

Name _____ Date _____

Non -Fiction English assignment

Week of September 14, 2015

1. Read and **annotate** the article "Book people live forever in our hearts and minds"
2. The annotation should show your thought process as you read (questioning, connecting, summarizing, etc)
3. Answer the following prompt, in paragraph form, following extended response guidelines: (2-4 paragraphs)
 - Do you agree with the author's assertion that some fictional characters have a strong hold on readers? Provide examples of one or more characters that you have strongly identified with, or characters that you think may evoke a strong reaction in readers. Be specific and explain what makes the character(s) special.

Grading Rubric:

Article is thoroughly annotated, with a clear "map" of your thought process ____/10

Extended response is at least 2-3 paragraphs long, articulate, provides examples and details, and uses proper grammar, vocabulary and spelling____10

Total: _____20

BOOK PEOPLE LIVE FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS

By U-T San Diego 12:01 a.m. Nov. 9, 2013

I'll be signing my newest books at Warwick's in La Jolla on Sunday, Nov. 17, from noon to 2 p.m., and, soon after on that same day, at Mysterious Galaxy in Clairemont, from 3 to 5 p.m. I'd love to meet and chat with you at one of those events.

This is a good time, then, to speak of books. Books are humanity in print. Books are the diary of the human race. Through books we hold conversations with the greatest minds of all the ages.

Literature lives. Literature endures. Literature prevails. I know this because I know that readers bestow a special kind of life upon people who exist only in books. Figments though they may be, literary characters can assume a vitality and longevity that pulse more powerfully than flesh and blood.

Not long ago, a woman telephoned an Atlanta library and asked, "Can you please tell me where Scarlett O'Hara is buried?"

The librarian explained, "Scarlett is a fictional character in Margaret Mitchell's novel 'Gone with the Wind.'"

"Never mind that," insisted the caller. "I want to know where she's buried."

For that reader, Scarlett O'Hara had been so alive that she was now dead.

After many years, the publishers of the children's classic "Charlotte's Web" persuaded E. B. White to record his book on tape. So caught had the author become in the web of his arachnid heroine's life that it took 19 tapings before White could read aloud the passage about Charlotte's death without his voice cracking.

A century earlier, another writer had been deeply affected by the fate of his heroine. Like most of Charles Dickens' works, "The Old Curiosity Shop" was published in serial form. The novel won a vast readership on both sides of the Atlantic, and as interest in the fate of the heroine, Little Nell, grew intense, circulation reached the staggering figure of 100,000, a record unequaled by any other of Dickens' major novels. In New York, 6,000 people crowded the wharf where the ship carrying the final "Master Humphrey's Clock" magazine installment was due to dock. As the vessel approached, the crowd's impatience grew to such a pitch that they cried out as one to the sailors, "Does Little Nell die?"

Alas, Little Nell did die, and tens of thousands of readers' hearts broke. The often ferocious literary critic Lord Jeffrey was found weeping with his head on his library table. "You'll be sorry to hear," he sobbed to a friend, "that little Nelly, Boz's little Nelly, is

dead.” Daniel O’Connell, an Irish M.P., burst out crying, “He should not have killed her,” and then, in anguish, he threw the book out of the window of the train in which he was traveling. A diary of the time records another reader lamenting, “The villain! The rascal! The bloodthirsty scoundrel! He killed my little Nell! He killed my sweet little child!”

That “bloodthirsty scoundrel” was himself shattered by the loss of his heroine. In a letter to a friend Charles Dickens himself wrote, “I am the wretchedest of the wretched. It (Nell’s death) casts the most horrible shadow upon me, and it is as much as I can do to keep moving at all. Nobody will miss her like I shall.”

Benjamin Franklin was at a Paris dinner party when a question was posed: What human condition most deserves pity? Each guest offered an example of a miserable situation. When Franklin’s turn came, he responded, “A lonesome man on a rainy day who does not know how to read.”

Because you have read this far in this column, you are almost certainly a lover of books. As a member of that happy band, you will never be lonely. Forevermore you have the company and conversation of thousands of men and women, ancient and modern, learned and light, who have set their humanity to pages and crafted language into literature.

*Please send your questions and comments about language to
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