

Dante von Foerster, 36

Mrs. Kragen

2nd period English

22 September 2015

Character and Theme in *The Phantom Tollbooth*

Format and Length

Follow the Format Guidelines and the Editing Hints meticulously. Start by following the directions for the heading and title (see the sample above). Make sure you use the date the project is *due*. You will receive a separate grade for how well you follow the Format Guidelines.

These reading projects are required to be more than one full double-spaced typed page and no more than two full double-spaced typed pages. (In other words, you will turn in two pages.) If you hand in a paper that is too long or too short, I will hand it back for you to fix—and it will be LATE.

Mechanics

As with any formal paper, avoid first and second person pronouns. In other words, do not use: *I, me, my, mine, myself, we, us, our, ours, ourselves, you, your, yours, yourself* or *yourselves*.

Do not use contractions or slang.

Keep your tenses consistent. Write the whole paper in the present tense, or write the whole paper in the past tense. Do not switch back and forth.

You will receive a separate grade for mechanics. That grade will count for ten times as much as a regular assignment.

Finishing

Spell check and grammar check. Get multiple readers. Ask your parents for help and *listen to what they say!* Fix everything to the best of your ability. Once you have the best final draft you can make, print then do a word count and write the number of words at the top on the right. Staple your pages on the top left. Hand in your paper on time!

INTRODUCTION (10%)

paragraph ONE

You need an introductory paragraph. Always put the book title and author in the first paragraph. Please note that you use *italics* for book titles, not an underline.

Make sure your introduction includes a thesis statement. Do not announce what you are doing: “This is a project on the characters in *The Phantom Tollbooth* and the theme of the book.”

Instead, write a thesis that reveals your topic without making an obvious announcement.

In *The Phantom Tollbooth* by Norton Juster, the protagonist Milo, accompanied by the watchdog Tock and the loveable Humbug, met Azaz, the king of words, and the Mathematician, the ruler of numbers, and a host of other fantasy characters in the Lands Beyond. His adventures changed Milo. They taught him the value of words and numbers and the importance of rhyme and reason.

Your introductory paragraph should have a hook that grabs the reader’s attention. It brings up everything you are going to talk about and does not include topics you are not going to discuss.

BODY (80%)

You will write several paragraphs in the body of your paper. These book projects are not book reports. In a classic book report you tell lots of knowledge and comprehension level information. In these projects I am looking for analysis level thinking.

The terms in bold are *required*.

paragraph TWO

Start the body of your paper with one paragraph showing how the author uses ***direct*** and/or ***indirect characterization*** to reveal the main character’s ***appearance*** and ***personality*** (10%). In that paragraph add two or more short examples from the book—no more than two or three lines per quotation—to support your statements (10%). These quotes should add specific, relevant detail to a general statement you make. Again, do not make an announcement, “This quote gives the

appearance.” Make your quotations flow naturally. Note the page the quotation came from, following the format shown below.

Juster never described Milo’s appearance. Several characters referred to Milo as a little boy, but it would be impossible for a reader to determine how little he was. On the other hand, Juster used direct characterization to reveal Milo’s personality. At the beginning of the book Milo was bored by everything. “Nothing really interested him—least of all the things that should have” (9).

paragraph THREE

Then write one paragraph showing how the author uses *direct* and/or *indirect characterization* to reveal the main character’s *background* and *motivation* (10%). Once again, add two or more short examples from the book to support your statements in that paragraph (10%).

paragraph FOUR

Add a paragraph differentiating between *major characters* and *minor characters*—tell who they are and what the relationships are between them (10%).

paragraph FIVE

Write one paragraph addressing issues of *conflict* between the *protagonist* and *antagonist*. Show how the main character develops or changes as a result of the conflict (10%).

paragraph SIX

Finally, write one paragraph to explain the *implicit* or *explicit theme* (10%). Again, that paragraph requires two or more short examples from the book to support your statements (10%).

Juster made the theme of the book explicit when Milo was talking with the Princesses of Rhyme and Reason in the Castle in the Air. As Rhyme explained to Milo, “It’s not just learning things that’s important. It’s learning what to do with what you learn and learning why you learn things at all that matters” (233). Milo, who started the book regarding “the process of seeking knowledge as the greatest waste of time of all” (9), by the end of the book became someone full of curiosity, eager to learn everything he could. “His thoughts darted eagerly about as everything looked new—and worth trying” (256).

CONCLUSION (10%)

paragraph SEVEN

At the end, write a concluding paragraph giving, briefly, the main ideas you want the reader to remember. It is your last chance to drive your point home. Again, do not announce “in conclusion.” The fact that you are concluding should be obvious from what you say and the way you say it. Do not add anything new that you did not include in your paper.

You will receive a separate grade for content. That grade will count for ten times as much as a regular assignment.