFLECTION

You will need to write an evaluation of this project. Think about what you have learned about using the library for college research. All of your novels were historical fiction that took place during a specific time in history and focused on a specific theme (ie. Civil Rights, World War II Resistance Fighters, World War II Nazis and S.S. leaders, Economic Issues in America, Bee Farming etc.) Explain how this research project helped you to better understand history and your novel. Explain specific things you can understand more clearly after doing the research and reading your book. What have you learned about the difference between using Google and the internet and using Library databases? What have you understood about plagiarism and citations? What are some ways you can use what you have learned in the future? What were some of the problems you encountered? What do you think could have been done differently to help you?

Please write 150-200 words on this topic. You will need to type your response.

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Adapted from Eisenhauer, Beth. “Portfolio Project [for CCS099].” Parkland College (IL), 2005.