**Outliers: The Story of Success**

by Malcolm Gladwell

Your tasks:

1. Enjoy the book.
2. Pay attention to the claims that Gladwell makes and how he sustains those claims with supporting evidence.

*** Important note: *Outliers* is an example of an argument. Read the definition of argument below.

*Argument*: to take a stand and to defend that stand against other possible stands. Given a subject, what stand can be defended? On what grounds can that stand be defended? Why is the author’s grounds of defense better than other grounds?

Essential components of a good argument include:

*Claims*: assertions open to challenge
*Evidence*: something that furnishes proof; anything that helps prove a claim

---

**Introduction: The Roseto Mystery**

Define outlier:

From where did the term outlier come?

At the end of the introduction, Gladwell concludes with his purpose for the book. What is it?

Offer a brief criticism of this opening. How well do you think the story of Roseto establishes Gladwell’s purpose?

Note to the reader: Gladwell divides his book into parts. You’ll notice that each part has a claim that is used to support his major claim about outliers. Within each part, he includes chapters that then support the claim of that part. Think of these claims as Chinese boxes: the claim of each chapter supports the claim of each part which supports the claim of the book as a whole.
Part I: Opportunity

Chapter One: The Matthew Effect

Claim:

Supporting Evidence:

Chapter Two: The 10,000-Hour Rule

Claim:

Supporting Evidence:

Chapter Three: The Trouble with Geniuses, Part I

Claim:

Supporting Evidence:

Chapter Four: The Trouble with Geniuses, Part II

Claim:

Supporting Evidence:
Chapter Five: The Three Lessons of Joe Flom

Claim:

Supporting Evidence:

Part Two: Legacy

Chapter Six: Harlan, Kentucky

Claim:

Supporting Evidence:

Chapter Seven: The Ethnic Theory of Plane Crashes

Claim:

Supporting Evidence:

Chapter Eight: Rice Paddies and Math Tests

Claim:

Supporting Evidence:
Epilogue: A Jamaican Story

What impression does Gladwell give of his ancestors in the first part of the epilogue?

In the second part of the epilogue, what details does Gladwell give to help prove the argument of the book? (Take note of the summary that Gladwell offers at the end of this part.)

What details does Gladwell give in the third part to reinforce his argument?

How does Gladwell connect the story of Daisy Nation to the stories of the other “characters” in his book?

What is Gladwell’s final conclusion?

Take note of the Notes section. List a few of the resources that he used to write this book: