

Specifications for Murder Charges

First-degree murder

A murder that is committed with premeditation *or* during the course of a serious felony (as kidnapping) *or* that otherwise (as because of extreme cruelty) requires the most serious punishment under the law.

Second-degree murder

Second-degree murder is ordinarily defined as: 1) an intentional killing that is not premeditated or planned, nor committed in a reasonable “heat of passion”; or 2) a killing caused by dangerous conduct and the offender’s obvious lack of concern for human life. Second-degree murder may best be viewed as the middle ground between first-degree murder and voluntary manslaughter.

Voluntary manslaughter

Killing resulting from an intentional act done without malice or premeditation and while in the heat of passion or on sudden provocation.

Name _____

Date _____

ELA/Novels

Period _____

Directions: After reading the specifications for First-Degree Murder, Second-Degree Murder, and Voluntary Manslaughter, complete the worksheet to decide how Johnny could be charged.

1. What does “premeditated” mean, as used in all three definitions? (Use a dictionary if necessary) _____

2. Which of the specifications for First-Degree Murder does Johnny meet? _____

3. Which of the specifications for Second-Degree Murder does Johnny meet? _____

4. Which of the specifications for Voluntary Manslaughter does Johnny meet? _____

5. Johnny should be charged with _____ for the following circumstances which coincide with the specifications outlined: (Reference specific examples from the book as well as the definitions). _____
