Story Ray

A story ray is a reader response strategy that shows the unfolding of a novel, chapter by chapter. Each person is responsible for the creation of one visual ray, representing a selected chapter from the book. Each story ray provides a strong sense of a particular chapter, with a focus on ideas, themes, characters, setting, mood, and tone. The completed rays offer a visual sense of the plot, characters, and issues in the book.

Story rays focus on images, symbols, colors, and words or phrases that seem especially significant within a chapter. They are constructed by readers asking themselves:

-How can I offer a visual essence of this chapter?

-What color(s) do I use for the background and for the images I choose to represent? Why are these colors significant to this chapter?

-What images (symbols, artifacts, items) should I represent on this strip of paper? What's the significance of each? Should I repeat any images? What layout should I use to capture a strong sense of my chapter?

-Should I include words? A quote? A short phrase? If so, where do words belong on my story ray? Should I repeat them? If so, why?

Tips: Leave little or no white space on a ray (unless white is essential to the ideas or mood being creating). Avoid using colored pencils unless bold colors can be created from this medium. Consider using more than one medium and think creatively about the media (collage, torn paper, paint, pastels, mixed media, etc.)

The rays are then hung on the wall to show the unfolding of the book from chapter to chapter.

Variation
Another way to create a story ray is to ask reader to use their rays to focus on what they see as the major themes and issues from the book using visual images and a few key words. Rather than an unfolding of the novel, this type of ray provides a visual representation of the key themes and issues across multiple readers.