Maus

Final Project

**Step One**

1. In groups and using your journals, discuss your section of the novel, how it fits in with what goes before in the novel, and what comes after.

2. Discuss how the elements of plot, setting, character, point of view, theme, and symbol are developed in this part of the novel.

3. Choose a title for your section of the novel.

4. Choose words, quotations, and graphics (doodles, drawings, shapes, colors, symbols) to represent your section of the novel. Each student must have equal representation in the project.

5. There must be a graphic for plot, setting, character, point of view, theme, and symbol. You may have multiple for one of these categories; however, each must be represented once.

**Step Two**

1. Your artist(s) will begin sketching. This DOES NOT mean you sit and do nothing.

2. Those not participating in sketching need to discuss how each symbol represents your section of the book. Discuss its significance. Assign each member that isn’t sketching a symbol to explain. Write a paragraph that describes the symbol, why your team selected it and its significance to the overall theme of the novel (so this means you need to have identified themes from the novel!)

**Step Three**

1. When the teacher calls on your group, put your graphic on the wall and

explain your section and how it fits into the development of elements

throughout the novel.

2. Be prepared to answer any questions raised by the class or lead a discussion raised by these questions.

3. Listen carefully to other presentations and be prepared to contribute to discussion of the complete novel.

4. When all groups have presented, raise issues and questions that have arisen during the presentations.

**Step Four**

Maus is a novel that offers a unique view of WWII through the eyes of a Holocaust survivor. In his award-winning graphic novel, Art Spiegelman uses animals to represent the peoples that experienced the war. While the story is simple, the themes present are complex. Write a well-developed essay that is two pages in length, typed, double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font, with margins set at 1” all the way around.

1. What are stereotypes? How does Spiegelman use stereotypes in Maus? Explain his use of cats, mice, pigs, etc. Infer the artist’s attitudes and the reasons for his choices. What effect(s) do these choices have on the understanding and impact of the story?
2. How does the author portray Anja as a young woman, and later as a depressed and suicidal older one? How are your earlier perceptions of her altered by the comic-within-a-comic “Prisoner on the Hell Planet”? If Anja had written a suicide note, what might it have said?
3. We see Art carrying a satchel at various points in the book. What does it mean to be carrying around baggage? Describe the baggage that Artie seems to be carrying. What attempts does he seem to make to release it?
4. The situation of Polish Jews worsens steadily and dramatically throughout Maus, a deterioration that is aptly summed up by the chapter heading “The Noose Tightens.” Chart the progress of this escalation, citing specific incidents in the book. What happens to Spiegelman’s mice as they are forced deeper into “mouse holes”? In what way do they become more “mouse-like”? How might they have responded differently if the Germans had begun their program of mass extermination from the start?
5. Most art and literature about the Holocaust is governed by certain unspoken rules. Among these are the notions that the Holocaust must be portrayed as an utterly unique event; that it must be depicted with scrupulous accuracy, and with the utmost seriousness, so as not to obscure its enormity or dishonor its dead. In what way does Maus obey, violate, or disprove these “rules”?