

Handout

Inhabiting the World of the Book

Directions: Books can open our imagination, expand our knowledge, and inspire us to try new things, but we don't always have or make time to fully explore the world of the stories we read. For this final project, explore the ideas in this handout and then choose one that interests and excites you. Be creative and have fun!

The Daily Dish

Are you reading a book filled with food references? Is food really important to the characters or world of your book? Are there descriptions of meals or recipes passed down through generations? Do characters work in a restaurant or aspire to be a chef someday?

If food is a central theme of your book and you are passionate about upping your cooking game, why not use this opportunity to learn a few recipes or make a cookbook of your own? Here are some ideas to help get you started:

- Review the chapters and make a list of the references to food.
- If your book explores an ethnic group's cuisine, do some research to learn more about the ingredients, when certain dishes are eaten, and which cultural traditions are connected to them.
- Find a recipe for a dish or a food from your book and teach yourself how to prepare it at home (after checking first with your parents or guardians). Document the process with short videos or photographs and share them with classmates.
- Create a cookbook with recipes that connect to your book. Or imagine that you are the protagonist of your own story. What recipes would fill your cookbook? Create it and design a cover!
- Reflect on your learning in a journal, blog, or video: *What new, different, or deeper understanding do you have about an aspect of your book—a character, scene, conflict, or theme—after learning more about the food that is so important to the story? What new skills have you added to your own repertoire? What do you want to learn next?*

All Over the Map

Are you reading a book where the author spends a great deal of time setting the setting? Are there vivid descriptions that create a sense of place—the sights, sounds, and feelings associated with where the characters live? Is your book set in a real place or is it imaginary?

If the setting is a key element of your book and you are interested in geography, cartography (map making), or art, why not use this opportunity to imagine the setting of the book in new ways. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Review the chapters and mark key places with a sticky note where the author develops the setting. Perhaps they are describing a street or landscape in great detail. Maybe a character is living between two homes or living in one place and going to school in another and there are different spoken and unspoken rules in each place.

- Conduct some research to learn more about the setting. For example, if your book is historical fiction, look for images or maps on Google Earth, Google Maps, or the Library of Congress website. If your book is fiction, but takes place in a real location, use these same resources to understand the look and feel of the place.
- If your book takes place in an imagined world, create sketches in a notebook or on a computer, using details from the story to inform your choices.
- Create a map of your book. Print or draw your own maps and make a collage to represent the different settings of your book. Or draw a street map and label buildings and key places from the book.
- Imagine you are a tour guide leading a group through the world of your book. What stops would your tour make? Create a brochure or webpage advertising your tour. Or imagine that you are an individual who took your tour and created a photo album. Create this photo album in a Google Doc with images you find online or on paper with your own sketches. Label the images with references and quotations from the book.
- Reflect on your learning in a journal, blog, or video: *What new, different, or deeper understanding do you have about an aspect of your book—a character, scene, conflict, or theme—after learning more about and visualizing the setting? What new skills have you added to your own repertoire? What do you want to learn next?*

The Power of a Picture

When you read, do you see the characters and imagine the world of the book in vivid colors? Are you illustrating the story in your mind as the story unfolds? Do you have a passion for art—drawing, painting, modeling with clay, murals, cartooning, sculpting, photography, graphic design? Can you imagine illustrating moments or scenes in your book club book?

If you love art or wish you had more time for creative expression, consider creating a visual representation of one or more scenes in your book.

- Review the book and mark places with sticky notes that you want to capture visually.
- Create a drawing, painting, or doodle (or another visual medium) to insert at the beginning of each chapter.
- If you like comics, take a section of your book and re-imagine it as a graphic novel. First, create a storyboard (you can find templates online) and decide what to include in each panel. Then create your artwork and add text from your book or your own imagination.
- If you are interested in fashion, imagine that you are the costume designer for a Hollywood production of your book. Choose one scene or section of the book and sketch each character's clothing and accessories, paying attention to details in the book that reveal what they might be wearing. If you sew, try creating a pattern for an article of clothing and then make it.
- If you have wanted to try layout and graphic design, create a new cover—both the front and back—for your book. Decide on your target audience and how you want to represent the story using color, fonts, text, images, and graphic design.
- Include a reflection that responds to the following question: *What new, different, or deeper understanding do you have about an aspect of your book—a character, scene, conflict, or theme—or your book as a whole after creating a visual representation? What new skills have you added to your own repertoire? What do you want to learn next?*

A Novel Soundtrack

Do the characters in your book turn up the music and tune out the world? Does a character play an instrument or perform in their school's marching band or orchestra? Who are their favorite artists? What's their favorite genre? Like a soft melody or a thumping bass, music can fill the space between the words and transport readers into the world of the book.

If your passion is music—listening to it, playing it, composing it, dancing to it—let your book guide you through an exploration of the sounds that inspire the characters.

- Review the book and mark places with sticky notes where music or sound plays an important role in the story.
- Research any specific albums, songs, musicians, or genres referenced in your book and try to find samples that you can listen to.
- Create the soundtrack for a movie version of your book. Select an opening and closing song and then select a song for five key scenes. Create an online playlist that you share with your book club and other students in your class. If you like to draw or enjoy graphic design, create a cover for your soundtrack "album."
- Create a playlist for your favorite character. Carefully compile the song list, design the album cover, and title the album. Then create an online playlist and share it with your book club.
- If you are a composer or musician, compose an original piece of music for a specific scene in your book and record it for your class. Or learn how to play one or more songs referenced in your book if you learn by ear or can find the music online.
- Reflect on what you learned by responding to the following questions: *What new, different, or deeper understanding do you have about an aspect of your book—a character, scene, conflict, or theme—or your book as a whole after exploring the musical references in the book or creating a soundtrack for your book or a character? What new skills have you added to your own repertoire? What do you want to learn next?*

Reimagining the Story

Are you a passionate writer? A storyteller? Do you keep a journal, write poetry, or contribute to your school newspaper or literary magazine? Do you imagine yourself into the stories that you read and hear? While authors anchor their stories in a particular time and place, it isn't hard to reimagine them occurring elsewhere, with characters who have different identities, or being written in a different form altogether.

If you love storytelling, or have not had an opportunity to write creatively in a while, here are some ideas for you to try:

- **Re-story Time and Place:** Write a new version of your book (shorter, of course) or a specific scene and set it at a different time. For example, you might re-story a work of historical fiction in the present. Or you might write a new version of your book or a scene by placing the characters in a new setting to see how they behave and interact with one another.
- **Reimagine Identity:** If the characters in your book don't represent your identity, the identities of people in your school, or what you see in the world, re-imagine them, perhaps writing your own story into a scene of your book. You might focus on one chapter or take the characters from your book and create a new story where they have different identities, thinking about how you might reimagine their race, ethnicity, sexuality, ableness, or another aspect of identity.

- **Shift the Perspective:** Insert a new chapter from a different character’s perspective. For example, if there is a character who does not have a voice or is located at the margins in your book, center them and let them tell part of the story. You might write from your own creative voice or try to emulate aspects of the author’s style.
- **Recast in a New Genre or Form:** Retell your story in a new way. Create a found poem for each chapter and assemble them into a small book. Recast one chapter or scene of your book in the form of a graphic novel if you have a passion for cartooning. Write your book in the form of a short story, or create a six-word memoir for each central character. If you enjoy drama, rewrite a chapter or scene in the form of a play. Write notes about the set design, include stage directions, use dialogue from the book and create your own. Make it yours!
- **Write a reflection that responds to the following questions:** *What new, different, or deeper understanding do you have about an aspect of your book—a character, scene, conflict, or theme—or your book as a whole after reimagining it or recasting it into a new form? What new skills have you added to your own repertoire? What do you want to learn next?*

Down the Rabbit Hole

What’s better than reading a really great book? How about reading a great book that references another great book? Or a book that is a modern re-telling of a much older story? Books can be filled with allusions to history, literature, mythology, and folktales. Sometimes characters quote from them; sometimes they read or make a reference to them; or sometimes the book itself offers a modern take on an old story.

If you have a passion for mythology or have always wanted to understand why your favorite character keeps quoting from a particular book, take this opportunity to explore! Go down the rabbit hole and learn about the other worlds your book references. Here are some ideas to get you started exploring the allusions in your book:

- Review your book, marking references with sticky notes to the literary and historical allusion. Then do some research to learn more about them!
- Read summaries of these books and stories, or, if you can find copies online, try to read the first 10 pages or the first chapter.
- Create an allusion guide to help other students who read your book understand these references—the ways in which knowing the original story deepens your understanding of your book club book. Add illustrations, key quotations, and brief summaries. Be creative!
- Include a reflection that responds to the following question: *What new, different, or deeper understanding do you have about your book after learning more about the literary and historical allusions? What new skills have you added to your own repertoire? What do you want to learn next?*

Expand your Horizons: Try Something New

How do characters in your book spend their free time? Do they play an instrument? Sing? Dance? Beat box? Play a sport? Knit? Crochet? Sew? Cook? Design computer games? Code? Write in a diary? Draw? Write stories? Perform at poetry slams? Write letters? Hike? Skateboard? Watch tv or movies? Build things? Martial arts? Read? Blog? Perform community service?

If you want to expand your hobbies and learn something new, look for inspiration in your book. There is probably a video on YouTube that can help you get started!

- Make a list of the hobbies and interests that characters have in your book. Then pursue one to see where it takes you. What can you learn on YouTube, blogs, social media, from books, or from your friends and family members?
- Learn how to doodle, paint or sketch, or draw anime characters.
- Produce music using GarageBand or another program.
- Write in a journal everyday, even if only for five minutes. In addition to writing, you can also include photos, articles from the news, and inspirational quotes and images. You can sketch, collect quotations that you see and year, or capture your ideas in poems or letters to your future self.
- Learn how to meditate or do yoga by trying out free classes online or in your community.
- Design an outfit or learn how to sew on buttons.
- Learn how to knit or crochet. There are free classes online.
- Write and perform a spoken word poem. Watch some youth slam poets compete on Brave New Voices and use their performances to inspire you. Need help getting started? Why not write down the first line of a poem you love and see where it takes you?
- Learn how to bake bread or cook a meal for your family. Prepare for the future by learning how to cook eggs, make pasta, chili (meat or vegetarian), or your favorite meal.
- Start a book lovers' community service project:
 - Can your book group connect with a local elementary school class to read stories out loud (in person or online)?
 - Can your book group help other students in your school or family members organize their own books groups?
- After you have spent time learning something new, reflect on the experience by responding to the following question: *What new, different, or deeper understanding do you have about an aspect of your book—a character, scene, conflict, or theme—or your book as a whole after learning something new that is connected to your book? What new skills have you added to your own repertoire? What do you want to learn next?*