

# Week of April 6-10, 2020

## Mrs. Swigart

Hello! I hope everyone is doing well. You conquered the 1st week! Congratulations! My “office hours” are Monday 1-3, Tuesday 11-1, and Thursday 3-5. Of course, you can always email me and I will try to get back to you as soon as I can. Please feel free to email me any questions you may have. As far as turning in work goes, you can either share a doc with me, or turn it into the school. Hard copies are at the school so you don’t need to print anything. Loose leaf paper works for me as well for turning in assignments. I do ask that your name is written, with the date, class period, and the choice number. You got this! - Mrs. Swigart

Class	Choice 1	Choice 2	Choice 3 (Enrichment)
6th Grade Literature	<p>Read the article “The Bling King” and answer the questions from “Know the News” and “Direction and Distance.”</p> <p>Then, write <b>at least</b> one paragraph (6-8 sent.) that answers the question, “What would you do if you had Mansa Musa’s wealth?”</p>	<p>Read a book of your choosing for 30 minutes. Then pick one prompt from the Independent Reading Journal Prompts Options.</p> <p>Your explanations should be at least a paragraph long (6-8 sentences). If you choose a project, please use complete sentences.</p>	<p>Write your own story about finding lost treasure. Make sure setting, conflict, character development, introduction, rising action, climax, falling action, and resolution are evident and clear. (There should be at least a couple of pages.)</p>

LIVING HISTORY Ancient Civilizations



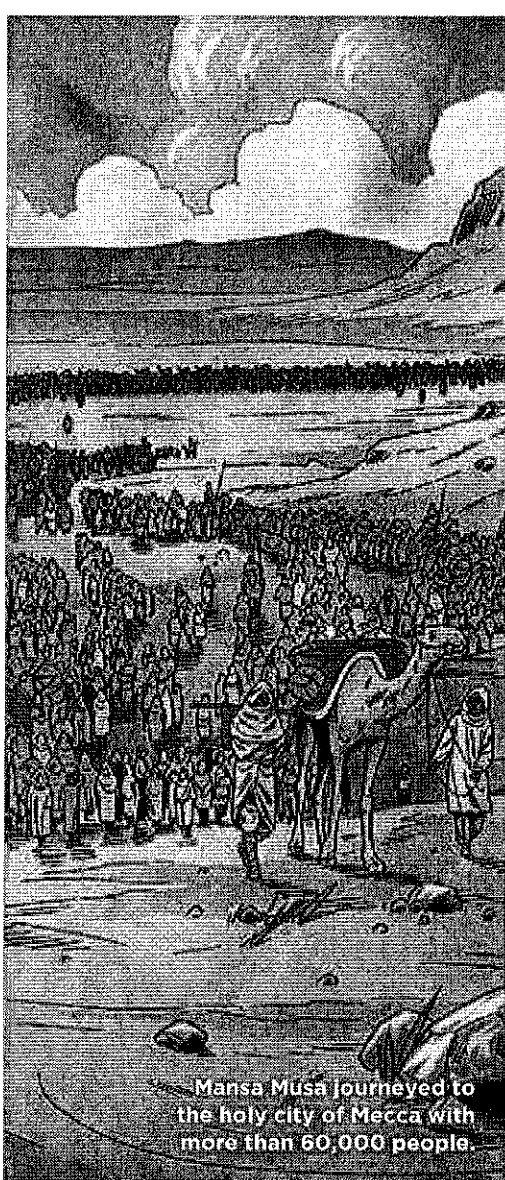
# THE BLING KING

How **Mansa Musa**, an early African emperor, turned his stash of gold into one of the world's biggest empires BY LAURA ANASTASIA

**R**IHANNA reportedly spends \$1 million a year on her hair. Boxer Floyd Mayweather recently dropped \$18 million on a diamond-encrusted watch. And Amazon

founder Jeff Bezos bought a \$65 million private jet. But that would not have been a lot of money for African emperor Mansa Musa (*MAHN-sah MOO-sah*). The 14th-century ruler still tops the list

as the richest person of all time. Musa was *mansa*, or king, of the West African empire of Mali. He ruled from 1312 to 1337. He controlled about 80 percent of the world's gold. His **net worth** would



Mansa Musa journeyed to the holy city of Mecca with more than 60,000 people.

## Q How did Musa get so rich?

**A** He was in the right place at the right time, for starters. Mali had an ideal location on the upper Niger River in West Africa. The fertile soil produced a lot of crops. The area was full of natural resources, including salt and gold.

Salt was a highly prized product in the ancient world. It could be used to preserve meat and other foods. That was especially important because refrigerators were not invented for another 500-plus years. Mali had easy access to the Sahara Desert's huge salt deposits.

As for gold, "the upper reaches of the Niger River produced more gold in the 14th century than anywhere else," says Richard Smith. Smith is an expert on ancient Mali at Ferrum College in Virginia. (Gold was still relatively rare back then. That made the metal even more valuable.)

Musa built on that wealth by conquering Timbuktu and other major cities along trade routes in the Sahara. The conquests helped Musa in more than one way. For one thing, merchants paid him taxes. For another, conquered kings gave him gifts of gold and other valuables.

## Q How important was the Mali Empire really?

**A** Pretty important. Mali became West Africa's most powerful state back in the 1200s. It was under the leadership of Sundiata. That was the empire's first great mansa.

But a century later, Musa took the empire to the next level. He did this by seizing control of gold-producing regions and **monopolizing** important trade routes. He also reconquered areas of the kingdom that had broken away.

By the time Musa's reign ended, the Mali Empire spanned about 1,200 miles of West Africa. It covered all or part of what are now nine modern-day countries (*see map, p. 21*). Musa once bragged that it would take a year for a person to travel from one end of his empire to the other.

Musa ruled over 40 million people in his kingdom. He managed to keep peace during his 25-year reign. He devoted large amounts of time and money to building schools and mosques (buildings where Muslims worship). These benefited his many citizens. He was also known for his generosity. He handed out millions of dollars' worth of gold.

Those habits were likely the secret to his great success, says David Tschanz. Tschanz wrote a book about the emperor.

"If you have a good economy and everybody's happy, nobody gets upset with you," he says.

## Q That sounds like a lot of work. Did Musa ever take time off?

**A** As a matter of fact, he took the vacation of the century in 1324. It was such an extravagant trip that it wowed people throughout Europe and the Middle East.

Musa's journey was a 4,000-mile hajj. That is the Muslim **pilgrimage** to the holy city of Mecca. In true centibillionaire fashion, he did not go it alone. He traveled with a serious squad of more than 60,000 people. That included 12,000 servants. (Of course, the king himself led the way on a blinged-out black stallion.) Musa's caravan stretched as far as the eye could see.

Also along for the ride was a mind-boggling amount of →

have topped \$400 billion in today's dollars.

But Musa's claim to fame went far beyond money. The emperor was a skilled leader. He turned Mali into one of the largest empires in African history.

Musa was nicknamed the "Lion of Mali." Original accounts about him and his reign still exist. So why is he not well-known today?

Mainly because he lived hundreds of years ago. Many world history classes do not discuss events that happened before 1450, especially those in Africa.

Here is everything you need to know about the mighty emperor and the secrets of his success.

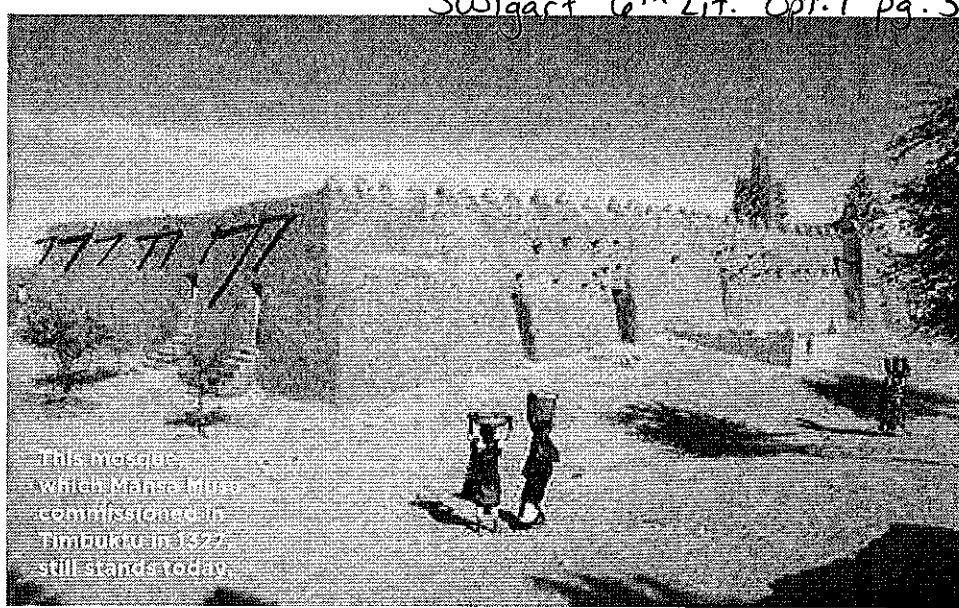
## LIVING HISTORY

gold. About 80 camels carried about 300 pounds of gold each. Musa's slaves carried another 24 tons of the precious metal.

"It was more money than anybody had ever seen anybody ever bring with them," Tschanz says.

Musa and his followers crossed the Sahara Desert. They stopped for a few months in Cairo, Egypt. Along the trip, Musa spent—and handed out—a lot of gold. Tales of his incredible wealth and charity quickly spread to North Africa, Europe, and the Arab world. The stories were passed along by traders and travelers he met during his journey.

He had good reason to show off his fortune. "The lavish display of wealth was designed to advertise his kingdom as a trade destination, and to a large extent, it worked," Smith says. After Musa's hajj, he and his empire were included in the 1375



This mosque, which Mansa Musa commissioned in Timbuktu in 1325, still stands today.

Catalan Atlas. That map of the world was important in medieval Europe.

### Q How did Musa's religion affect his rule?

**A**s shown by his hajj, Musa took his Islamic faith very seriously. Fridays are holy days for Muslims. Every Friday during his hajj, Musa reportedly ordered that a mosque be built wherever he happened to be.

After the trip, he devoted himself

to turning Timbuktu into a center for Muslim learning and culture. He brought Islamic architects and artists to the city. He also built a major college, Sankore University. It had a library collection that made the European libraries seem small. (Invaders destroyed the school a few centuries later.)

Musa wanted his people to learn to read and write Arabic. He wanted them to understand the Koran, which is the Muslim holy book. So he oversaw the building of schools and mosques to promote the study of Islam. One of Musa's mud-brick-and-wood structures is the Djinguereber Mosque. It could hold 2,000 people. It still stands in Timbuktu today.

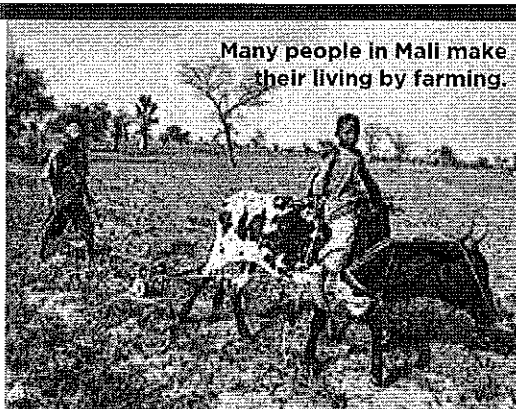
### Q Did Musa spend all of his money on building stuff?

**A**He did build an awful lot. But construction was not Musa's only expense. During his pilgrimage, for example, he spent a lot of time shopping at Cairo's world-famous markets. He also handed out gold to Egypt's poor and sick people, and to just about everyone else he encountered. Historians estimate that the gold he gave away during his hajj alone would be worth more than \$100 million today.

## Mali Today

Islam is still the dominant religion in Mali, but that may be the only aspect Mansa Musa would recognize about the country today. The peace Mali enjoyed under Musa is a thing of the past. For a few centuries, other empires ruled Mali. Then France seized control of the area in 1898. (European countries colonized much of Africa around that time.) Mali gained its independence in 1960 but has since suffered droughts, rebellions, and a military dictatorship.

As for all those riches, the area's gold deposits were mostly used up before the 19th century. Today, about half of Mali's 18.9 million people live in poverty, and only about one-third can read. In recent years, Mali has become a breeding ground for terrorism. Al Qaeda and ISIS (the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) remain active in Mali, and the country is plagued by violence and political instability.



Many people in Mali make their living by farming.

Musa reportedly pumped so much gold into Cairo's economy that the precious metal *decreased* in value. It took more than 12 years for gold's value to bounce back. "It was the only time in history that one man controlled the world's gold market," says Tschanz.

### Q How does Musa stack up to today's wealthiest people?

**A** It is not even a contest. Amazon founder Jeff Bezos is currently the world's richest person. He has a net worth of about \$112 billion. Musa's net worth was more than three times that much. It was an amount most people cannot comprehend.

"Imagine as much gold as you think a human being could possess and double it," Rudolph Ware told *Time*. Ware is a history professor at the University of Michigan. "This is the richest guy anyone has ever seen."

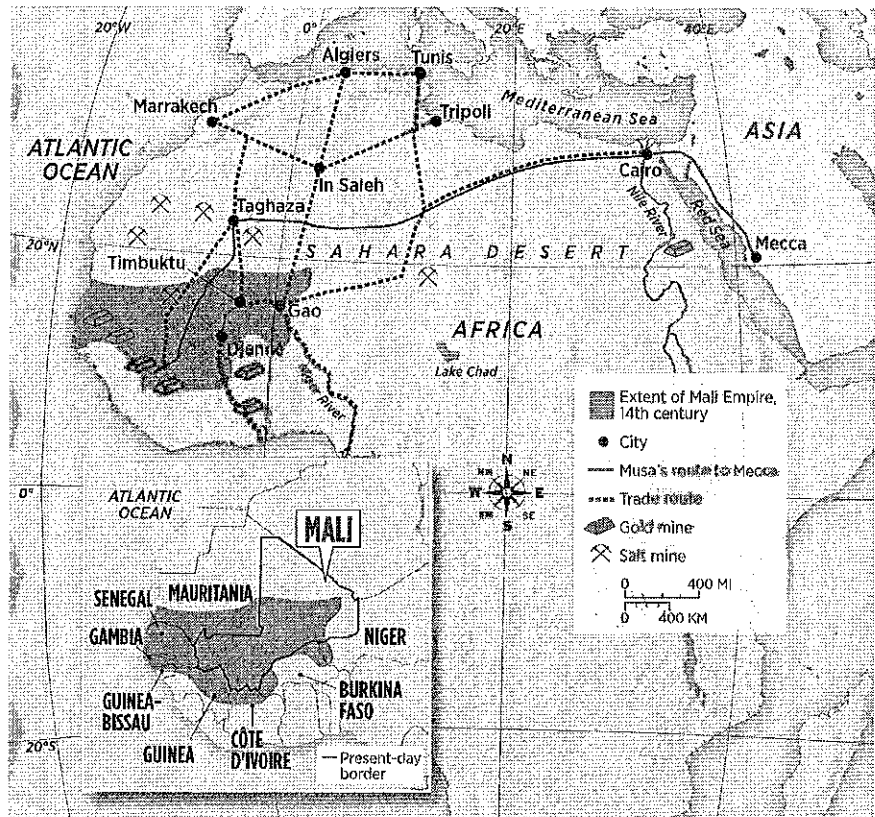
### Q What happened to Musa's empire after he died?

**A** Musa died in 1337. He was somewhere around age 55. His empire lived on for only 100 or so more years. That is partly because Musa's successors did not share his talent for leadership. Outsiders conquered Gao around 1365. Gao was one of the kingdom's most important trading hubs. The rest of the empire started crumbling in the 1400s. Timbuktu fell to invaders. By 1500, almost all of Musa's kingdom had disappeared. So had his gold and riches. ♦

**WRITE ABOUT IT!**  
How might learning about Mansa Musa and other ancient rulers affect people's perceptions of Africa?

## Musa's World

The Mali Empire's wealth relied on access to prized gold and salt resources—and a network of routes for trading them.



### DIRECTION

Find the compass rose on the map. It shows the cardinal directions: north, east, south, and west. Halfway between any two of them are the intermediate directions: northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest.

### DISTANCE

Every map has its own scale that compares distance on the map with the actual distance on Earth's surface. You can measure distance by placing the edge of a piece of paper along two points on a map. Mark the center of each point on the paper. Then compare those points with the map's scale of miles or kilometers.

## Map Skills

1. What do we use to find direction on a map?
2. What are the cardinal directions?
3. Which trade-route city was directly east of Timbuktu?
4. The Mali Empire's western area was rich in which resource?
5. What kind of mines lay west of the city of Taghaza?
6. Mansa Musa's hajj to Mecca began near which river?
7. Which general direction did his hajj take to Taghaza?
8. What is used to measure distance on a map?
9. About how many straight-line miles separate Cairo and Mecca?
10. Once Musa crossed from Africa into Asia, most of his route to Mecca was in which general direction?

**Reading a Map**

**KEY STANDARD**  
**RH.6-8.7**

## Direction and Distance

On p. 21 of "The Bling King," you learned how to figure out direction and distance on a map. Knowing how to determine direction and distance helps us answer important questions, including: Where is this place in relation to that place, and how far apart are they? Use this map of the United States and its capital cities to gauge direction and distance. Then answer the questions on a separate sheet of paper.



Alaska and Hawaii are not drawn to scale or placed in their proper geographic positions.

JIM MCMAHON/MAPMAN® (MAP)

### Questions

- Which states border Montana to the south?
- Which border it to the east?
- In which direction would you travel to get from Charleston, West Virginia, to Lansing, Michigan?
- What is the straight-line distance in miles between those two cities?
- In which direction would you travel to get from the capital of New Mexico to the capital of Texas?
- The straight-line distance between those two cities is about how many miles?
- What is that distance in kilometers?
- Which two capital cities are about 300 miles southwest of Nashville, Tennessee?
- If you were to fly from Virginia's capital to New York's, then from there to the capital of Wisconsin, in which directions would you travel?
- What is the approximate distance in straight-line miles for each leg of that trip?

**Write About It!** We can use this map's compass rose and scale for the 48 contiguous (connected) states but not for Alaska and Hawaii. Why not? Why are those two states pictured off to the side and in separate boxes?

**Test Prep**

## Know the News: The Bling King

Read the article on pp. 18-21, then answer the questions.

- Which is a central idea of the article?
  - Mansa Musa was an extremely wealthy African emperor who built a major empire.
  - Musa had more money than Rihanna.
  - Musa's hajj, or pilgrimage, brought Mali fame.
  - Musa had a lot of gold and salt.
- Which statement best supports that central idea?
  - "[Musa was] nicknamed the 'Lion of Mali.'"
  - "After Musa's hajj, he and his empire were included in the 1375 Catalan Atlas, a map of the world that was important in medieval Europe."
  - "The emperor was a skilled leader who transformed Mali into one of the largest empires in African history."
  - "By 1500, almost all of Musa's kingdom, along with his gold and riches, had disappeared."
- Which is one reason the author calls Musa a "skilled leader"?
  - Musa conquered major cities along trade routes.
  - Musa's empire was rich in natural resources.
  - Musa had thousands of servants at his disposal.
  - Musa decreased the value of gold in Cairo, Egypt.
- What does *teemed* mean in this sentence? "The fertile soil produced abundant crops and the area teemed with natural resources, including salt and gold."
 

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>drove away</li> <li>lacked</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>had a lot of</li> <li>sold</li> </ol>
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- How did Musa promote Islam within his empire?
  - He oversaw the construction of schools and mosques in his cities so people could learn to read the Muslim holy book.
  - He made sure Mali's economy stayed strong, which meant people had more free time to spend in prayer.
  - He gave away more than \$100-million worth of gold during his pilgrimage.
  - He conquered major cities including Timbuktu.
- What conclusion can you draw about the importance of Gao after reading "What happened to Musa's empire after he died?" on p. 21?
  - Musa's successors cared more about Gao than about Timbuktu.
  - Keeping control of Gao was key to maintaining the Mali Empire.
  - Gao was no longer an important trading hub after 1365.
  - After Musa's death, Gao and Timbuktu fell to the same invaders.
- Which of these statements is a fact?
  - History classes should cover Musa's empire.
  - Musa remains the richest person of all time.
  - Today's billionaires should be more generous.
  - Musa should have spent less money in Egypt.
- In what way is Mali today similar to the Mali Empire in the 14th century?
  - About half the people live in poverty.
  - It has large gold deposits.
  - Islam is the dominant religion.
  - It is plagued by violence.
- What is the main purpose of the map on p. 21?
  - to show that Musa's empire was located in West Africa
  - to illustrate why salt was so valuable in the 14th century
  - to highlight the location of Algiers and Tunis
  - to show the Mali Empire's size and access to important trading routes
- Why might the editor have chosen this headline for the article?
  - to highlight one of Musa's nicknames
  - to illustrate Musa's interest in diamonds and gold
  - to emphasize that Musa enjoyed listening to hip-hop music
  - to grab readers' attention and engage them in the story right away

## Independent Reading Journal Prompts page 1

Following is a list of journal prompts. Use whatever helps you to arrive at good, interesting reflections. Remember, your journal entries should be your reflections, connecting your novel to universal ideas, current events, history, yourself, etc. Also, pay attention to the writer's craft. Have fun!

Please label your journal entry.

- Describe the problem/conflict of this book.
- Summarize the main events in this book so far.
- Who is your favorite or least favorite character? Why?
- Do any of the characters remind you of yourself, a family member, or a friend? How?
- Are there situations in the story where you would have acted differently than one of the characters? Describe what you would have done.
- Compare and contrast two characters. Include at least three important similarities and three important differences.
- Describe the setting (time and place). Does it remind you of anywhere you are familiar with?
- Describe the climax (the turning point of the story when the action reaches a critical point).
- What do you like best about the story? The least? Why?
- Does this story remind you of other books you have read, movies you have seen, or experiences you have had? Describe the similarities.
- Write a letter to a friend recommending this book.
- If you could ask the author one question, what would it be? Why do you want to know this?
- Why do you think the author wrote this selection?
- What did the author do in order to "hook" the reader? Explain.
- What "pictures" does the author create in your mind? Draw and describe them.
- Have you learned anything interesting that you didn't know before reading this selection? Explain.
- Are the characters believable? Why or why not?
- Write a letter to one of the characters giving him/her advice on how to handle a problem or situation he/she is facing. Be sure to include a greeting and a closing.
- If you could spend one day with a character, who would it be and what would you do? Explain why you chose these activities for this particular character.
- How has the main character changed over the course of the story? What do you think is the cause of the change?
- What was the best part of this book? Explain.
- Are there any parts you would change? Explain.
- How did you feel while reading this book? Why did you feel this way?
- Pretend you are a character in the story. Write a diary entry as the character, explaining what has happened to you and how you feel about it.
- Using the text, illustrate a descriptive passage, a key scene, or a character (this should take some time and effort . . . no stick figures!). Describe the picture.
- Create a timeline of important events in the story. Give corresponding page numbers by each event.
- What are two attributes that describe a particular character? Give at least two examples for each attribute that support your opinion.
- Prepare an interview with your favorite character in the book. Prepare at least 10 questions to ask the character. Write the character's answers to the questions.
- Cast the film version of the book. Decide which real life actors and actresses should play the parts of the main characters. Include photos and descriptions of the stars you've selected and an explanation of why each is "perfect" for the part.



- Turn the book or a portion of it into a comic book with comic-style illustrations and dialogue bubbles.
- Create a poem that a character in the book would write. The poem may focus on a situation in the book or describe how the character feels about what is happening.
- Write a postscript or a continuation to the story, explaining future occurrences in the characters' lives.
- Write a letter from one character to another.
- Design a travel brochure focusing on the setting of the book. Include a map with explanatory notes of significant places. Describe the type of activities that tourists might find there.
- Create the front page of a newspaper based on the events in the book.
- Develop a fact sheet about the book, listing 10 facts that you learned from reading it. The facts must be written in complete sentences and include details you didn't know before reading the book.
- Design a book jacket for the book. Include an original book blurb and information about the author on the jacket along with your review comments. The jacket should "sell" the book to other readers.
- Make a list of 10 or 15 rules by which the main character in the book lives. Tell how these rules compare to the rules you live by. Tell how the character's life would have been different if you had been living it.
- Pretend that you are a fortune-teller and predict what each of the main characters will be doing in their lives ten years after the story ends. Explain your prediction for each character.
- Write a letter of recommendation for one of the main characters in the book. It can be a letter of recommendation for a job or for college admission. Discuss the good and bad points of the character and why you are recommending that character for the job or school.

(taken from Mr. Crumb and L. Cornwell)

I liked the way that the writer...

I didn't like...because...

This novel makes me realize...

The most important thing about this novel is...

If I were (name of character), I would (wouldn't) have

What happened in the novel was very realistic (unrealistic) because...

I agree (disagree) with the writer about ...

I think the title is a good (strange/misleading) choice because....

A better title for this book would be...because....

In my opinion, the most important word (sentence/paragraph) in this novel is...because...

If I could talk to (name of character), I would say...

The novel is similar to (different from) other novels I have read because...

The novel is similar to (different from) other novels by this writer because ...