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Feedback Form

Name:_____

Book Title: _____

Overall Reaction

Why (or why not!) did you find this book interesting to read?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Give specific examples of sentences that grabbed your attention (opening lines or

cliffhangers):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Why would you (or wouldn't you!) recommend this book to other readers?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Plot

What parts of this story were exciting?

_____

_____

_____

_____

And/ or

What parts of the story were boring or hard to understand?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Characterization

Describe one of the characters in detail here:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Describe a part of the story you thought was important when you could really feel the character's emotions:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Setting

Describe a setting you could picture most in the story:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Theme

What important message is the author trying to give the reader in this story?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Style and Presentation

What did you like (or not like!) about how the author presented the story?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Was this book a **mirror** (did it reflect your culture, and experiences) or a **window** (did it allow you to look into someone else's culture, and experience) **or both**? Explain your answer.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Distinguished Book?

Is there anything so distinguished about this book that it should win the Newbery

Award?_____

Explain your answer, either yes or

no:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Newbery Criteria: Characters

"I wish we could sometimes love the characters in real life as we love the characters in [books]. There are a great many human souls whom we should accept more kindly, and even appreciate more clearly, if we simply thought of them as people in a story."
—G.K. Chesterton, *What I Saw in America*

"I care more about the people in books than the people I see every day."
—Jo Walton, *Among Others*

"But, how do you know if an ending is truly good for the characters unless you've traveled with them through every page?"
—Shannon Hale, *Midnight in Austenland*

Discussion Questions:

Think about the characters in the books we've been reading.

- Did you really care about them?
- Could you feel their emotions?
- At some point in the book, did their dreams and wishes become your dreams and wishes?
- Explain your answers!

Newbery Criteria: Plot

"I hate when people ask what a book is about. People who read for plot, people who suck out the story like the cream filling in an Oreo, should stick to comic strips and soap operas….Every book worth a darn is about emotions and love and death and pain. It's about words. It's about a man dealing with life. Okay?"
—*J.R. Moehringer*

"If you read a book that's fiction and you get caught in the characters and the plot, and swept away, really, by the fiction of it - by the non-reality - you sometimes wind up changing your reality as well. Often, when the last page is turned, it will haunt you."
—*Jodi Picoult*

"What if Cinderella had been sent to kill the prince?"
— *J.C. Morrows, A Reluctant Assassin*

Discussion Questions:

What makes a good plot in a story? Think about the books you've read and the things the characters have done… would the story be the same if they'd done something differently?

What makes a good plot in a story? Is it the emotions of the characters? Or is it the action, excitement, and adventure of the events? Does one matter more than the other? Can you have one without the other, or do you need both?

Which of the books we've read have a GREAT plot? Why?

What if ___ hadn't _____?

Would you still want to read the books? Why or why not?

Newbery Criteria: Setting

The ***setting*** of a book is generally described as

where and when the story takes place.

Every story would be another story, and unrecognizable if it took up its characters and plot and happened somewhere else... Fiction depends for its life on place…
—Eudora Welty

Discussion Questions:

Think of the books we're reading that have well described settings.

- What if those books happened in different places?
- Are there any books we're reading that have such amazing setting descriptions that you just can't get them out of your head? Which ones? Why?

Newbery Criteria: Evidence of and Discussions about Theme

The *theme* of a story is the message about people, life, and the world we live in that the author wants the reader to understand.

Think about these quotes:

"A great book should leave you with many experiences, and slightly exhausted at the end. You live several lives while reading."
—William Styron, Conversations with William Styron

"Some books should be tasted, some devoured, but only a few should be chewed and digested thoroughly."
—Francis Bacon

Discussion Questions:

- Which of these books really got you thinking… maybe about life, people, or the world… in a way that stuck with you after the book was done?
- Have you found yourself comparing things in your life to ideas in any of these books?
- Even if you don't understand why the ideas keep coming back to you, it's important that they've stuck with you. That's the mark of powerful book!
- So, which book's ideas have stuck with you the most? Why?

What Makes a Book Distinguished?

The Newbery Committee members must make three nominations each month in October, November, and December of books they think should be seriously considered for the Newbery Medal.

When they make their nominations, they will argue that the book they're nominating is ***distinguished*** (stands out above the rest) according to the same criteria on our feedback forms:

Plot (the action in the story)

Characters (the people)

Setting (where and when it takes place)

Style and Presentation (the way it's written)

Theme (the message the author is trying to tell you about life)

Use these criteria to argue for your winning book.

What is so great or exciting about the plot? Why were the characters so believable and real to you? Why did you think the description of the setting was so good? What was so powerful about the author's message?

The John Newbery Medal is awarded to "the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children."

So, what makes a book **distinguished**?

Think about these quotes:

Whenever you read a good book, somewhere in the world a door opens to allow in more light.
—Vera Nazarian

Great books help you understand, and they help you feel understood.
—John Green

A good book has no ending.
—R.D. Cumming

Discussion Questions:

Have any of the books you've read opened a door of understanding for you?

- Do you feel like the author has understood *you*, the reader? Have you finished reading it, but continued to live with it in your mind?
- Which books? Why?

Books as Mirrors and Windows

Dr. Rudine Sims Bishop published an essay in 1990 about how children's books should reflect the multicultural nature of the world, and she used the phrase "Windows, Mirrors and Sliding Glass Doors" to explain how readers see themselves in books - or don't - and how they can also learn about the lives of others through the stories they read.

Discussion Questions:

Think about the books you've read.

When have books been **mirrors** for you?

- Did the characters remind you of people in your family?
- Were their traditions like your family's?
- Did they eat the same foods your family eats?
- Did the characters talk like you and your family and friends?

When have books been **windows** for you?

- Did learning about the way the characters lived or talked show you what life was like for other people?
- Did they eat food that was different from what you normally eat?
- Did they have different traditions than you and your family?

Be ready to share some of your answers.

Using Evidence to Support Your Book Choices

We are getting close to the time when we will each need to pick ONE book that most deserves the Newbery Award. How do we narrow down our choices? How do we make the case for our choices?

Let's start with PROVING these books are distinguished. Find passages that are excellent examples of the different criteria the Newbery Committee Members are looking for. This week, we'll focus on **Character** and **Setting** descriptions.

Discussion Questions:

Character Descriptions:

- When did characters *do*, or *say*, or *think* things that really showed their personality?
- Were there moments when you felt their feelings very strongly -- when the character's emotions really stuck with you?
- What about times when you could picture them completely? Find those passages.

Setting Descriptions:

- Are there places from these books that were described so well you can still picture them?
- As you read those descriptions, could you really picture being there? Find those passages and be prepared to share them.

Overall Reaction

*Think about how the books you've read so far have made you feel **overall.***

Think about these quotes:

"A great book should leave you with many experiences, and slightly exhausted at the end. You live several lives while reading."
—*William Styron*

"That's the thing about books. They let you travel without moving your feet."
—*Jhumpa Lahiri*

Discussion Questions:

- Which of these books really stuck with you after the book was done? Why?
- Did you feel like the characters were real people you knew?
- Was it so exciting you couldn't stop thinking about when you could read it again?
- Could you still imagine where the story took place, and you wanted to visit?
- Is there a book you can't stop thinking about?

Defend your Choice!

Newbery Committee members will be debating the best books of the year intensely! What's your winner so far? Why?

Which words will you choose to persuade others?

How will **your** arguments make a difference?

Remember to use the Newbery criteria to argue for your winning book
(plot, characters, setting, writing style and presentation, and theme).

but MOST IMPORTANTLY…

put your **heart** into your argument!

Discussion Questions:

- What is so distinguished about your favorite book?
- Why were the characters so believable and real to you?
- Why did you think the description of the setting was so good?
- What was so powerful about the author's message?
- Why does this book matter??

Be ready to defend your winning choice!

Why should I read your favorite book? Convince me!!

Members of the Newbery Committee must do a *lot* of work to

convince the rest of the committee to vote for their favorite books.

You do, too! If others haven't read your favorite book, they won't

vote for it!

Convince us to read your favorite book!

Discussion Questions:

- What made your favorite so great?
- How did you feel when you were reading it?
- What made this book so much better than other books you've read?
- WHY should we spend our time reading it?