SUGGESTED ANALYTICAL ASSESSMENTS

These prompts could be used for traditional essay assignments or for responses across a variety of mediums (live presentation, digital stories via PowerPoint or video, etc.)

1. Read one or both reviews of *The Yellow Birds* (see Print Resources). One review very positive; the other one mixed. Respond to the review(s) – do you agree or disagree with their statements? Use support from the text to back up your position.

2. Variation on #1 - Doug Stanton’s review states that, "We don’t need anymore ‘information,’ ‘facts,’ ‘reality.’ We need story, and fewer pixels. We need crisp canvas, a brush." Compare and contrast the novel with journalistic and non-fiction reporting on Iraq (see Online Resources). What are the benefits and limitations of each approach as a way to inform the reader? In the end, which do you think is more effective?

3. Powers includes two epigrams for the novel-- one from an Army marching song, and the other from a 17th Century British author. How does each quote connect to the text, and how do they connect to each other? Provide thorough support from the text.

4. *The Yellow Birds* takes us into the world of the U.S. Army and the nation of Iraq, but does not always explain the cultural and military references that are being made. Pick out a set number of places, names, ideas, or practices that are mentioned in the book and research their meanings. Share your findings to the class via an audio-visual presentation.

5. Look at timeline of *The Yellow Birds*. Place the events into chronological order, and then analyze why the author chose to tell the story in the order that he did.

6. Compare and contrast *The Yellow Birds* with Brian Turner’s poem “The Hurt Locker” (see Print Resources.)
SUGGESTED CREATIVE ASSESSMENTS

These prompts could be used for traditional essay assignments or for responses across a variety of mediums (live presentation, digital stories via PowerPoint or video, etc.)

1. *The Yellow Birds* makes frequent mention to different types of birds and trees. What theme speaks to you? Pick a category of symbolic items and weave them into a short story of your own.

2. One reviewer stated that *The Yellow Birds* "wakes the readers of ‘the spoiled cities of America’ to a reality most would rather not face." What else do you think the world needs to be woken up to? Write a creative response.

3. After Murph’s death, Private Bartle wrote a letter to Murphy's mother LaDonna, pretending to be her son (pg 29). What do you think he said? Write the letter.

4. Kevin Powers also studied poetry, and many of the sentences in the book have a poetic, lyrical feel. Select one sentence from each chapter, and then organize those sentences into a “found poem.” (Additional task: write an explanation of why you picked those sentences, and why you organized them that way.)