

# English 2 and 4

## Independent Reading Analysis and Reflection

Jennifer Morrison, Mid-Carolina High School, 2008-09

This year's independent reading program was quite successful.

### English 2

My 71 English 2 Honors students read 484 books over four quarters with an 89% independent reading assessment (IRA) turn-in rate. Students were required to read two books per quarter (one classic and one book of choice), completing an IRA on each. I encouraged students to choose books that challenged their reading levels. According to the IRA numbers, each English 2 student read an average of 7 books outside class, but it was clear from students' year-long reading records that many students read more than the required number of books.

One of my goals as an honors teacher is to expose students to more classics in preparation for advanced coursework and Advanced Placement classes in the future. I define a classic as a text generally studied in upper level high school and college literature courses. Of the 484 books my students read, 235 (49%) were classics. Most-read classics included *The Old Man and the Sea* by Ernest Hemingway, *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien, books in C.S. Lewis' Narnia series, *Call of the Wild* by Jack London, *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, and *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros.

### English 4

My 72 English 4 students read 299 books over three quarters with a 90% IRA turn-in rate. I wanted to keep my seniors reading and build their enjoyment of reading, so I required students to complete their IRAs on one book of choice per quarter. Students were to complete two IRAs each quarter, one on the first half of their chosen book and one on the second half. Informally, I encouraged seniors to read more and to read classics. About half of the students in each of my English classes each quarter completed IRAs on more than one book. Several students, particularly those with higher lexile levels, chose to read and complete their IRAs on classics.

### Independent Reading Goals

I designed my independent reading program with a number of goals in mind. I wanted students to...

- gain vocabulary from context of their reading. (3.1, 3.3)
- read and respond to a variety of texts. (1.6, 2.4)
- read independently for extended periods to learn new information and derive pleasure. (1.7, 2.5)
- make connections within and across texts. (1.1, 2.1, 2.2)
- practice analyzing author style, purposes, and use of literary devices. (1.2-1.5)
- become more goal-oriented and self-aware as readers.

Note: Numbers indicate SC Academic Standards for ELA, June 2007 version.

The 2008-09 IRA Rubric (see below) was designed to assess most of these goals. Discounting an unusually low dip in average scores at the end of the second quarter, average scores for students' completed IRAs were good. Over the course of the year, English 2 Honors students' average IRA score was an 85 (2B = 89, 8B = 85, and 3A = 81). English 4 students' average IRA score was an 81 (1A = 75, 7A = 83, and 6B = 84). In terms of the rubric criteria, problem areas tended to be "Comparison/Contrasting with previous texts" (connections were often too general or they were nonexistent when students could not think of a comparison text and forgot to contrast) and

"Analysis/Evaluation" (responses were summaries of the plot, simple personal responses, and/or not literary enough).

	<b>25</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Response to reading (1.6, 2.4)</b>	meets requirements	meets requirements but may show lack of effort overall	1-2 minor incomplete areas	1-2 missing items
<b>Level of commitment and reading purposes (1.7, 2.5)</b>	extended time was spent and reading purposes are clear	little time was spent and/or reading purposes are unclear	little time and/or purpose evident	
<b>Comparison/ Contrasting with previous texts (1.1, 2.1, 2.2)</b>	connections are detailed, inferential, and analytical (theme, information)	connections are text-based but general	connections are merely personal	no connections are evident
<b>Analysis/Evaluation (1.2-1.5)</b>	analysis is extremely literary (impact of devices may be explained)	analysis is literary (several terms may be referenced)	analysis lacks detail and/or use of terms	analysis is not evident

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Vocabulary goals were addressed and assessed through our class vocabulary program.

### Reflection

After 12 years in the classroom, I finally designed and implemented a program that was successful in motivating students to read (as evidenced by their turn-in rates), differentiated reading according to student ability and interest, effectively supported a context-based vocabulary program, and was clearly tied to my goals and state standards. In addition, it helped students become self-aware, more critical readers. This was because on each IRA they received four scores, one for each of the rubric criteria, and because students were familiar with the IRA Rubric itself, they were better able to target responses to their independent reading from IRA to IRA, no matter in what format they completed the assessment. For the first time, my students analyzed and evaluated their independent reading texts on a consistent basis rather than simply responding with summaries and/or personal opinion. Because of this, their independent reading work clearly reinforced the kind of literary analysis and critical evaluation I was teaching in class and became a learning tool unto itself.

Having a good rubric was important. While I started the year requiring students to complete a worksheet of my design which clearly targeted the rubric criteria and standards (see attached), later in the year students were able to branch off into posters, power points, and other products to show response to their reading. It didn't matter; the IRA Rubric always applied. And because the Rubric was so specific, I found myself engaging students in more conversation about what I (and the State) wanted them to learn.



What have you gained from your reading of this book? (1.7, 2.5)

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**PART C: ANALYSIS**

Choose two passages from the book that you find significant. Giving page numbers, please cite each passage and then describe, using appropriate literary terms in 50-100 words, what that passage means to the work as a whole. What does it show? Why did the author include it? (1.2-1.5)

<b>PASSAGE</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>1</b>	
<b>PAGE(S):</b>	
<b>2</b>	
<b>PAGE(S):</b>	