The Chopping Block Project 2016 – updated 2019
Written by: Yvonne Toney

The Big Question: What makes a book a “keeper”?

Curriculum Standards & Connections:
- Comprehends & responds to various types of texts/media
- Manage ideas & information
- Organize, presents & revises thoughts & opinions to communicate ideas
- Use experience & knowledge to understand

Curriculum Connections:
- Use strategies to understand what I read/see/hear
- Use phonics & text structure to read
- Make connections to things I see/hear/read
- Share ideas & listen to others’ ideas
- Use language to show respect
- Set goals as reader/writers/illustrator/speaker
- Understand literary techniques & elements
- Generate/elaborate on the expression of ideas
- I can use what I know to express my opinion
- I can plan for my audience
- I can locate information to answer questions
- I can organize and record information
- I can revise & edit my work to improve it
- I can expand my written/spoken vocabulary
- Use complex words, sentence structure & grammar rules
- Use rules of capitalization & punctuation
- Effectively present information
- Effectively access & emerge with information

21st Century Competencies:
- Self-directed learner
- Communicator
- Critical Thinker
- Civically Engaged
- Information & Media Literate
Modes of Assessment & Producibles:
- Reproduce the cover with important parts – title, author, picture
- Book tasting choices
- Figurative Language Identification – record any figurative language techniques found*(optional)
- Persuasive Essay – persuade the jury to keep the book or get rid of it
- Trial Presentation – presentation skills of eye contact, expression, appropriate volume
- Reflection

Resources:
- ✓ fictional novels of various levels and genre
- ✓ music stand
- ✓ table cloths
- ✓ Novel summary sheet
- ✓ OREO cookies
- ✓ Persuasive writing tip sheets & samples
- ✓ Graphic Organizers
- ✓ Trial Scripts
- ✓ Trial Props: gavel, judge’s cape, bailiff’s vest; lawyer’s clothes, music stand

Assumptions:
- Students can write a summary
- Students know how to choose books at their appropriate level
- There has been a common book that all students have read – ie: novel study

Chopping Block Project Steps:
Step 1: Present the Problem and Initiate Discussion
Step 2: Choose a book
Step 3: Read and Summarize the book; mini-lessons
Step 4: Write a persuasive essay
Step 5: Mock Book Trials
Step 6: Reflection
Step 7: Celebration
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
<td>Reading time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second Due Date: Book reading complete</td>
<td>Introduce OREO persuasive writing technique</td>
<td>Demonstrate and students write opening paragraph – O</td>
<td>Demonstrate and students write first paragraph – RE (reason and examples)</td>
<td>Demonstrate and students write second paragraph – RE (reason and examples)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrate and students write third paragraph – RE (reason and examples)</td>
<td>Demonstrate and students write closing paragraph – O (opinion and proof)</td>
<td>Review and edit OREO essay.</td>
<td>Demonstrate court procedure</td>
<td>Court Cases begin – students need to submit – cover, marking sheet, orio essay, figurative language hunt</td>
<td>Court Cases</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Court Cases</td>
<td>Court Cases</td>
<td>Court Cases</td>
<td>Assessment components returned</td>
<td>Reflection and take away discussion</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear __________,</td>
<td>Dear __________,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as the <strong>Judge</strong> for 2 cases on __________. Please arrive early. There is a script for you to follow. At such time, when you call for questions, select 3 jury members.</td>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as the <strong>Bailiff</strong> for 2 cases on __________. Please arrive early. There is a script for you to follow. You will need to speak loudly.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court.</td>
<td>See you in court.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dear __________,</th>
<th>Dear __________,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as the <strong>Judge</strong> for 2 cases on __________. Please arrive early. There is a script for you to follow. At such time, when you call for questions, select 3 jury members.</td>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as the <strong>Bailiff</strong> for 2 cases on __________. Please arrive early. There is a script for you to follow. You will need to speak loudly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court.</td>
<td>See you in court.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dear __________,</th>
<th>Dear __________,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as the <strong>Judge</strong> for 2 cases on __________. Please arrive early. There is a script for you to follow. At such time, when you call for questions, select 3 jury members.</td>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as the <strong>Bailiff</strong> for 2 cases on __________. Please arrive early. There is a script for you to follow. You will need to speak loudly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court.</td>
<td>See you in court.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Written by Yvonne Toney
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dear __________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as Jury #1 on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Who else in this courtroom, would be interested in reading this book and why?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dear __________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as Jury #3 on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Why did you choose this book to read?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dear __________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as Jury #2 on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If you could ask the author one question, what would you ask?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dear __________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as Jury #4 on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“How are you and the main character different?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dear __________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as Jury #5 on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“How are you and the main character the same?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dear __________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as Jury #6 on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Where you happy with the ending of the book. Why or why not?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Written by: Yvonne Toney
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dear __________,</th>
<th>Dear __________,</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as <strong>Jury #7</strong> on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as <strong>Jury #8</strong> on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What was the most exciting or interesting part for you in the book?”</td>
<td>“How do you know this book is fiction/non-fiction?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear __________,</td>
<td>Dear __________,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as <strong>Jury #9</strong> on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as <strong>Jury #10</strong> on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“If you could meet the main character in real life, what question would you ask?”</td>
<td>“How are you and the main character the same?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dear __________,</td>
<td>Dear __________,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as <strong>Jury #11</strong> on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
<td>You have been called to Toney Classroom Courtroom to serve as <strong>Jury #12</strong> on _________. Please arrive early. Do not leave the courtroom until the judge leaves. At such time, when the judge calls for questions you may ask the following:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“What do you think happened to the main character after the story finished?”</td>
<td>“Which character did you like the best and why?”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
<td>See you in court. Come with a pencil.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Written by: Yvonne Toney
### Trial

**Name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking Criteria</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepared – book, essay</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read with expression</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read so all can hear</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers all questions with thoughtful responses</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role plays following description provided</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** /25

**Comments and Mark:**

---

### Trial

**Name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking Criteria</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepared – book, essay</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read with expression</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read so all can hear</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers all questions with thoughtful responses</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role plays following description provided</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** /25

**Comments and Mark:**

---

### Trial

**Name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking Criteria</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepared – book, essay</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read with expression</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read so all can hear</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers all questions with thoughtful responses</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role plays following description provided</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** /25

**Comments and Mark:**

---

### Trial

**Name:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marking Criteria</th>
<th>Marks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepared – book, essay</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read with expression</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read so all can hear</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Answers all questions with thoughtful responses</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role plays following description provided</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total:** /25

**Comments and Mark:**

---

Written by: Yvonne Toney
Ladies and Gentlemen of the Jury:

My name is Mrs. _______. I am a _______ at Langdon School. I enjoy golf, reading and watching hockey. I consider myself an avid reader and have recently read the book Crazy for Gold written by Frieda Wishinsky. It is the #3 book in the Canadian Flyer series. Crazy for Gold is a historical fiction book that takes place during the 1898 Klondike Gold Rush. The story is told from the third person point of view. In the story two friends, Emily and Matt, board a magic sleigh and transport to the Klondike Gold Rush. They travel with a family who climb up the golden stairs, build their own boat, sail down a wild river and finally end up in Dawson City. They even find gold nuggets. I feel very strongly that Crazy for Gold is a good book and should remain in the classroom library.

To begin with, the words the author choses to tell the story were amazing. For example, in the book the main character calls the Gold Rush a “cold rush” because up north the weather is very cold. Another example is when the author wanted to show the passing of time, she wrote, “An hour passed. Two hours. Three.”

Secondly, we should keep this book in the classroom library because of the interesting add ons that are found at the back of the book. The story takes place during the Gold Rush. There is a section at that back of the book called More About. In this section it tells 10 top facts about the Gold Rush from the main characters. I learned that the people who came to the Gold Rush were called “Stampedes”. We have a football team called the Stampedes. At the back is a section called So You Want to Know. In this section, the author answers questions about the Gold Rush. It felt like I was talking to the author. Another add on was a little excerpt from the next book in the series. It made me excited to look for the next book.

One last reason why we should keep Crazy for Gold in the class library is because the characters in the story are both interesting and realistic. Emily is the main character. She enjoys adventures like I do but she also acts like a normal kid. She is even a little whiny like when they finally make it to Dawson and it was really hot, Emily says, “I hate the sun!”. I also like Emily because she helps others in the story. The family that Emily travels with needs a way to earn money so they can survive. She found some gold nuggets and gave them to the family. Emily also suggested that the mother open a bakery. The family thought her ideas were great.

To sum it all up, I believe the book Crazy for Gold should stay in the class library. This book uses excellent words, has informational add-ons, and fantastic characters. Thank you for your attention. I look forward to your decision.

Written by: Yvonne Toney
Bailiff, Lawyer and Judge

Bailiff: All rise. The honorable Judge ______ presiding. (Wait for judge to sit). Please be seated.

Judge: (hammer) Court is now in session. Ladies and Gentlemen of the jury, you are advised to make your decision solely on the evidence presented today. Do not discuss your decision with any other member of the jury or anyone that you may come in contact with today.

Bailiff: First case your honor.

Lawyer: I am presenting the book, ______________________ your honor.

Judge: Jury members please hear the case for ______________________. You may proceed.

Lawyer: (Reads the Oreo essay)

Judge: Thank you for your presentation. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, do you have any questions for our presenter. (call on 3 questions from the jury).

Judge: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you have heard the case about __________. Please state clearly on your paper whether the book is to stay or go by writing “stay” if you want the book to stay, or “go” if you want the book to go.

Bailiff: (Collect all the papers and count the votes). (Write the outcome on another piece of paper).

Judge: Do we have a decision?

Lawyer: (Stand up)

Bailiff: Yes your honor.

Judge: What say you?

Bailiff: (hand the paper to the judge)

Judge: The people of the jury have decided (read the paper). (Hammer). Case is closed.
Bailiff: Next case your honor. (Lawyers switch spots).

Lawyer: I am presenting the book, __________________ your honor. (Place copy of the book and title page on the stand).

Judge: Jury members please hear the case for ______________________. You may proceed.

Lawyer: (Reads the Oreo essay)

Judge: Thank you for your presentation. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, do you have any questions for our presenter. (call on 3 questions from the jury).

Judge: Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you have heard the case about ______________. Please state clearly on your paper whether the book is to stay or go by writing “stay” if you want the book to stay, or “go” if you want the book to go.

Bailiff: (Collect all the papers and count the votes). (Write the outcome on another piece of paper).

Judge: Do we have a decision?

Lawyer: (stand up)

Bailiff: Yes your honor.

Judge: What say you?

Bailiff: (hand the paper to the judge)

Judge: The people of the jury have decided (read the paper). (Hammer). Case is closed.

Bailiff: There are no more cases your honor:

Judge: (hammer) Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, you are dismissed. Court is adjourned.
(stand up to leave).

Bailiff: All rise. (judge leaves).

Written by: Yvonne Toney
# Chopping Block Project Assessment

Name: ______________________
Name of Book: ______________________

## Cover & Reflection

- [ ] cover includes title of book
- [ ] cover includes author of the book
- [ ] cover includes details from original cover
- [ ] cover includes color
- [ ] book chosen at appropriate level

*****

- [ ] reflections include at least one supporting detail per response
- [ ] reflections include:
  - [ ] proper use of capital letters
  - [ ] proper use of endings to sentences
  - [ ] sentences make sense
  - [ ] sentences are the right length

Comments and Mark:

## Novel Reading Paper Work

- [ ] Front page complete with accuracy and thought
- [ ] (middle) summaries make sense and show understanding of the book events
- [ ] uses proper sentences where required
- [ ] proper use of capital letters
- [ ] proper use of endings to sentences
- [ ] identified figurative language in novel

Comments and Mark:

## Oreo Writing

- [ ] 5 paragraphs easily seen
- [ ] paragraph 1 – introduction
- [ ] paragraph 2 – reason + 2 examples
- [ ] paragraph 3 – reason + 2 examples
- [ ] paragraph 4 – reason + 2 examples
- [ ] paragraph 5 – opinion, call to action, restates the 3 reasons
- [ ] proper use of capital letters
- [ ] proper use of endings to sentences
- [ ] sentences make sense
- [ ] sentences are the right length

Comments and Mark:

## Trial

- [ ] prepared – book, writing, assessment sheet, cover page
- [ ] read with expression
- [ ] read so all can hear
- [ ] answers all questions with thoughtful responses
- [ ] role plays following description provided

Comments and Mark:

Written by: Yvonne Toney
Chopping Block Project – Reflection
Name: ______________________

1. Explain how the chopping block project worked.

2. Which parts of the chopping block project did you enjoy?

3. Which parts of the chopping block project did you find challenging? Why?
4. In your opinion, should next year’s class do the chopping block project? Why or why not?

5. What did you learn about books from this project?

6. What changes would you make to the chopping block project?

Written by: Yvonne Toney