

# HAND OUT

## Lesson 8. Literature Circles

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As a part of our close careful reading and analyzing of culture, you will have the opportunity to read a fictional text in a literature circle group.

Identify three reading and learning goals that you have for your work with your book and literature circle group. Be sure to consider your work with critical reading and journaling, discussion, and inquiry questions.

**Goal 1:**

**Goal 2:**

**Goal 3:**

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Your group will have four major discussion dates. Divide your book into four sections—one for each of the meetings.

Meeting 1 date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pages due: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting 2 date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pages due: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting 3 date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pages due: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting 4 date: \_\_\_\_\_ Pages due: \_\_\_\_\_

For each literature circle meeting, please complete the following:

- Read all the pages assigned in the book.
- Be a careful and critical reader. Mark passages that you would like to discuss. Use sticky notes to mark spots that you would like to review in the reading when you discuss with your group.
- Journaling—there are multiple purposes for your journal:
  - It is a place to think about your reading. Remember, writing is thinking.
  - It is a place to prepare for your discussions of the reading.
  - It is a place to chart your reading and its connection to culture and identity. It is also a place to explore your inquiry questions and chart out connections.
  - Your journal needs to be set up for *you*. You may choose to complete a digital journal (you could use Google Drive, our class webspace, or another digital space, such as a blog or Youth Voices). Or you can write out a print journal. Any form is perfectly acceptable.

For each meeting, prepare the following minimum (yes, you can and should do more than this) in your journal:

- **Write out three discussion questions.** Use the questioning strategies we've explored with Socratic discussions, including open-ended questions, to think more critically about the text. Remember:
  - Closed-ended questions are for clarifying, as they generally have a "correct" answer.
  - Open-ended questions challenge readers to think about the text and additional connections. They may require evidence from the text or outside research to extend beyond the text in connection making.

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- Open-ended questions may ask about character motivations or the author's purpose, or they may relate events in the text to the world or a universal theme or an essential question. They may also be a literary analysis or author's craft question. Additionally, they may relate to the cultural connections you are making while reading from a cultural lens. They may also relate to your "self," "world," and inquiry questions.
- **Dialectic journaling.** This is the practice of having a dialogue with the text by arriving at truth based on the exchange of arguments. In two columns, write out notes that are in dialogue with one another. This is the practice of exchanging ideas with the text to further analyze and carve out your understanding.
  - In one column, record quotes and paraphrasing with page numbers.
  - In the second column, record your thinking about this work through a response to the quote, exploring the importance and interesting factors related to the content. Consider some of the ideas noted in writing an open-ended question earlier.
  - Use this journal to specifically address some of your inquiry questions and the big culture questions we are exploring.
- **Culture log.** Keep track of cultural characteristics (characteristics of culture are more abstract and metaphorical; consider them as "thinking about culture" or factors of culture that are intangible yet are often shown through specific culture artifacts) and artifacts of culture (which can be from various parts of culture, from art, to music, to fashion, to food, to traditions, to language, etc.) that impact the story and potentially the reader.

### ***Example Journal Setup***

If it helps you, you may set up your reading journal using the following structure:

### ***Discussion Questions***

- Question 1
- Question 2
- Question 3

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***Dialectic Journal***

Quotation or Paraphrase	Page Number	Response to Quote
<p>Keep track of compelling passages that relate to you, your inquiry questions, and your analysis of ideas, writing style, and plot.</p>		<p>Response to quote: Consider some of the following ideas in your thoughtful and thorough response:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why do I find this quote interesting or important?</li><li>• What does it help me to understand about the text?</li><li>• How might it help me to relate to the text?</li><li>• How does this quote relate to my inquiry questions?</li><li>• How does this idea or quote relate to culture?</li><li>• How does it relate to my understanding and analysis of the text?</li></ul>

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**Cultural Log**

Identify Cultural Artifacts and Characteristics	Page Number	Reflect on the Cultural Artifact or Characteristic and Its Role in the Novel
<p>Cultural characteristics: abstract and metaphorical representations; consider them as "thinking about culture" or factors of culture that are intangible, such as defining culture as individualistic</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Artifacts of culture: specific representations of a cultural characteristic; for instance, to show an individualistic culture, a picture of a person wearing a personalized shirt, etc. (consider various artifacts—art, music, fashion, food, traditions, language, etc.)</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How does this cultural characteristic or artifact impact my reading?</li><li>• How does it impact the plot of the story?</li><li>• How does it help me think about big questions related to culture and identity?</li></ul>

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### ***Assessment for Literature Circle Meetings***

After the first and fourth literature circle meeting, I will collect your notes to do a spot check of your thinking. Additionally, after the first and fourth meetings, I will ask you to fill out a self-assessment using Google Forms. Combined, these activities will give me a picture of your thinking over the course of your literature circle work. Final grades will be based on the following:

### ***Discussion Questions***

- Questions that earn all points encourage strong and sophisticated discussion.
- Overuse of closed questions or questions that do not adequately encourage strong sophisticated discussion earn fewer points.

### ***Discussion Active Engagement***

- The student is actively involved in the discussion. This is demonstrated through body position in the discussion, preparation for the discussion, use of and references to the novel in the discussion, and involvement in recording student thinking in notes from the literature circle team meetings.

### ***Dialectic Journal***

- The journal thoroughly records thinking based on passages from the novel, and
- responses to the passage show analysis that explores its significance to the text and to bigger inquiry questions.

### ***Cultural Log***

- The cultural log highlights both artifacts and characteristics of culture and analyzes these items in relation to the novel and inquiry questions.