

# BODY BIOGRAPHY

## ASSIGNMENT

For your chosen character, you will be creating a **body biography**—a visual and written portrait illustrating several aspects of the character's life within the novel.

You have many possibilities for filling up your giant sheet of paper. I have listed several, but please feel free to come up with your own creations. As always, the choices you make should be based on the text, for you will be verbally explaining (and thus, in a sense, defending) them at a showing of your work. Above all, your choices should be creative, analytical, and accurate.

After completing this portrait, you will participate in a showing in which you will present your masterpiece to the class. This showing should accomplish these objectives:

- review significant events, choices, and changes involving your character
- communicate to others the full essence of your character by emphasizing the traits that comprise that person
- promote discussion of your character

## REQUIREMENTS

Groups will be provided class time to make contributions to the body biography. Each discussion group should be divided into two smaller groups. One group should complete a body biography for the protagonist, while the other groups creates one for the antagonist. Each student will select a particular color to use for his/her contributions (to visually make it easier to identify who contributed what). Additionally, each student will be required to complete a minimum of 3 significant contributions to the biography every two weeks. Groups will need to discuss and coordinate their contributions.

Although I expect your biography to contain additional dimensions, your portrait **must** contain the following:

- a review of significant happenings in the novel (with regards to the character)
- visual symbols that represent meaningful images, objects, etc. for the character in the novel
- an original text presenting your view/interpretation of the character and his/her/its role in the novel
- the character's most important lines/scenes from the novel

## SUGGESTIONS

1. **Placement:** Carefully choose the placement of your text and artwork. For example, the area where your character's heart would be might be appropriate for illustrating the most important relationships within his/her life.
2. **Spine:** Writers often discuss a character's spine. This is that person's objective within the novel. What is the most important goal for your character? What drives the character's thoughts and actions? How can you illustrate this spine?
3. **Virtues & Vices:** What are your character's most admirable qualities? Worst qualities? How can you make us visualize them?
4. **Color:** Colors are often symbolic. What color(s) do you most associate with your character? Why? How can you effectively work these colors into your presentation?
5. **Symbols:** What objects can you associate with your character that illustrate that person's essence? Are there objects mentioned within the novel itself that you could use? If not, choose objects that especially seem to correspond with the character.
6. **Formula Poems:** These are fast, but effective recipes for producing a text because they are designed to reveal a lot about a character.
7. **Mirror, Mirror...:** Consider both how your character appears to others on the surface and what you know about the character's inner self. Do these images clash or correspond? What does this tell you about the character?
8. **Changes:** How has your character changed within the novel? Trace these changes within you text and/or artwork.

