**Major Works Data Sheet (MWDS)**

The MWDS sheet is used in AP and advanced English courses throughout the nation, and while different schools may make minor modifications, the form includes the information most essential to a thorough analysis and understanding of the novel.  You will complete quite a few MWD sheets during your time in this class--so it's well worth learning how to fill out the sheets correctly!  Remember, Cliffs Notes are *not your friend*.  It's no different than copying a friend's homework--if you don't do the work and learn the material on your own, you'll fail the test every time.  It's fine to use Cliffs Notes as a resource, but you need to do the legwork to complete the MWDS on your own.  Let's take a look at the MWDS, page by page.

**Page One:  Plot Summary, Overview, & Background**

* The title and author are located easily enough.  Be sure that you put the *original* date of publication.  The copy in your hands may have been printed in 2002, but that doesn't mean the book was *published* in 2002!!!  Genre may be more difficult for some of you if you've not had an advanced English class in the past.
* Historical Information - Please understand that this does not require a one-sentence answer ("This book is set during World War II.")  Is there historical significance?  This section exists to help provide context for the novel so you more fully understand the work.  For example, in *Summer of My German Soldier*, a novel by Bette Greene, the main character lives in the United States during World War II.  The plot centers around the character's interaction with a prisoner from a US internment camp.  Therefore, it's historically significant that the US had internment camps, and that you know some background on these camps.  Who was imprisoned?  Why?  What were the conditions of their internment?  To demonstrate the point further, did you know that over 120,000 Japanese Americans were imprisoned in America during the war?  We all know about the German prison camps, but very few people are aware that we did something similar here in the US!  Reading the novel with this knowledge can change your perception.
* Biographical Information - Again, only include information that's significant.  This is not a place to list the author's date of birth and/or date of death and nothing else.  What you're looking for is an explanation of why *this author* wrote *this book*.  Did the author grow up in a town similar to the novel's setting?  Do they share traits with a character?
* Characteristics of the genre - First, be sure that you understand the meaning of genre.  You should also be aware that a novel may fit into more than one genre.  Provide a definition of the genre(s).  Knowing the characteristics helps you determine whether or not the novel is a good example of the genre.
* Plot summary - Please don't assume your teacher is a fool.  We know about Cliffs Notes, Barron's, Spark Notes, and so on.  Write a plot summary *in your own words*.  A plot summary doesn't have to be flowery or full of "dollar words."  The goal is to help condense the novel to its salient points, allowing you to review easily in the spring.

**Page Two:  Style and Quotes**

* Style Description - *Step away from the Cliffs Notes*.  Provide a description of the author's style *in your own words*.  This is important--style is subjective.  Different people may see different things!  A few things to look for include word choice, sentence structure, formal vs. informal writing, use of literary devices...you get the point.
* Examples - For each of the style traits (you should have named 3 or more), you should provide a *specific example* from the book, **with page numbers**.
* Memorable Quotes - Again, put the Cliffs Notes down.  Choose your own significant quotes.  This is not a place to list quotes that you thought were funny or entertaining.  You're looking for quotes that demonstrate something about the work.  *Why* would a particular quote be significant?  Perhaps it illustrates symbolism or helps demonstrate the theme of the work.  Plot points do not count as significant quotes!!!

**Page Three:  Characters**

This section is best completed *as you read the novel*.  Failing to do so can mean that you forget to include minor characters.

* Role - Generally, the character's role is a very basic description.  Albus Dumbledore is the headmaster of Hogwarts.
* Significance - What value does the character have--does he serve as an example of the theme?
* Adjectives - If you had to choose a single word to describe a character, what would it be?  Include 3 to 5, please.

**Page Four:  Setting, Themes, & Symbols**

* Setting - Simply enough, time and place.  Be as specific as you can be.
* Symbols - Include 3 to 5 symbols present in the novel.
* Significance of the opening/closing scenes - Please don't fill in these boxes with simplistic answers like "The first chapter is where we meet the main character and the setting is identified."  While that may be true, it's also true for almost every other novel throughout the history of literature.  It's also not a significant revelation.  Try to tie the opening scene to something else.  Is there foreshadowing?  Is the theme introduced in some way?  The same follows for the closing scene.  "They all lived happily ever after" is not a valid answer.  Really think about why the author chose *this* ending over another ending.
* Possible themes - Again--no cheating.  Come up with theme ideas on your own.  Don't know what theme is?