

ORDINARY PEOPLE

Connecting Literature to Life

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.1 Cite strong and thorough textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text, including determining where the text leaves matters uncertain.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RL.11-12.3 Analyze the impact of the author's choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.2 Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.5 Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience. (Editing for conventions should demonstrate command of Language standards 1–3 up to and including grades 11–12.)

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.W.11-12.6 Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.

Literature is a mirror for society; the themes, concerns, issues and events that arise in literature reflect the same concerns of the outside world. Literature often serves not only as a mirror for the world outside the pages of a book, but also as a commentary on the very issues it presents.

In this task you will be analyzing and connecting the thematic concerns of Judith Guest's novel *Ordinary People* to the outside world of music, newspaper and magazine writing and film production.

OPTION ONE – MUSIC AND ORDINARY PEOPLE

- Choose one song that connects thematically to the novel.
- You should print and submit the song lyrics separately (please use your judgment when it comes to lyrics).
- Write an essay explaining the meaning of the songs as well as the specific song lyrics you feel align themselves with *Ordinary People*, and how the a theme from the novel mirrors the theme of the song. Use textual evidence to support your answer.

OPTION TWO – PSYCHOLOGY AND ORDINARY PEOPLE

- Find a scholarly article on a topic in psychology related to *Ordinary People*. The article must be three pages or longer and from a credible source.
- Compare the contents of the article to the characters, plot, conflict, and themes of *Ordinary People*.
- Develop your ideas on each relationship using textual examples from the novel.

OPTION THREE – FILM AND ORDINARY PEOPLE

- Choose one film that shares similar concerns/issues as those presented in *Ordinary People* (...the film version *Ordinary People* is not an option).
- Compare the characters, themes, conflicts, plot, etc. in the film you have selected with the *Ordinary People* novel (not the *Ordinary People* movie).
- Develop on your ideas on the relationship between the film you selected and the novel using textual examples from the novel.

OPTION FOUR – CRITICAL REVIEW OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

- Write a critical review on the novel *Ordinary People*, including what Guest did well and what needs improvement; write the review from the perspective of a critical reader.
- Your review must include textual examples as evidence.
- Develop your ideas around whether the content of *Ordinary People* is accurate to life and to relationships.
- Must maintain third person point of view.

