

Handout 9.1. *The Fifth Child* Discussion Board Contract

Discussion Board Guidelines

Your participation on *The Fifth Child* discussion board is worth 50 points. I am hopeful that you will invest yourself fully in the discussion of this fascinating and peculiar text. You have a full week to read the book and post, but if you dawdle, your classmates may have already moved on and you'll end up talking to yourself. The discussion board will be active from _____ through _____.

READING: You will be reading the book outside of class, and you are invited to post every time you've read another twenty-five pages. Prior students have told me this book is hard to put down and that they enjoy rereading sections of it as the discussion board develops over the course of the week. You can (and probably should) start posting before you finish the whole book.

POSTING: As they say of Chicago voting, post "early and often"! There's a lot to talk about here, but if you wait too long, you will end up either recycling what's already been said or having no one to talk to.

RESPONDING: The board will be organized by "opening questions," a new question for each twenty-five pages that you read. At least at first, I will ask you to respond to these opening questions, but once you've finished the book and engaged with the original prompts, you will have earned the right to ask your own questions and begin new threads for further consideration. As you post, I ask that you reply to the particular thread, adding tags/specifiers at the end of the subject heading. This keeps the discussion organized and the conversation coherent.

SAVING: Sometimes the server times out and you lose your post, sometimes your Internet connection gets the hiccups, and sometimes gremlins gum up the works, so I strongly recommend writing and saving your responses in a word-processing document and then pasting them in to your posts. Do not "attach" your posts—we can't read them!

THE AUP: Remember: all posts are governed by the school's Acceptable Use Policy.

GRADING:

To Be Eligible for a "C": Read the book; engage in adequate, textually based conversation with other posters to the board; and post a minimum of five times (on at least three separate days) before _____ at 11:59 p.m. Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee you a C. Editing, insight, detail, and timing also factor into your grade.

To Be Eligible for a "B": Read the book; engage in responsive, textually based conversation with other posters to the board; and post a minimum of seven times (on at least four separate days) before _____ at 11:59 p.m. Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee you a B. Editing, insight, detail, and timing also factor into your grade.

To Be Eligible for an "A": Read the book; engage in insightful, responsive, textually based conversation with other posters to the board; and post a minimum of ten times (on at least five separate days) before _____ at 11:59 p.m. Meeting the minimum requirements does not guarantee you an A. Editing, insight, detail, and timing also factor into your grade.

The hallmarks of careful writing—like correct spelling, grammar, and editing—are EXPECTED. All quotes should be cited parenthetically, as should all information drawing on outside sources (hyperlinks accepted). Try to post early and revisit each topic later in the week.