VMA Book Report ENSK 2 LS 05

Book Report – Introduction

*Holes* by Louis Sachar.

The Book Report will consist of six paragraphs or questions which will all score 1/7 of the final grade. The last part is the way you write your report, the layout, the spelling and the grammar. The questions are:

1. Plot. Here you have to describe the plot of the novel. The trick is to try to mention every important bit, but skip the less important things. Avoid going into too much detail. A good trick is to begin by writing just one short sentence about each chapter and then try and work them together into a cohesive account. A good idea is to separate the various plot lines if there is more than one.

2. The narrative point of view. What advantages and disadvantages does it give the novel to use this point of view? Who is really telling the story (narrator) and how much does he know and tell us about (point of view)? What is good and/or bad about this way of telling a story? Do not forget that these are actually two questions and that you have to answer them both.

 3. Characters / characterization. Write about Stanely and then choose one of the following: Zero, Pendansky or Mr Sir. Describe their appearance (if possible), characteristics, approach to life and state of mind throughout the course of the novel. Look out not just to write a summary of the characters’ lives, but how they react to different people and situations. What has shaped them to be the way they are? Look at the question: it is really many questions that are supposed to lead you to a complete analysis of these characters.

 4. Setting. What kind of circumstances cause the situation that Stanley and his family are in and also everyone at Camp Green Lake? Where does the novel take place? Does it happen in more than one place? determine if the places are important to the development of the main characters.

5. Message. What do you think the author is trying to say with this novel? The question is very clear: is the author trying to teach us something? Try to concentrate on no more than two or three things mentioned in the book to avoid taking on too much and saying too little. Here it is your argument that is important. The message itself is not important, and there may be many. It is your argument that makes or breaks this part.

6 Rating: Good? Bad? Fair? Why? Your comments on the novel. Remember to argue your point! Here it is very important to form an opinion based on the book, state it clearly and then argue why you have this opinion. Your actual opinion does not really matter: your teacher does not care if you like this book or loathe it! What matters is that you have valid reasons for liking or disliking the book. And saying that you do not like the book because you do not like reading will get you an automatic 0.0 for this question. One final advice: Never, ever use the words “I think” about anything. When writing about literature you are not allowed to think, have an honest opinion, or even believe something about a novel, the plot, the characters in it or the intentions of the author. You are supposed to read the book and then know what you have read. Then you can put forward an idea, a thesis or a theory and argue it based on your knowledge. Leave “thinking” to those who do not know anything.