

ELEMENTARY BOOK REPORT SAMPLE

PACK

3 Complete Reports for Grades 3-5

SAMPLE #1: Grade 3 (285 words)

The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein

Have you ever loved someone so much you would give them anything? In The Giving Tree by Shel Silverstein, a tree loves a boy so much that she gives him everything she has. This book teaches us that real love means giving without expecting anything back.

The story is about a tree and a boy who are friends. When the boy is young, he plays in her branches and eats her apples. The tree is very happy. As the boy grows up, he visits less and less. Each time he comes back, he needs something. He asks for money, so the tree gives him her apples to sell. He asks for a house, so she gives him her branches. He asks for a boat, so she gives him her trunk. The tree gives the boy everything until she is just a stump.

At the end, the boy is an old man. He comes back one last time. The tree is sad because she has **nothing** left to give. But the old man just needs a quiet place to sit and rest. The tree is happy because her stump is perfect for sitting.

The tree is the main **character**. She stays loving and generous from beginning to end. Even when she becomes just a stump, she is still happy to help the boy. The tree never stops caring about the boy, even though he only visits when he needs something.

The most important lesson is about unconditional love. The tree keeps giving even when the boy takes everything. She doesn't ask for anything in return. This shows that when you really love someone, you want them to be happy even if it costs you something.

I learned that being a good friend means giving, not just taking. The tree's love never changed, and that made her a true friend.

What Works:

- ✓ Simple thesis about giving without expecting back

- ✓ Clear beginning-middle-end plot summary
- ✓ Basic character description (tree stays loving)
- ✓ One main theme clearly explained
- ✓ Personal reflection at end
- ✓ Age-appropriate vocabulary
- ✓ 285 words (perfect for grade 3-4)

SAMPLE #2: Grade 4 (398 words)

Because of Winn-Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

What would you do if you found a dog in a grocery store? In *Because of Winn-Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo, a lonely girl named Opal finds a stray dog that changes her whole summer. This book shows how opening your heart to new friendships can help you feel less alone.

The story takes place in a small Florida town where ten-year-old Opal has just moved with her father, who is a preacher. Opal doesn't have any friends and misses her mother, who left when she was three. One day at the Winn-Dixie grocery store, Opal finds a big, ugly dog causing trouble. She claims he's hers to save him from the pound and names him Winn-Dixie.

Because of Winn-Dixie, Opal starts making friends. She meets Gloria Dump, an old woman with a "mistake tree" in her yard. She meets Otis, a shy pet store worker who plays music for the animals. She meets Amanda, a girl who seems mean but is actually sad about her brother who died. She even becomes friends with Sweetie Pie Thomas, a little girl, and the Dewberry brothers, who everyone thinks are bullies. Winn-Dixie helps Opal see that everyone has their own sadness, just like she does.

The problem happens when Opal throws a party and a thunderstorm starts. Winn-Dixie is afraid of storms and runs away. Opal is terrified she'll lose him like she lost her mother. But her new friends all help search for him. They find Winn-Dixie hiding under Gloria Dump's bed. Opal realizes that even though she can't get her mother back, she has a whole family of friends who care about her.

Opal changes a lot in the story. At the beginning, she is lonely and angry about her mother leaving. She doesn't talk to people and stays by herself. After meeting Winn-Dixie and making friends, Opal becomes braver and happier. She learns that you can't hold on to people who want to leave, but you can appreciate the people who stay.

The theme is about finding family in unexpected places. Opal's real family is small and sad, but her friend-family is big and loving. The book teaches that family isn't just the people you're related to—it's the people who care about you and help you when you need them.

This book reminds us that being brave enough to make friends can heal a lonely heart.

What Works:

- ✓ Clear thesis about friendship healing loneliness
- ✓ Detailed plot covering main events
- ✓ Character development shown (lonely → happy)
- ✓ Multiple examples of new friendships
- ✓ Theme clearly stated with explanation
- ✓ Thoughtful conclusion
- ✓ 398 words (perfect for grade 4-5)

SAMPLE #3: Grade 5 (476 words)

Holes by Louis Sachar

Can one bad decision change your whole life? In the book *Holes* by Louis Sachar, Stanley Yelnats is sent to a desert camp for a crime he didn't commit. Through Stanley's experiences at Camp Green Lake, Sachar shows that justice, friendship, and doing what's right matter more than following unfair rules.

Stanley comes from a family that believes they're cursed with bad luck. When a pair of stolen shoes falls on his head, Stanley gets arrested even though he's innocent. The judge sends him to Camp Green Lake, a juvenile detention camp in the Texas desert. The camp isn't really a camp—it's a prison where boys dig holes every day in the hot sun. The warden claims they're "building character," but Stanley soon learns she's actually searching for buried treasure.

At camp, Stanley meets Zero, a quiet boy everyone thinks is stupid. Stanley teaches Zero to read, and Zero helps Stanley dig his holes. When Zero runs away and Stanley goes after him, they discover a connection between their families going back over a hundred years. Stanley's great-great-grandfather was robbed by an outlaw named Kissin' Kate Barlow, who buried treasure in the desert. Zero is actually the great-great-great-grandson

of Madame Zeroni, who put a curse on Stanley's family. When Stanley carries Zero up a mountain, he breaks the family curse by finally keeping the promise his ancestor made.

Stanley changes throughout the story. In the beginning, he is weak, has no friends, and accepts bad things happening to him because of the "family curse." At camp, he becomes physically stronger from digging holes. More importantly, he becomes mentally stronger. He stands up for Zero when other boys make fun of him. He risks his own safety to rescue Zero in the desert. By the end, Stanley is brave, loyal, and confident. He doesn't believe in the curse anymore because he took control of his own fate.

The most important theme is that justice eventually wins. The warden and counselors at Camp Green Lake are cruel and unfair. They make boys dig in the desert for their own greed, not to help them. But in the end, the camp gets shut down and the warden goes to jail. Stanley and Zero find the treasure that actually belongs to Stanley's family. The innocent boys go free while the guilty adults get punished. Sachar shows that even when bad people seem to be winning, good people who stick together can make things right.

Another theme is about the power of friendship. Stanley could have stayed safe at camp, but he chose to help Zero even though it was dangerous. Their friendship literally saves both of their lives in the desert. The book proves that real friends don't abandon each other when things get hard.

Holes teaches readers that you can't always control what happens to you, but you can control how you respond. Stanley could have given up and stayed bitter, but instead he found friendship, broke his curse, and created his own good luck.

What Works:

- ✓ Sophisticated thesis about justice and friendship
- ✓ Complex plot explained clearly
- ✓ Character transformation detailed (weak → strong)
- ✓ Two themes explored with evidence
- ✓ Connection between past and present explained
- ✓ Mature analysis appropriate for grade 5
- ✓ 476 words (upper elementary level)

GRADE PROGRESSION GUIDE

Notice the differences:

Element

Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	
Word Count	285	398	476
Plot Detail	Basic summary	More events	Complex plot
Character Analysis	Simple traits	Shows change	Deep transformation
Themes	1 theme	1 main theme	2 themes
Evidence	General	Some specific	Detailed examples
Conclusion	Personal reflection	Thoughtful	Sophisticated

2025 | Use these as models for structure and depth at each grade level

