

Directions for Summer Journals

A Reading Journal is a place to react to what you read. You can discover exactly how you feel about what you're reading, gather new insights, and expand your enjoyment. Reading Journals can be excellent source books for book reviews. When you have a source of compelling ideas, memorable lines, details, questions, and personal reactions, you have the ingredients for an outstanding book review--one that reflects honest and original thinking.

All of us actively respond to what happens around us each day. This is normal. We laugh, get angry, feel sad, become confused, encourage others, wonder, ask questions. It is just as normal to respond to what is happening in the inner world of a book. Reading Journals provide a place for you to interact with the author and the world he/she has created. This interaction makes you an active reader.

As you read, write your personal responses to the work. Each response is a journal entry. State your feelings, thoughts, reactions, and questions about the selection--its situations, ideas, actions, characters, settings, symbols, plot, theme, and other elements of the work that interest you or mean something to you.

You cannot be wrong in your responses, so take risks and be honest. Write about what you like and dislike, what seems confusing or unusual to you. Tell what you think something means. Look for examples of writing you particularly like or dislike and talk about them. Make predictions about what might happen later. Relate your personal experiences that connect with the plot, settings, or characters.

If you like, quote brief passages from the work and respond to them. Try to relate this work to another work you've read or to a movie you've seen. How are they alike? How are they different?

PROCEDURES

1. Journal entries may be typed on the computer, printed, and stapled together OR may be handwritten in a notebook (one notebook for all books).
2. Minimum of five (5) entries for each book
3. Each entry must be labeled as follows:
 - ◆ Book title & author
 - ◆ Date of entry
 - ◆ Page numbers covered in this reading
4. Each entry must be at least 100 words of mature response writing.
5. Students will submit completed journals on the first full day of school.

Suggestions for Entries

The following is a list of sentence lead-ins and questions that can be used when writing a journal entry; you do not have to use these suggestions, but if you do you will be more likely to respond effectively to what you read. Make use of different sentence lead-ins and/or questions when writing your 5 entries. Use supporting details from the book that provide evidence of your having read and thought about the book; however, do not just retell or summarize the story.

SUGGESTED SENTENCE LEAD-INS

I wonder what this means...

I really don't understand this part because...

I really like/dislike this part because...

This character reminds me of somebody I know because...

This character is like (name) in (title of work) because...

I think this setting is important because...

This scene reminds me of a similar scene in (title of work) because...

This part is realistic/unrealistic because...

This section makes me think about...because...

This section is particularly effective because...

I like/dislike this writing because...

I think the relationship between...and ...is interesting because...

I like/dislike (name of character) because...

This situation reminds me of a similar situation in my own life when...because...

The character I most admire is...because...

If I were (name of character) at this point, I would...

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

What are your feelings after reading the opening chapter(s)? After reading half the book? After finishing the book?

Did this book make you laugh? Cry? Cringe? Smile? Cheer? Explode? Record some of your reactions.

Would you like to acquire a personality trait of any particular character? Describe the trait and explain why you like it.

Would you have used a different name for any character or place? What name?

What questions would you like to ask the author of this book?

How have you changed after reading this book?

What do you know now that you didn't know before?

READ, THINK, and WRITE your thoughts!