Letters on Literature

**Assignment:**

For your final assignment in English I, you will write a letter to an author of one of the texts we have read this year. You can select any of the novels we read as a class, or one of your approved independent novels to provide the basis of this assignment. I will also allow students to write to the teacher in the film “Freedom Writers”, as she (along with her students) is a contributing author of the book “The Freedom Writer’s Diary” which was the inspiration for the film we watched in class.

Letters should be written in an organized format and be over one page in length. I do not require these to be typed, but they must be written legibly. Write these as if you were writing an actual letter, including both a greeting followed by the author’s full name and your signature at the end.

**Questions to address/answer in your letter:**

* What did you learn about yourself either while reading or after reading this author’s work?
* What elements within the book—the author’s characters or setting or style of writing, for example—touched you emotionally or influenced your thoughts
* What insights about the world did this book reveal to you?

**Tips for writing your letter:**

* Write honestly and in your own voice, as if you were having a conversation with the author. Those are the best letters to read and the most fun to write
* Correspond, don’t just compliment. Your letter should inform rather than flatter the author.
* Do not summarize the book’s plot! Because you are writing to the author, don’t tell him or her what they already know—what the book is about. Instead, use clear and relevant details to explain how the author’s story affected you, what you learned and felt and understood that you didn’t prior to reading the author’s work.

**Short stories/books/plays and authors (select from the list or use your IRP):**

* *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak
* *The Odyssey* by Homer
* *12 Angry Men* by Reginald Rose
* *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck
* *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare
* *The Freedom Writer’s Diary* by “The Freedom Writers” with Erin Gruwell
* *Thank You Ma’am* by Langston Hughes
* *Harrison Bergeron* by Kurt Vonnegut
* *The Most Dangerous Game* by Richard Connell
* *The Scarlet Ibis* by James Hurst
* *The Cask of Amontillado* by Edgar Allen Poe
* *The Sound of Thunder* by Ray Bradbury
* *The Necklace* by Guy de Maupassant