



Partner Novel Study

A six-week project for high school literature classes

Six discussions, a shared journal, and an individual reflection on the process

STUDENT GUIDE 

Partner Novel Study

One novel, six 40-minute discussions, and a shared record of your thinking

YOUR NAME _____	PARTNER _____
NOVEL _____	AUTHOR _____

What you will do

Choose an approved novel with a partner. Divide the reading into six checkpoints. Meet after each checkpoint, then write one shared journal entry while the conversation is still fresh. At the end, write your own reflection about the project experience.

Plotting Something



Partner Novel Study Teacher Guide

A flexible project for high school English
Classroom tested and refined for more than a decade

About this resource

I have used some version of this project in my own high school English classroom for more than ten years. The pacing, discussion sequence, journal requirements, and final reflection have changed over time in response to the questions students asked and the problems that came up during actual use.

Students read one approved novel with a partner. They divide the book into six checkpoints, meet for six structured discussions, write a shared journal, and complete an individual reflection about the experience. The project works with many different novels, so the teacher can use it with a class list, student choice, or an existing independent reading program.

The six-week schedule remains my recommended version. Compressed options appear later in this guide for teachers who need a shorter window.

At a glance

Feature	Plan
Length	Six weeks recommended, with four- and five-week options
Meetings	Six 40-minute partner discussions
Shared work	Six-entry discussion journal
Individual work	Final reflection on the project, book, and partnership
Submission	Print and digital copies
Grades	Six discussion grades, one journal grade, and one reflection grade

Partner Novel Study 1 

10-page student guide

8-page teacher guide

Editable and print
formats

Grades 9-12

What is included

The buyer receives both editable files and print-ready PDFs

Project requirements

All books need teacher approval before either partner begins. The novel should be complex enough to support six substantial conversations and more than one reasonable interpretation.

Separate grades

Grade	What it covers	Points
Discussions 1 through 6	Preparation, sustained conversation, use of the novel, and partnership	10 each
Shared discussion journal	Six dated entries with at least one full double-spaced page per entry	45
Individual final reflection	One full double-spaced page about the process, book, and partnership	10

These remain separate grades in the gradebook.

What to submit

- The pair submits one printed copy and one digital copy of the shared journal.
- Only one partner uploads the shared journal. Put both names on it.
- Each student submits one printed copy and one digital copy of the individual reflection.

Shared work and original writing

Both partners must contribute ideas and read the complete journal before submission, even if one person does more of the typing. The journal and reflection must contain your thinking and your writing. Do not use AI to write either one.

Partner Novel Study 2

STUDENT GUIDE

10 pages
Editable PowerPoint
Print PDF

Partner Novel Study Teacher Guide

A flexible project for high school English
Classroom tested and refined for more than a decade

About this resource

I have used some version of this project in my own high school English classroom for more than ten years. The pacing, discussion sequence, journal requirements, and final reflection have changed over time in response to the questions students asked and the problems that came up during actual use.

Students read one approved novel with a partner. They divide the book into six checkpoints, meet for six structured discussions, write a shared journal, and complete an individual reflection about the experience. The project works with many different novels, so the teacher can use it with a class list, student choice, or an existing independent reading program.

The six-week schedule remains my recommended version. Compressed options appear later in this guide for teachers who need a shorter window.

At a glance

Feature	Plan
Length	Six weeks recommended, with four- and five-week options
Meetings	Six 40-minute partner discussions
Shared work	Six-entry discussion journal
Individual work	Final reflection on the project, book, and partnership
Submission	Print and digital copies
Grades	Six discussion grades, one journal grade, and one reflection grade

Partner Novel Study 1

TEACHER GUIDE

8 pages
Editable Word document
Print PDF

The project is undated, so teachers can build their own calendar or use the six-week pacing model in the guide.

Students need their own copy of a teacher-approved novel. No novel text is included.

Project planning

The calendar and reading plan stay together

Calendar and reading plan

Complete the dates and checkpoints with your partner

Use the edition you will actually read. The first window may be short, so divide the book realistically. Ask before changing the plan.

Meeting	Date	Read through	Notes or adjustments
Book approval		Do not begin until approved	
Discussion 1		Chapters or pages	
Discussion 2		Chapters or pages	
Discussion 3		Chapters or pages	
Discussion 4		Chapters or pages	
Discussion 5		Chapters or pages	
Discussion 6		Finish the novel	
Project due		Beginning of class	

Planning reminders

- Page ranges may work better when chapter lengths vary.
- Tell your partner early if you fall behind or need to adjust a checkpoint.
- Discussion time is for conversation, not reading or catching up.
- Finish the entire novel before Discussion 6.

Partner Novel Study

3

Every book requires teacher approval before students begin.

Partners divide the edition they will use into six realistic checkpoints.

Students can record dates, page ranges, and later adjustments in one place.

The final checkpoint requires students to finish the novel before Discussion 6.

Six partner discussions

Each meeting lasts 40 minutes

Discussions 3 and 4

Choose two or three questions and keep returning to the novel

DISCUSSION 3

How the novel is built

Pay attention to how the novel is put together and how that affects your reading.

1. How does the organization affect your reading? Consider chronology, chapter divisions, shifts, gaps, or repetition.
2. What does the point of view help you understand? What remains uncertain?
3. Does the setting simply provide a location, or does it affect the characters and conflicts? Explain.

AP option Use an open-ended literary analysis prompt from your teacher. Which part could this novel already address? What evidence would you use?

Passage and page or chapter _____

One idea after the discussion _____

DISCUSSION 4

Style and repeated patterns

Look closely at the author's style and at patterns that have developed.

1. Choose a passage in which the author's style stands out. How do the language, sentence structure, tone, imagery, dialogue, or pacing affect it?
2. Which image, symbol, or situation keeps appearing? What does it seem to mean now?
3. Which earlier idea or prediction now needs revision? What changed your mind?

AP option Connect the novel to one chapter or idea from How to Read Literature Like a Professor. Use Foster to explain something you already noticed.

Passage and page or chapter _____

One idea after the discussion _____

Partner Novel Study

6



Students choose two or three open-ended questions and keep returning to the novel.

The focus shifts as students move from the opening to the complete work.

Discussions 3-6 include optional AP Literature extensions.

Each discussion receives a separate 10-point grade.

Shared discussion journal

Six entries preserve the thinking that comes out of the conversations

Shared discussion journal

Submit all six entries at the end of the project. Write each one within a few days of the discussion so the ideas stay manageable and fresh.

Requirements

- Six dated entries labeled with the discussion number and reading covered
- At least one full typed page per entry, for six double-spaced pages total
- An 11 or 12 point font, standard margins, and developed paragraphs
- At least one short quotation or precise scene reference in every entry
- Both voices, including agreements, disagreements, or changes in thinking
- Careful proofreading by both partners

What each entry should include

Opening Name the reading covered and the question, passage, or idea that drove the discussion.

Development Explain the interpretations you considered and the evidence that supported or challenged them.

Two voices Represent at least two different viewpoints. If you disagree, or change your mind, explain why.

Closing State what you learned and more clearly, and what questions you will carry into the next reading.

Evidence Include at least one quotation or scene reference, or character, or an example from the text.

Journal rubric 45 points

Category	Full credit work	Points
Analysis and interpretation	Entries explain the novel and consider how the author's choices create meaning.	15
Specific evidence	Entries use well-chosen quotations or scene references and explain their significance.	10
Development across six entries	All six entries show how your thinking changed as you read.	10
Collaborative thinking	The journal represents both readers' questions, agreements, and disagreements.	5
Clarity and care	Entries are organized, readable, and carefully proofread.	5

Partner Novel Study

8



Partners write one shared entry after each discussion.

The complete journal is due at the end of the project.

Students are encouraged to write while the discussion is still fresh.

The journal rubric is worth 45 points and remains a separate grade.

Individual final reflection

The final writing focuses on the project process

Individual final reflection

Write one full double-spaced page in an 11 or 12 point font with standard margins. Reflect on the project process rather than analyzing the novel again. Organize the response as a reflection, not a list of answers. Honest criticism will not lower the grade.

Questions to consider

1. Did you like or dislike the project? What shaped that response? What was your favorite part?
2. Did you like the book? Why or why not? Would you recommend it or choose a different one?
3. How well did the partnership work? Were you a good match? Was the work shared fairly?
4. What challenges came up with the reading, schedule, discussions, journal, or partnership?
5. Which parts felt worthwhile? Which parts were less useful or need to change?
6. What should have changed, stayed the same, or been added? Give specific feedback.

Reflection rubric 10 points

Category	Full credit work	Points
Project and book	Gives an honest, specific response to the project and the book.	4
Partnership	Explains how the partnership worked and what each person contributed.	3
Feedback	Offers specific suggestions for future classes.	2
Clarity and care	The response is developed, organized, and proofread.	1

Submission checklist

☐ One printed shared journal with both names

☐ One digital journal uploaded by one partner

☐ One printed reflection from each student

☐ One digital reflection from each student

Partner Novel Study

9

Students reflect on the project, book choice, and partnership.

They identify challenges and give specific feedback for future classes.

The prompt avoids repeating the literary analysis already completed in the journal.

Each student submits a separate reflection worth 10 points.

Teacher support

Procedures for the situations that arise during a long project

Pacing options

The six-week plan gives students the most consistent rhythm. The shorter plans require heavier reading weeks and less time between the later discussions.

Plan	Discussion pattern	Final work
Six weeks	One discussion at the end of each week. Launch at the start of Week 1 and finish the novel before Discussion 6.	Hold a work period after Discussion 6. Collect the project one or two classes later.
Five weeks	Hold Discussions 1, 2, and 3 at the ends of Weeks 1, 2, and 3. Hold Discussions 4 and 5 during Week 4. Hold Discussion 6 at the end of Week 5.	Give a short work period during Week 5 or collect the project in the next class.
Four weeks	Hold Discussion 1 at the end of Week 1. Hold Discussions 2 and 3 during Week 2. Discussions 4 and 5 during Week 3, and Discussion 6 at the end of Week 4.	Plan class reading time and collect the project after a final work period.

Reading checkpoints

Ask each pair to divide the actual edition they will read. Chapter counts can be misleading when chapters vary in length, so page ranges may produce a fairer plan. The first window is often short. Pairs can adjust later checkpoints after teacher approval, especially when the book changes pace or one section is unusually demanding.

Keep Discussion 6 intact. Students need to finish the novel before the final conversation so they can reconsider earlier scenes, evaluate the ending, and form a claim about the whole work.

Class reading time

A small amount of shared class reading time can prevent the project from becoming entirely homework. Announce necessary class hours and the intent of the reading time.

Teacher planning calendar

Milestone	Date	Reading target or note
Launch		
Discussion 1		
Discussion 2		
Discussion 3		
Discussion 4		
Discussion 5		
Discussion 6		Finish the novel
Project due		



Book approval and project launch

Pacing and make-up discussions

Partnership problems

Optional AP Literature extensions

Separate rubrics and scoring record

Print and digital submission directions



Built from classroom use

The project has been revised and refined for more than a decade

[illegible]

Flexible enough for any approved novel

Designed for grades 9-12 and AP
Literature

Six weeks of sustained reading and conversation

Use the structure as written or
adjust the calendar to fit your
class

Plotting Something

Secondary English resources
shaped by real classroom use