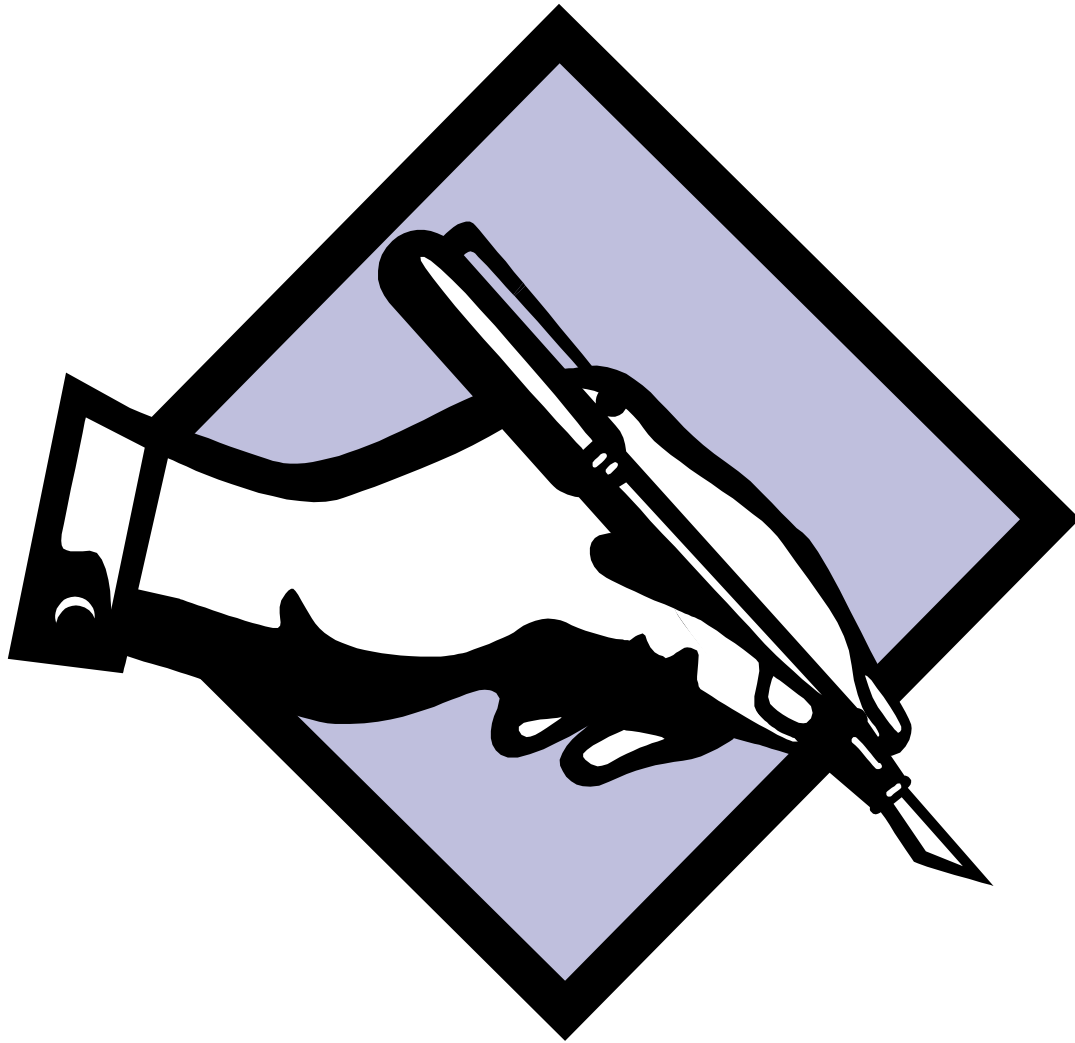


AUTHOR STUDY



Mrs. Wolfe's Class

Name _____ Date _____

Revised March 2005 to reflect suggestions made by students
on self reflection surveys

AUTHOR STUDY

Pretend that MCPS has decided to select a few authors to use for all of the literature studies in fourth grade Center classrooms. They have asked our class to do some research with the needs of Center fourth graders in mind and to make recommendations of which authors should or should not be used by MCPS.

To complete your author study, follow the tasks below:

1. Select a favorite author and have him/her approved by the teacher.
2. Do some research in the library or on the internet. As you read about this author, complete the attached author biography sheet. On the form provided, list as many books as you can which this author has written. (Use book jackets, online or magazine interviews, author web pages, encyclopedias, etc.)
3. Collect at least three books from the author which you would like to read. Do not include books you've already read. You may only read one book from a series (For this purpose, books which tell stories about the same characters in different situations are considered series books.)
4. Chose one of the books to read. As you read the first few chapters, you might want to think about which activity you're going to do. This will help set your purpose for reading.
5. After reading, complete one of the AUTHOR NOVEL ACTIVITIES (A-F) to enhance your understanding of the book and the author's craft.
6. Read another of your selected novels.
7. Choose a different AUTHOR NOVEL ACTIVITY to complete.
8. Repeat steps 4 and 5 until **3** novels (total) are read by this author and 3 novel activities have been completed.
9. Select one final author novel activity from choices G-K. This activity may use information from any of the three novels you read as well as from other novels and author research.
10. Design a visual display to present to your classmates. You might consider a poster, display board, mobile, flip book, diorama (built in a shoe box), etc. Your display must be able to be seen while displayed on a table or hung from hooks at the front of the room. It should depict the aspects you feel are most important about this person and his or her work. Please include biographical information about the author as well as an overview of his or her writing style or of the books you've read. Your display should entice your audience into also wanting to read novels by this author. You will present and discuss your project on your author study due date. Your presentation should be between 3 and 4 minutes in length and should not be read word for word from notes. You are welcome to use note cards for this.

11. Write a persuasive essay (between one and two single spaced typed pages using 12 point readable font) explaining why this author should be chosen to be used by Center classrooms. Include the titles of his/her books you have read and specific details about how these appealed to you as a reader. You might want to include leads that hooked you, plot, character development, use of figurative language, word choice, description of setting, etc. Be sure to list specific examples. Be sure that when deciding how to persuade the committee, you think of their wishes and motivations. Persuade them based on what they will gain from granting your request. You might want to read the sample essay I've enclosed.

SCORING

You will receive 7 grades for this project using the attached rubrics which will consist of:

1. One score for each of the four Author Study Activities completed
2. One score for following directions, neatness, and completion of binder
3. One score for visual presentation according to the attached rubric
4. One score for listening and active participation during presentations

AUTHOR CHOICES

Here are some authors you may want to choose from for your study (*you are not limited to this list as long as you have teacher approval of your author.*) Remember that the author must have written at least three books which you have not read. If your author has written a series, you may read the first book, but the other two may not be from the series.

Avi
Katherine Paterson
Gary Soto
Cynthia Voigt
Scott O'dell
Roald Dahl
C. S. Lewis

Madeline L'Engle
Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
Jerry Spinelli
Lawrence Yep
Sharon Creech
Natalie Babbitt
Betsy Byars

Lois Lowry
Gary Paulsen
Mildred Taylor
Yoshiko Uchida
Richard Peck
Judy Blume
Beverly Cleary

AUTHOR NOVEL ACTIVITIES

You will select a total of 4 of the following activities to be completed. One activity must be completed for each of the 3 novels you read (Choose from activities A-F). The fourth activity may use a combination of novels including ones you have read before starting this project (Choose from activities G-K.)

- A. **LITERARY ELEMENTS ESSAY** In a well-developed essay, analyze this author's use of literary elements (see glossary), such as imagery, figurative language, flashbacks, foreshadowing, symbolism, etc. Be sure to include substantial examples from the novel to demonstrate your findings. Include in your essay the effect each of these literary elements has on the reader. You may want to use the "Literary Devices" Graphic Organizer to record examples while you read.
 - B. **CHARACTER CONTRACT AND COMPARISON** Compare and contrast a main character from the novel you just completed with a main character from a different text by your author or another character from this novel. Your comparison must include information about the characters' thoughts, words, actions, and motivations. It might also include things that other characters say to/about, or think about your characters. Be sure to include details from the text in your response. You may want to use the "Character Grid" Graphic Organizers to record examples while you read.
 - C. **BEGINNING, MIDDLE, AND END ESSAY** In a well developed essay, explain how characters, settings and events changed from the beginning to the middle, to the end of the novel your just read. Be sure to include examples from the text in your explanation. You may want to use the "Comparison Grid" Graphic Organizer to record ideas as you read.
 - D. **SONG COMPARISONS** Find two or more songs that you feel express the mood, a character, the main problem, or some other literary element from the novel you just read. You may use well known children's songs, songs you hear on the radio, songs from music books borrowed from the music teacher, or classical/instrumental song. List the novel, the song titles, the composer/artist, the literary element, and a brief explanation of how this song symbolizes the novel.
 - E. **MAIN CHARACTER CORRESPONDENCE** Write a letter to the main character discussing the main problem he or she encountered in the story. Give suggestions about what he or she might have been able to do differently to make the outcome different or how he or she might have been able to avoid the problem all together.
 - F. **TITLES** Discuss your author's use of titles. If he or she gives each chapter a title, select five and tell why you think these were chosen. If no titles were given, choose five chapters and give each one a title. Explain why you chose it giving specific examples from the text. Finally, write a paragraph about the title of the book explaining why you think the author chose this for the name of this novel. Think of another title that would work for it, and explain why it fits.
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- G. **AUTHOR QUESTIONS** Use information from your author research and from the texts to respond to the following questions:
- What important or interesting insights did you gain about the author and his/her works?
 - How are some of the important people, places and events in this author's life reflected in his/her works?
 - Where does this author find ideas for writing?
 - What are some of the author's writing habits or strategies?
 - What can we learn about writing from this author?
- H. **ILLUSTRATION SCRAPBOOK** Create a scrapbook of 5 or more self created illustration depicting the overall mood of different texts by this author. Select a medium that best conveys the mood of each illustration (oils, water color, chalk, markers, crayons, colored pencils.) Use at least three different mediums. You may choose to imitate an artist's style, but the work must be your own. *Each illustration must include a caption stating the title of the book and explaining how the illustration fits the mood of the story.* Please note that pencil is an extremely informal writing tool and may not be used to write these captions unless traced with pen. You should use a straight edge to guide your writing so that lines don't run all over the page.
- I. **LEADS** In order to complete this activity, you will need to be able to read the leads of five novels including the three you have chosen for this activity. List each book title and the type of lead used by the author. Refer to the lead posters displayed on the classroom walls. Explain why you think the author chose this type of lead. For example, does he or she use dialogue because it's used throughout the story? Do they start with a character description because character traits are a main component of the story? Do they begin with setting because it's integral to the story? If you have not read the last two novels, predict why you think the author chose that particular type of lead based on your experiences about him or her and his other novels.
- J. **AUTHOR CORRESPONDENCE** Think about personal connections you have with the author and to the novel you just read or to his/her other novels. (You might want to use the Connections Chart to organize your thoughts.) Write a letter to the author identifying the books you have read and experiences you've had that match his/her experiences and the ones in his/her stories. Include any other information you would like to share or questions you would like to ask. If you can find the author's website, address and stamp the envelope with your letter inside. Before you mail the envelope, ask me to make a copy for your project folder. If you want the author to write back, you must include a stamped self-addressed envelope.
- K. **POST CARD COLLECTION** Pretend that you were with the author you're studying as he or she grew up and lived his or her life. Use the post card pattern to design five post cards from places you would have either lived or visited. On the back, write a note from each place to someone in the author's life describing what you saw and did there.

What You'll Turn In

On the day of your visual presentation when you turn in your project, all parts of it including this packet should be **bound** in a report cover or other folder with a clear cover which allows your title page to show through. Make sure the binder or folder includes:

_____ this packet with a completed book list and biographical organizer

_____ 4 projects

_____ persuasive essay

_____ any notes or papers from your presentation

_____ a cover sheet/title page (may be the first page in the binder or on the outside) which has the author's name, your name, date, and an optional illustration.

Self Selected Due Dates:

Author Approval: _____

Biography Sheet and author book list _____

Book #1 Read: _____

Activity #1 Completed _____

Book #2 Read: _____

Activity #2 Completed _____

Book #3 Read: _____

Activity #3 Completed _____

Activity #4 Completed _____

Persuasive essay: _____

Visual display presentation and due date for all materials: _____

MY AUTHOR STUDY CONTRACT

Student Name _____ Date _____

Author _____

What I already know about this author and his/her works:

What I want to find out:
