BookTalk Genre Project Example Notes on *Safekeeping* by Karen Hesse

* You will be required to give a book talk to the class on **Tuesday, December 16th or Thursday, December 18th**.
* You may use notes to give your book talk, but you will be expected to make eye contact and address your audience.
* The book talk should be 3-5 minutes long, and I expect you to rehearse at home before presenting.
* Your notes should be written **in final draft form** and handed in for my review after your presentation.
* You should create a visual aid to refer to during your presentation.

**In your Book Talk notes, I will be looking for:**

1. the title and the author of the book as well as the year it was published (please include whether the book is part of a larger series or if the author has written anything else like it) (3 points)

*Safekeeping* by Karen Hesse, a bestselling author, published this book in 2012. This book is not part of a series, but Karen Hesse has written other popular books including *Phoenix Rising*, *Stowaway*, *Letters from Rifka*, *Witness*, and *Out of the Dust*.

1. the genre AND subgenre of the book with a well-written explanation of why your book falls into that subgenre – if it falls into more than one category, include that! (10 points)

The genre of this book is FICTION and the subgenre is REALISTIC FICTION set in the not-too-distant future of America. The main character has to survive (without parents) when a radical political party takes over the US government. This book falls into the fiction category because it is not based on any real events; however, it is in the subgenre of realistic fiction because the plot is one that readers can easily imagine as happening in our world.

* an explanation of why you chose your book from all other books for this assignment – what made it the most appealing? (3 points)

The title, the cover, and the description all interested me. I like reading modern, realistic fiction, especially written for teens and young adults. The title made me curious – did she have something valuable that needed to be “kept safe,” or was it something more symbolic?

1. a summary of the book that does not reveal the ending (about 100 words) – Be careful to write **in your own words** and PROOFREAD your work! You should give enough details about the book to interest listeners without ruining their possible experience with reading it. (10 points)

Radley Hayes cuts her mission trip to Haiti short to return home to America, which is in the midst of government turmoil. After a difficult journey home, she discovers her parents are missing. Frightened to stay in her family’s home alone, she heads north to Canada to find safety. On the way, she befriends Celia, a lonely, quiet girl with many secrets. After four months of hiding and barely surviving in an abandoned school house in Quebec, Radley returns home to Vermont once she learns the worst is over in America. She reaches her home safely, only to find her parents are still missing. Radley finds some answers to her questions and soon embarks on a fulfilling new life that leads her back to Canada. *Safekeeping* is an easy-to read book with many layered meanings and interesting characters.

* Read 2 short selections from your book and tell why you like and chose each one.

**First Short Selection** - “I stare out the small window over a vast field of clouds. New travel restrictions ban even backpacks from the cabin of the plane. I haven’t brought much out of Haiti anyway. The orphans at Paradis des Enfants need my sandals, my toothpaste, my T-shirts more than I need them. Besides, Mom will buy new stuff for me when I get home.”

I chose the opening lines as my first example because they are so simple. By the end of the first page, I really wanted to know what was going on with her and her parents! I can’t imagine traveling on an airplane as a teenager without my parents (especially without a backpack). I wondered how long this girl had been away from home, and what was really going to happen when she got back home to her mom.

**Second Short Selection** - “I try to see the quiet beauty of Vermont…to reclaim it as my birthright. But I know now there is no such thing as a birthright. Anything can be taken from you.”

The last five words haunt me. This makes me think that no matter what I do to prevent it, anything can be taken from me. Is that really true? Hmmmm…

* Read a longer selection of text from your book that you like. Tell why you like it. Make sure it is school appropriate. (If you are in doubt, ASK!)

I remember my parents warning that all hell would break loose once the American People’s Party took power. And now it seems as if all hell has broken loose. The plane is rerouted in flight with no explanation. To Philadelphia. When we touch down in Philly military personnel direct us through customs. There are three separate officers at three discrete stations. Each station has its own arsenal of weaponry. Each its own computerized lists. At the second checkpoint, soldiers single out a dread-locked man three people ahead of me in line and strong-arm him away. He had been sitting across the aisle from me on the flight from Haiti. I watch, stunned, as the man is led off, arrested on suspicion of … of what?  
 My head aches by the time my turn comes at the last station. The officer carefully studies my passport, shines a small light on it, fixes a hard stare on my face. He checks my name against his master list, then opens my passport again. “Radley Parker-Hughes,” he says. There’s something about my name he doesn’t like. I’m having trouble breathing. The room spins around me. Finally, he makes a decision. He lets go of whatever it is that’s bothering him and sends me through.

I think the author does a great job of building suspense in this passage. I felt anxious reading it and was relieved when she was passed through. Much of the book is described this way so that you imagine what is going on not only in the world but also in Radley’s mind.

* your rating of the book on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being the best) with a well-written explanation of your choice

On a scale of 1 to 10, I would give this book a 7.5. The characters are intriguing, the plot is suspenseful, and the conflicts are unusual. As good as it was, though, it doesn’t come close to my perfect 10 rating of The *Hunger Games* trilogy, the *Divergent* trilogy, or the *Harry Potter* Series.

* your recommendation – who would like this book? (Consider phrasing it this way: People who like \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ would probably like this book.)

This book is easy to read. I listened to it on CD, and there were only 4 CD’s. It is geared toward high school students, primarily girls. People who like realistic fiction with contemporary issues would probably like it. In an honest warning, however, the vocabulary, language, and mature themes (rape, abandonment, attempted kidnapping, survival) would likely be too much for a middle school age reader.