



PROJECT TITLE: The Reader's Verdict

COURSE: AP English Literature & Composition

INSTRUCTOR: Ms. Hamilton



## DRIVING QUESTION

Should this literary work remain on the AP Literature list of texts with literary merit?



## PROJECT SUMMARY

In this project, students will step into the role of a Literary Review Board, tasked with determining whether a studied novel or play deserves to remain on the AP Literature list of works of literary merit. Working in groups, students will research critical responses, analyze the text's themes, authorial craft, and complexity, and compare it to at least two other literary works. Each group will prepare a written case file that outlines their argument, addresses counterarguments, and provides supporting evidence. The project culminates in a mock trial-style presentation where groups act as either defense or prosecution, presenting their case before a panel of peers, teachers, and/or guest judges who will deliver a final "verdict."



## REAL-WORLD CONTEXT

This project mirrors the work of literary critics, educators, and review boards who decide which texts should be taught, preserved, or removed from curricula. Just as school boards, universities, and publishers debate the value of works in shaping culture and education, students will evaluate a text's merit through evidence, counterarguments, and persuasive reasoning. The format also connects to real-world law and advocacy, as students present their case in a courtroom-style setting before an authentic audience of peers, teachers, or community guests.



## PRODUCTS & AUDIENCE

Students created a written case file and held a live defense/prosecution presentation.



## STUDENT REFLECTIONS

- “Due to the group contract, we were better able to organize and distribute the work. This allowed for people to know what work they were responsible for and prevented one person from doing all the work.”



## NC PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE SKILLS GAINED

COLLABORATION

COMMUNICATION

EMPATHY

CRITICAL THINKING

ADAPTABILITY

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

LEARNER'S MINDSET



## TEACHER REFLECTION

“This PBL was highly effective in pushing students to think critically about literary merit and to support their claims with nuanced analysis rather than personal preference. The live defense format revealed strong growth in students' ability to address counterarguments and articulate sophisticated reasoning. If I were to repeat this project, I would build in additional structured checkpoints for evidence selection, but an unexpected “aha” moment was watching students genuinely wrestle with the complexity of deciding whether a text deserves its place in the canon.”