

Gibbons. *Ellen Foster*

"When I was little I would think of ways to kill my daddy. I would figure out this or that way and run it down through my head until it got easy." So begins the tale of Ellen Foster, the brave and engaging heroine of Kay Gibbons's first novel, which won the Sue Kaufman Prize from the American Academy of Institute of Arts and Letters. Wise, funny, affectionate, and true, Ellen Foster is, as Walker Percy called it, "The real thing. Which is to say, a lovely, sometimes heart wrenching novel. . . . [Ellen Foster] is as much a part of the backwoods South as a Faulkner character—and a good deal more endearing."

Erdrich. *Yellow Raft in Blue Water*

Michael Dorris has crafted a fierce saga of three generations of Indian women, beset by hardships and torn by angry secrets, yet inextricably joined by the bonds of kinship. Starting in the present day and moving backward, the novel is told in the voices of the three women: fifteen-year-old part-black Rayona; her American Indian mother, Christine, consumed by tenderness and resentment toward those she loves; and the fierce and mysterious Ida, mother and grandmother whose haunting secrets, betrayals, and dreams echo through the years, braiding together the strands of the shared past.

Mark Haddon. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night*

Christopher John Francis Boone knows all the countries of the world and their capitals and every prime number up to 7,057. He relates well to animals but has no understanding of human emotions. He cannot stand to be touched. And he detests the color yellow.

Although gifted with a superbly logical brain, for fifteen-year-old Christopher everyday interactions and admonishments have little meaning. He lives on patterns, rules, and a diagram kept in his pocket. Then one day, a neighbor's dog, Wellington, is killed and his carefully constructed universe is threatened. Christopher sets out to solve the murder in the style of his favourite (logical) detective, Sherlock Holmes. What follows makes for a novel that is funny, poignant and fascinating in its portrayal of a person whose curse and blessing are a mind that perceives the world entirely literally.

Each student will complete one task and will receive an individual grade for this. You will also receive an individual grade for your annotations. Yes, this literature circle you will be annotating the text. So get out your sticky notes and/or highlighters and get to work!

Tasks:

1. Discussion Director: Your role is to come up with 4 thoughtful discussion questions for each group meeting. You will lead the discussion taking notes on your group's responses. Questions must be thought provoking and debatable. You will turn in your questions with the discussion notes after every meeting.
2. Device Director: You are the literary critic; your role is to note at least 5 important literary devices for each group meeting. You should look for things like irony, humor, metaphor, symbolism, inciting moment, foil characters, and other significant devices. For each device include a cited quote or paraphrase. Also be sure to label the device. During the meeting, you will go over these devices and examples for your group, allowing for discussion and questioning from other members. You will turn in your work at the end of each meeting.
3. Art Director: (THIS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED ON LINED PAPER) As the artists in residence, your role is to create an artistic rendering of significance for each group meeting. You may draw from characters, events, mood, or other inspiration, but it must be significant and justifiable. You may be abstract or concrete, but either way your job is to explain your art to your group at each meeting. Art maybe in the form of drawing, painting, collaging, sculpting, crafting, or other mediums. You will turn in the art after every meeting and I may ask you to explain it to me. You must also include a quote that captures the essence of your illustration.
4. Vocabulary Director: Your role is to pick out at least 5 difficult words from each section to bring to the meetings. You must write the word, the definition, and a properly cited quote that includes that word. During the meeting you will explain the meanings to your classmates. Be sure that the definition you select makes sense in context!
5. Context Director: Your role is to investigate the context surrounding the novel. For each section, research the context of the novel. For example, if you were reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, you might research Jim Crow Laws, The Great Depression, FDR's inaugural address, Emmitt Till, etc. You must write one page of handwritten notes (bullet points are okay) with a proper citation. Do not use Wikipedia as a source. You will turn in the notes after each meeting.