



Star Surfers



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SPECULATIVE FICTION



Speculative fiction is fiction that speculates, which in this case means stories that wonder about the future, the paranormal or alternate worlds. It's pretty interesting stuff. For this assignment, you need to speculate on the speculative!

CHOOSE

Pick a book from the speculative genre (so dystopian stories like *The Hunger Games* or *Divergent*), horror (like *The Enemy*), paranormal (like *Twilight* or *Half Bad*), sci fi (like *Illuminae* or *72 Hours on Mars*), horror (*I Hunt Killers* or *Frozen Charlotte*) or fantasy (like *Sabriel* or any Sarah J Maas book).

- What makes this book part of the speculative fiction genre?
- What themes does the author explore?
- Does the book carry ideas or a message that could be applied to every day life? Explain how.
- Did you find the world explored in this book believable or not? Explain why, with evidence.

COMPARE

Pick another speculative book that riffs on the same ideas as the first book you chose (ghosts, aliens, future worlds, swords and sorcery).

- What, if any, are the similarities between the books?
- What are the differences in ideas between the books?
- Which author has built the most believable world and why?
- Which author's treatment of the genre do you like the best?
- Which of these books seems most relevant to everyday life and why?

BOOK TO FILM



Recently, lots of book for Young Adults have been made into successful films. Adapting a text is a tricky job and can go well or...not so well. In this assignment you get to be a film critic.

CHOOSE

Pick a book that you know has been adapted for film.

- From whose perspective is the story told?
- Which is your favourite character and why?
- Which is your favourite part of the story and why?
- Explain the most surprising or powerful aspect of the book?
- Would you recommend this book to others? Why/Why not?

COMPARE

Watch the film based on your chosen book.

- Does the film come from the same perspective as the book?
- Is the main character portrayed in the same way as they are in the book?
- What are the major differences between the two and can you see why they might have changed things for the film?
- Do you prefer the film or the book? Why/Why not?



DOCUMENTARY

CHOOSE

Watch a documentary about a particular subject that interests you.

- Though documentaries do not have plots, how is the information arranged to keep you watching?
- What did the documentary teach you about the subject under investigation?
- What is the point of view of the documentary maker? (Is it neutral or biased? How can you tell?)
- What is the best part of the documentary and how are film techniques used to make it effective?
- Explain how the non-fiction text is like and unlike fiction novels you have read.
- Summarise the elements that make this an interesting piece of film.

COMPARE

Watch another documentary on the same subject

- What are the major similarities between the documentaries?
- What are the major differences between the documentaries?
- How would you assess the attitude of each director towards the subject?
- Which did you enjoy more and why?

CONTEMPORARY FICTION



Contemporary fiction is fiction set in the time in which it was written. We'd like you to look at books that are contemporary in terms of the time you live in—so books that are based in the current day and are realistic, with no supernatural or fantastical side plots!

CHOOSE

Choose a fictional book set in the real world.

- Summarise the elements that fix this story firmly in the present day.
- What was the plot and do you think that the story was believable? Why?
- What did you learn from this book that you did not know before?
- What did you learn about human nature from reading a contemporary novel?
- Do you think the author successfully portrayed the world that you live in?

COMPARE

Read another book set in the real world.

- Summarise the elements that fix this story firmly in the present day.
- What was the plot and do you think that the story was believable? Why?
- What did you learn from this book that you did not know before?
- What did you learn about human nature from reading a contemporary novel? Explain how the view of human nature is similar or different to that of the other novel.
- Do you think the author successfully portrayed the world that you live in?
- Of the two books you have read, which do you think was the more realistic and why? Explain your answer.

Refugee Stories



Changing classes, changing schools and moving house can all be super stressful. Imagine how much harder it must be to leave your country, your home and everything you have ever known often risking your life to reach a safe haven. The selection of refugee stories in the library help you to experience a journeys that you may never have to take but which many teenagers to.

CHOOSE

Choose a refugee story from the selection in the library and write about:

- The plot
- The format—how is the story being told?
- The lead character
- The tone—is this series funny or serious? Or both? Explain.
- How has this story made you feel about refugees?
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?

COMPARISON

Look up the poem Home by Warsan Shire (you can find it via Google:

- Does the poem cover similar themes as the novel that you read?
- Who do you think the poem is aimed at? Who is the audience?
- Do you think that the book and the poem are representative of real refugee experiences or not? Explain your answer.
- How did this poem make you feel? What did it make you think about?
- Would you read more stories or poems about the refugee experience? Explain your answer.

SHELF HELP



One in four teenagers and adults suffer from a mental health condition and *everyone* has periods in their lives that are tough. Many fictional books have been written about this and while they can be sad they can also be informative or even funny as well as being useful when trying to understand the struggles of other people or even when trying to understand yourself.

CHOOSE

Pick a book that involves someone struggling with difficult issues or mental health problems. Perhaps they are being bullied, either at school or online, perhaps they are struggling with depression or anxiety or perhaps they are trying to help a friend who isn't doing so well. If you need recommendations, ask your teacher or a librarian.

- What is the main plot of the book?
- Tell us about the central character and what they are dealing with?
- Does the book carry ideas or a message that could be applied to every day life? Explain how.
- Did you find the book informative—do you think it carries a message that could help yourself or a friend?

COMPARE

Pick another book that deals with the kind of issues detailed above

- What, if any, are the similarities between the books?
- What are the differences between the books?
- Which book is most successful in its treatment of the issues involved?



Video games, while seemingly totally different to books, are still a story-telling medium. This assignment is a chance to play your favourite games and think about why they work so well.

CHOOSE

Choose a video game with an interesting storyline or world setting:

- All video games have to do some world-building (introducing the world that the characters live in and helping you to understand it) - how does this game do this?
- Does the game have a strong narrative? (is it telling a strong story?)
- How do you get to know the characters and how does the game illustrate their personalities?
- Do you think this game was successful in telling a story? Explain.

COMPARE

Choose a video game with a completely different setting:

- How does this game world-build (i.e. help you to understand the world that the characters live in)?
- Does the game have a strong narrative? (is it telling a strong story?)
- How do you get to know the characters and how does the game illustrate their personalities?
- How is this similar or different to the other game you chose?
- Which game do you think was more successful in telling a story? Explain your answer.

STEP OUT OF YOUR COMFORT ZONE



We all like to read certain types of books and sometimes there are books that we would never even consider picking up. Maybe we don't like the cover, maybe we don't like the genre. In this section, why not try something new—you may find that you are pleasantly surprised.

CHOOSE

Pick a novel that is unlike anything you would usually read.

- What are your first impressions from the cover and the blurb? Why?
- Tell us about the story, focussing on what you liked and disliked.
- Did your impression of the book change while you were reading?
- Would you read something similar to this book again? Explain your answer.
- Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why?

COMPARE

Now pick a book that is more in keeping with your usual choices?

- What are your first impressions from the cover and blurb? Why?
- Tell us about the story, focussing on what you liked and disliked.
- Did your impression of the book change while you were reading?
- Which of the two books was your favourite and why? Does your answer surprise you?
- Would you recommend this book to to a friend? Why?

BOOK TRAILERS

THE FOLLOWING BOOK TRAILER HAS BEEN APPROVED FOR
ALL AUDIENCES
FOR YOUR BOOK PREVIEWING PLEASURE

Just like films, these days many books come with their own trailers which you can find by Googling “teen book trailers” or checking out the ones on the Scottish Booktrust website (www.scottishbooktrust.com).

CHOOSE

Choose a book trailer

- What is the title of the book and the name of the author?
- How does the trailer tell you about the book?
- Look up the traditional blurb for this book (if you can't find a copy of the book, then you can find the blurb on Amazon or www.goodreads.com) - how do you think it compares to the book trailer?
- Does the trailer make you want to read the book? Explain your answer.

COMPARE

Choose a different book trailer

- What is the title of the book and the name of the author?
- How does the trailer tell you about the book?
- Look up the traditional blurb for this book (if you can't find a copy of the book, then you can find the blurb on Amazon or www.goodreads.com) - how do you think it compares to the book trailer?
- Is this trailer more or less successful than the first one? Explain your answer.

BANNED BOOKS



It's time to discover the books that THEY don't want you to read. From *Harry Potter* to *Of Mice and Men*, from *Twilight* to *Fahrenheit 451*, hundreds of books have been banned over the years. Now is the time to become a reading revolutionary, claim your **fREADom** and find out why.

CHOOSE

Pick a banned book (ask your teacher or a librarian if you aren't sure how to find one*)

- Why do you think this book was banned?
- Do you agree or disagree with the ban? Why?
- Do you think the book covers topics that it is important to talk about? What are they and why?
- Explain the most surprising or controversial aspect of the book.
- Why would you recommend this novel to others?

COMPARE

Pick another banned book

- What, if any, is the similarity between the two novels in terms themes covered?
- Do you think these books were banned for similar or different reasons? Explain.
- Which novel do you prefer? Explain.
- How have these novels made you see the world in a different light?

**Your choice must be approved by your teacher or a librarian.*