Rea071/Rea081 Literary Letters I, II, III

You will write three literary letters about each book. Your letters will be personal, critical responses to your reading. You need to label your letters: Letter I, II or III. Follow the directions below when you choose the questions you will answer in your letter. Review the sample letter on page 2 so that your assignment follows a similar format. Your letters should be 300-350 words.

Directions for Letter I

1. Begin your letter with a title, the number of pages you have read and a brief summary of the book. You should include only 5-6 sentences here. DO NOT RETELL THE BOOK.

2. Find a quote or a special passage in the novel that really got your attention. Copy that section and label the page number where you found the information. Then tell why this quote or section is important and explain what it means to you. Label this section Q

3. Answer three of the following questions below in your letter. Label the letter of the question you are responding to in the left margin. (see Sample Literary Letter, page 2)

   A. What is the major conflict the character or characters are dealing with?

   B. Explain the pressures placed on a character and how he/she is dealing with them.

   C. How would you describe one of the main characters? What kind of a person is he/she? Do you like or dislike them? Why?

   D. What do you think about the first part of the book? Is it interesting, confusing, strange, or funny? Does it hold your attention? Why or why not?

   E. Does anything in the book remind you of someone you know or something that has happened in your life or the life of someone else?

   F. Is there something or someone in the book that really upsets you or bothers you? Explain.

   G. Explain the setting—when and where the story takes place. Do you know much about this location and/or this time in history?

   H. Who might be the hero in the book? Who might be the villain? Explain why.

4. Find two unfamiliar vocabulary words. Write the sentence where you found the word and make a guess about what the word means using the context of the sentence or paragraph (your definition). Then look it up in the dictionary (dictionary definition).
Sample Literary Letter I

Dear Marty,

I am presently reading a book called, *Cold Cases*, by Stephen White. I am on page 86. It is a murder mystery that takes place in a small town in Colorado. A clinical psychologist, Alan Gregory has been asked to review an old murder case from ten years ago. The police want him to study the girls who have been murdered and see if he has any idea what may have happened to them. He has to help solve the old murder. Q. Here is an interesting quote. “Her father said she was an adventurer. Her judgment wasn’t always that sound. She wasn’t a bad kid but sometimes she didn’t always think things through. She made impulsive decisions. I am afraid one of them may have had something to do with her murder.”

I think the quote gives you a hint of what may have caused her murder. Maybe she took a risk and ran off with someone she didn’t really know and shouldn’t have trusted? The author is also showing that the father knew his daughter was doing some wild or risky things. Since she is dead though, he is being nice and he calls her an “adventurer”.

A. The major conflict in the book is trying to solve these old murders. The parents of one of the girls are paying a lot of money for this to be reinvestigated. I wonder why after ten years they are so determined to solve this crime? They have involved the FBI and several out of town detectives who are making the small town police uncomfortable. You have to wonder why they don’t want to help solve the case.

D. The first part of the book is confusing since they flash back ten years and describe the scene of the crime and the actions of the police. Then they flash forward to the present and you are introduced to the characters who I assume will solve this cold case. There are too many characters here so it’s confusing.

F. It upsets me to read how these young girls were murdered so violently. That is very scary. I also think it is rather odd that police never came up with any idea as to who may have committed this crime. They also didn’t seem to get many facts about the girls, their friends or what they were doing that night. In a small town people should know more. I will get back to my book now.

Sincerely,

Brenda

**Vocabulary Words**

1. A Chicago widower had been sweet on A.J. during their *sojourn* together in Colorado. pg.11
   
   **My Definition** - *sojourn* - trip, travels together, time together,
   
   **Dictionary Definition** - a short stay at a place, to stay at a place for a time

2. I assumed there a was a *protracted* argument between mother and son about why Emily could not go with them wherever they were going. pg. 88
   
   **My Definition** - *protracted* - long, extended
   
   **Dictionary Definition** - lasting a long time, drawn out

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Directions for Literary Letter Two

1. Begin your letter with the **title**, the **number of pages** you have read and a **brief summary** of the book. You must include only 4-5 sentences here. **DO NOT RETELL THE BOOK.**

2. Find a few sentences in the book that you think **describe a character well**. Copy those sentences and explain what you think they tell about this person. You can use a quote about them, a description of them, a scene where they are doing something that you think tells their personality or character. Label this section **CH.**

3. Answer **three** of the following questions below in your response. Label the letter of question you are responding to in the left margin.

   A. Describe an instance of foreshadowing in the story. From this incident you as a reader had an indication of what might happen later in the story. What do you predict might happen after reading this instance of foreshadowing?

   B. Can you compare or contrast this book with another book you have read or a movie you have seen?

   C. Is there some advice you could give to one of the characters? What would you tell them?

   D. Describe an event that you found most memorable or one that impacted you the most so far?

   E. Explain a relationship between two characters in the book that you found interesting.

   F. If you could be any character in the book, which one would it be? Why?

   G. Analyze a character. Why does this character behave as he/she does? What is motivating him/her? How does he/she feel about an issue?

   H. What about the book has surprised you so far? What has happened that you did not expect?

   I. How does this book make you feel? Does is excite you, upset you, make you concerned, relieved, sad, happy or content? Explain.

4. **Find two unfamiliar vocabulary words.** Write the sentence where you found the word and make a guess about what the word means using the context of the sentence or paragraph (your definition). Then look it up in the dictionary (dictionary definition).
Directions for Letter Three

1. Begin your letter with the title, the number of pages you have read and a brief summary of the book. You must only include 4-5 sentences here. DO NOT RETELL THE BOOK.

2. Explain a moral dilemma a character in the novel must face. A moral dilemma is a difficult, ethical decision a character must make. He/she must decide “What is the right thing to do?” Explain the hard decision this character makes and then tell what you think he or she should have done. Explain why you feel as you do. Label it MD.

3. Answer three of the following questions below in your response. Label the letter of question you are responding to in the left margin.

   A. Do you think the title is appropriate? Why or why not? What do you think the title means? Explain.

   B. What do you think the author is trying to say about one of the following topics in the book: courage, truth, love, success, happiness, death, failure, trust, survival, redemption, honesty, friendship, or loyalty? Explain.

   C. Has this story changed your attitudes or your thinking on some issues? Explain.

   D. Would you recommend this book to others to read? Why or why not? Explain the strengths and/or weaknesses of the book.

   E. What do you think were the main character’s strongest point(s) and weakest point(s)? Why do you think this?

   F. If you could change the ending of the book, how would you have it end?

   G. What might you have done differently if you had taken the place of one of these characters? Explain.

   H. How was the conflict resolved in the end of the book? Were you satisfied with the end, why or why not?

4. Find two unfamiliar vocabulary words. Write the sentence where you found the word and make a guess about what the word means using the context of the sentence or paragraph (your definition). Then look it up in the dictionary (dictionary definition).
### Rubric for Grading Basic Literary Letters I, II, III

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- Your paper is **300-350 words** in length. (3 pts)
- The paper is either typed or handwritten in a neat and legible manner. (2 pts)
- You have included the **title** of your book and the **number of pages** you have read. (1 Pts)
- You have used correct **grammar and punctuation and spelling**. (2 pts)
- You have written a **brief summary** (1 paragraph) of what has happened. (6 pts)
- You have covered the (Quote, Character Description or Moral Dilemma). (6 pts)
- You are keeping up with the assigned pages and the content of your letter demonstrates this (6pts)
- You have answered three of the response questions completely. (18pts.)
- You have provided two vocabulary words in their sentence. You have included your definition and the dictionary definition. (6 pts.)