

# Novel Sheet

Title: In Cold Blood

Author: Truman Capote

General premise of story: (one or two sentences to highlight the main idea behind the work):

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## Part I

### Setting --

- What is the **setting** of the story?
- Does the setting change from one place to another? What, if any, effect does this have?
- Is the change of setting a necessary and natural one? How does it contribute to the development of the plot?

### Point of View—

- Identify the **point of view** used by the author (1<sup>st</sup> person p.o.v., 3<sup>rd</sup> person limited p.o.v., 3<sup>rd</sup> person omniscient p.o.v.).
- Discuss why the author may have chosen to use this point of view. Why was it effective?

## Part II

### Characters –

- Who is the **protagonist**?
- What are his or her chief weaknesses and strengths? How do these affect his or her motivation/actions?
- How does the protagonist change throughout the course of the story?
- Who is the **antagonist**? What traits define the antagonist?
- Who are the **minor characters**? What are the special functions of the minor characters?
- What characters function as **foils** and why?

## Part III

### Plot –

- What important details are listed in the **exposition** of the story (background information on characters, setting, relationships, etc...) before conflict is introduced?
- What is the **inciting incident** of the story (where conflict first occurs and disrupts the harmony of the story)?
- What key events constitute the **rising action** of the story (where conflict is developed)? Provide examples of both **internal and external conflict**.
- What is the pivotal point of utmost importance in the story (**climax**)?
- What events constitute the **falling action** of the story (where the effects of the climax are seen)?
- What is the **resolution** of the story?
- Is there **dramatic irony** present? What does it achieve?

## Part IV

### Theme

- What is the **theme** of the story? This should be stated as a universal message the author was trying to convey through the characters, plot, etc... \*\*There may be more than one theme\*\*
- What parts of the story were crucial in developing that message? Be specific!! (Ex: certain characters / certain conflicts / etc....)

**English II Summer Reading Assignments**  
Argument Essay Topics for *In Cold Blood*:

**Select one** of the essay prompts below and write an argument essay. You may use the book and/or the poem “Death of a Hired Man” for the essay, but you do not NEED to use specific quotes. Be sure to label which option you chose at the top of your paper.

**Option 1:** When you look for this book in the library, you will find it in the nonfiction section, because the book details real events and real people. During an interview, Capote explained that *In Cold Blood* is a “nonfiction novel,” and he admits that he made stylistic choices to engage readers and create a new genre. Critics have claimed that the book is pure “fiction” and argue that it’s not worthy of the nonfiction label it possesses. In which genre do you think it belongs? Argue your position carefully in an essay with textual support.

**Option 2:** Capote’s purpose in writing this book changes as the story progresses. Write an essay in which you analyze those choices and how he manipulates the reader to support his purpose. Finally, argue what his real purpose was in publishing *In Cold Blood*.

**Option 3:** The back of the book says: “*In Cold Blood* is a work that transcends its moment, yielding poignant insights into the nature of American violence.” Consider Capote’s research and detailed description of the criminals in this book and reflect on whether this statement is true. Write an essay in which you support and agree with this book review.

**Option 4:** A common psychological debate is whether individuals are more controlled by “nature” (the inherited traits over which we have no control such as eye color, disease, etc.) or “nurture” (the upbringing by our parents and family members). Discuss nature and nurture as it relates to either Dick or Perry and draw a conclusion in which you support which is more important.

**Option 5:** At the beginning of the unit, we read “Death of a Hired Man.” I told you I thought this could serve as an epigram or prologue for the entire non-fiction novel. Defend, challenge, or qualify my choice