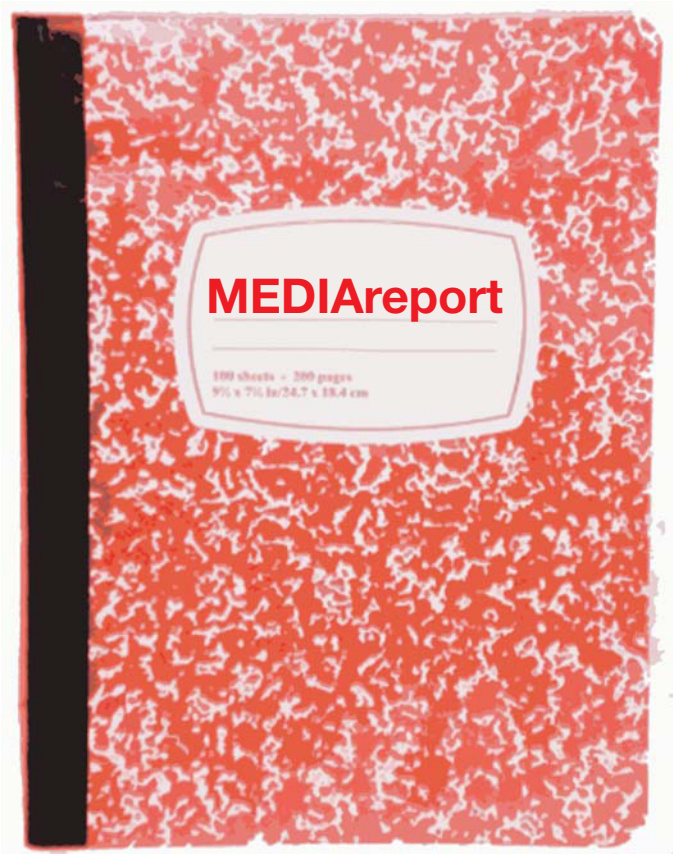


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USER GUIDE



MEDIAreport is an event where people gather to discuss, dissect and critique any form of media. This can include books, movies, television, magazines, newspapers or electronic media. Discussions can be focussed on a specific area of culture, based on a theme, initiated by individual presentations or directed toward the production of an electronic or print publication. Media in all forms is created at faster rate than any one person can consume, much less understand or digest. MEDIAreport provides a way for a group of people to focus their collective attention on media that is relevant to their pursuits and interests. By sharing and exchanging information and opinions, a group has the potential to surpass the investigations of a lone researcher.

WHAT IS MEDIAreport?

The purpose of this user guide is to explain the steps necessary to facilitate and host MEDIAreport. Through a loose set of instructions and anecdotal commentary, we intend that users in diverse locations with varied resources be able to organize and execute this event (or series of events). Though this guide attempts to provide a logical framework for realizing MEDIAreport, the components and ideas presented can be expanded and modified to fit individual user needs.

Document your MEDIAreport meetings through video, photographs or any other means. Share your experiences with others through a group web log or newsletter.

Media discussion groups benefits from repetition. As with a book club or reading group, regular meetings provide an opportunity for conversations and relationships to develop over time. Depending on the group's level of interest and availability, you may wish to meet once a week or once a month. Create a schedule. Online calendar systems are a great way to coordinate regular meetings. Otherwise, pick a time and place that is consistent so that it can become part of everyone's routine.

Once you've secured a space and supplies, you'll need to promote the event. This could be as simple as calling or emailing some friends and family. Social networking sites can be an effective means of publicizing events. If you are a bit more daring (and your venue has the capacity) put up flyers in your neighborhood or at work. Popular culture can easily create connections between strangers.

Find a space for people to gather. This could be someone's apartment, a public building or a city park. Depending on the group's interests, you may only need seating. If someone is giving a presentation you may need to obtain a television, stereo, computer or projector. It's also nice to provide refreshments. Once a regular group of participants has been established, hosting duties can be shared (so that one person's hospitality is not exhausted).

HOW TO ORGANIZE MEDIAreport

PURPOSE

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR ACTIVITIES

MEDIAreport is in part based on elementary school book report assignments. Try out some of the activities listed below as a way to foster production and discussion. One interesting method is to have everyone present on different media using the same assignment. Or each person could apply a different assignment to the same media. You can apply these assignments to any form of media. Document and compile your activities in a zine (short run, hand-made, photocopied magazine) or blog (electronic journal, i.e. blogger.com).

- Create life-sized models of two of your favorite characters. Crouch down behind your character and describe yourself as the character.
- Create a sculpture of a character. Use any combination of soap, wood, clay, sticks, wire, stones, old toy pieces, or any other object.
- Construct a diorama (three-dimensional scene which includes models of people, buildings, plants, and animals) of one of the main events of the book.
- Design costumes for dolls and dress them as characters from the book.
- Make a board game using problems from the book as ways to get ahead or go back.
- Make a gravestone for one of the characters.
- Make a scale model of an important object or objects.
- Make a mobile showing pictures or symbols of happenings in the book.
- Make a television box show. Cut a square from the bottom of a box to serve as a TV screen. Slide a butcher roll on which you have drawn the scenes through the two side slits that you cut in opposite sides of the box. Also make an audio track.
- Write a diary that one of the story's main characters might have kept before, during, or after the book's events.
- Interview a character from your book. Write at least ten questions that will give the character the opportunity to discuss his/her thoughts and feelings about his/her role in the story. Consider presenting the interview in the form of a news report or article.
- Compare and contrast two characters in the story.
- Make a map of one or more characters' traits and evolution through the story.
- Choose a character's quote--would it be a good motto by which to live your life?
- Make a life-sized stand-up character of one of the people in the book. Write about the character's traits in different body parts.
- Write an obituary for one of the characters.
- Make an ID card which belongs to one of the characters. Include a picture, signature and all information found on and ID card.
- Find the top 10 web sites a character in your book would most frequently visit. Include 2-3 sentences for each on why your character likes each of the sites. You could do this in the form of a del.icio.us links page
- Create a facebook.com, myspace.com or flickr.com profile for a character in the book.
- Select one character from the book you read who has the qualities of a heroine or hero. List these qualities and tell why you think they are heroic.
- Plan a party for the characters in the book you read. Consider what kind of party this might be--birthday, housewarming, anniversary, etc. What will the invitations look like? What kind of food will you serve?
- Obtain a job application from an employer in your area for a job that a character in your book might be interested in. Fill out the application and write a resume for this position on behalf of the character.
- Prepare a case against one of the characters in your book as if you were either the prosecuting or defense lawyer in a trial for a misdeed committed in the book.
- Match common proverbs or famous inspirational quotes to characters in the book. What suggestions should they or did they follow?
- Make a paper doll likeness of one of the characters in the book you read. Design at least three costumes that this character may have worn during events in the novel.
- Pick a national issue. Compose a speech to be given on that topic by one of the major characters in the book you read.
- Read the classifieds. Find something a character in your book was looking for.
- You must give up your favorite pet (whom you love very much) to one of the characters in the book. Which character would you choose? Why?
- If you had the chance to spend time with one of the main characters--what would you do? What would you talk about?
- Write an ad for a dating service for one of the characters.
- Nominate one of the characters for an office in local, state or national government. What are the qualities that would make them be good for that office?
- Make up a lost or found ad or poster for a person or object in the story.
- Write a letter to a movie producer trying to get that person interested in making your book into a movie. Explain why the story, characters, conflicts, etc., would make a good film. Suggest a filming location and the actors to play the various roles. If you had to cast the movie with family and friends who would you pick?
- Write a book review as it would be done for a newspaper or website.
- Make a poster advertising your book to convince a new audience to want to read it.
- Create a radio ad for your book. Write out the script and tape record it as it would be presented. Don't forget background music!
- Design an advertising campaign to promote the sale of the book you read. Include each of the following: a poster, a radio or TV commercial, a magazine or newspaper ad, a bumper sticker, and a button.
- Make sketches of scenes in the book and write a caption for them.
- Retell the story from a different point of view, for a different audience (young children for instance) in a new setting, with a different beginning or end, with a new scene, if a conflict had been resolved differently or if another character was added.
- Prepare a travel brochure or a tour that you would give, for the town, city, or country that your book took place. - Write about one of the character's life twenty years from now.
- You are going to join the characters in the story. What things will you need to pack?
- Write the plot for a sequel to this book.
- What other story could have taken place at this same time and setting? Write about the plot and characters in this new book.
- Think of a new adventure for the main character.

- Find a song or a poem that relates to your book. Explain the similarities.
- Construct puppets and present a show of one or more interesting parts of the book.
- Write and perform an original song that tells the story of the book.
- Be a TV or radio reporter, and give a report of a scene from the book.
- Give a pantomime of an important part of the story. Have the audience guess what you are acting out.
- Tell a story with a musical accompaniment.
- Broadcast a book review at an institution with a PA system or via megaphone.
- Present your book dressed either as the author or one of the characters.
- Create a television talk show about the book that can be performed or prerecorded.
- Write a tabloid-style news story related to your book.
- Write the copy for a newspaper that is devoted entirely to the book you read. You could create articles, headlines, comics, weather pages, editorials, ads or other newspaper sections that go along with the book.
- Write a letter to the main character of your book asking questions, protesting a situation, and/or making a complaint and/or a suggestion. Then write the letter he or she sends back.
- Write a letter or postcard (with image) from one character to another character.
- Write a letter to a friend about the book you read.
- Write a letter to the author of your novel.
- Make up a lost or found ad for a person or object in the story.
- Gather a collection of objects described in the book.
- Compare this book with another you have read on a similar subject.
- Make a collage that represents major characters and events in the book you read. Use pictures and words cut from magazines in your collage.
- Make a bookmark available for others to use as they read the same book.
- Make a scrapbook that one of the characters in your book may have made.
- Make a banner or bulletin board about your book.
- Make a new book jacket for your book. You could include a summary and quotes from critics that liked the books. Consider making the jacket wearable.
- Write the title of your book. Decide on some simple word--picture--letter combinations that will spell out the title "rebus style." Present it to the class to solve
- Design a symbol for a novel or a certain character.
- Draw or paint pictures of the main characters.
- Create a mini-comic book relating a chapter of the book or the whole book.
- Draw a comic strip of your favorite scene or scenes.
- Write Graffiti about the book on a fake or real wall.
- Draw a picture of the setting of the climax.
- Write a one-sentence summary of each chapter and illustrate the sentence.
- Paint a mural of the story or parts of it.
- Write a reflection on your book using one of these prompts: This book made me realize that, wonder about, decide that...
- Write about the pros and cons of your book
- Decide on an alternate title for the book. Why is it appropriate?
- Make a dictionary of words and definitions important to the story.
- Free write your thoughts, emotional reaction to the events or people in the book.
- If the book you read involves a number of locations within a country or geographical area, plot the events of the story on a map. Attach a legend to your map.
- Make a time line of the major events in your book. Be sure the divisions on the time line reflect the time period in the plot. Use drawings or magazine cutouts to illustrate events along the time line.
- Make a flow chart of all the events in the book.
- Show the events as a cycle.
- Make a Venn diagram of the people, events or settings in your story, the ways you are like and unlike one of the characters, or your location compared to the setting.
- Choose a character from your book. Decide on a gift for him or her. You could also design a greeting card to go along with your gift.
- In *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden Caulfield describes a good book as one that "when you're done reading it, you wish the author that wrote it was a terrific friend of yours and you could call him up on the phone whenever you felt like it." Write out an imaginary telephone conversation between you and the author (your terrific friend).
- Research and give a brief biography of the author.
- Make a test for the book you read. You could include true-false, multiple choice, and/or short essay questions.
- Gather a large collection of current events that parallel incidents in your novel.
- Do a science experiment associated with the reading.
- Make a list of new and unusual words and expressions.
- Make a crossword puzzle using ideas from a book.
- Choose any topic from your book and write a research report on it.
- Make a display of the time period of your book.
- Research and write a report on the geographical setting of your story. Include an explanation as to why this setting was important to the effect of the story.

