

Reading Response Journals

In an effort to encourage all students to think more about what they read and confidently share their observations and opinions, we will be using reading response journals this year in fifth grade with both fiction and nonfiction literature. A reading response journal is a notebook that students use expressly for "talking" -- thinking and writing -- about what they read. In their journals (either physical or digital), students share feelings, reactions, and ask questions about story elements -- including characters, the setting, symbols, the plot, and themes -- of the books they are reading. Response journals can help assess students' comprehension and critical thinking abilities.

Response Sentence Starters: (Refer to your rubric when writing responses).

Starting a New Book:

Tell why you choose this book, why it was a good choice for you, and what you can predict about the book.

- o I chose this book because...
- o So far, this book started off... I think I will enjoy it because... or I am not sure how I will like it because...

Summary: Summarize the assigned reading in your own words. (At any point in reading, a summary can be made. The reader does not have to wait until the end of the book.)

Strategy for Fiction Summary:

Somebody (identify the character(s))

Wanted (describe the character's goal)

But (describe a conflict or event that the character experiences)

So (describe how the character reacts to the conflict or event)

Then (describe the resolution of the conflict or the ending of the event)

**Remember to focus on information that is most important. **

Plot:

Describe the current plot of the reading.

- o A conflict (problem) from today's reading was... It was resolved by... or I think it will be resolved by...
- o When _____ happened, it caused _____ to happen.
- o In today's reading the following important events occurred...

Predictions:

Explain what you think will happen next and why. Include evidence for why you think that event will happen next.

- o After today's reading, I predict that...
- o I predicted that because _____. What happened was...

Character Analysis:

Choose a character from the reading.

Describe at least three traits the character possesses. Be sure to include evidence/proof from the text as to why you gave the character that trait.

- o The character, _____, possesses the following character trait(s).
- o Some examples from the story that support this include...
- o The character, _____, said _____, proving that he/she possesses the following character trait _____.
- o I can relate to the character, _____ because...
- o _____ is my favorite character in this book because...
- o _____ is my least favorite character in this book because...

My Reaction:

Describe your reactions to the assigned reading. How did the story make you feel or did it remind you of a previous event?

- o The events from today's reading remind me of a time when I...
- o I am confused about _____ because...
- o While I was reading today, the book made me think of _____. This is interesting because...
- o As I was reading today, I felt _____. I think this was because...

Compare and Contrast:

Think of two stories, characters, events, or themes that you can compare or contrast.

- o The story I am reading is similar to _____ because...
- o The story I am reading is very different from _____ because...
- o The character possesses _____ trait because...
- o The characters _____ and _____ are similar/different because...

Setting/tone

Describe the setting of the book. Give details to explain where and when the story takes place and any other important features. Why is the setting/tone significant to the story?

o As I was reading, I noticed that this story is taking place in/at _____.

This is important to the story because...

Otherwise,...

o The tone of this book right now is _____.

Some words that the author uses

to show this are _____, _____, and _____.

Imagery and Figurative Language:

Look for interesting or new words/phrases in the text. Record how each word/phrase that was used in the book and what you might think it means.

o During today's reading, I found the following 5 strong verbs...

o During today's reading, I found the following 5 descriptive adjectives...

o My favorite line from today's reading was

"_____".

o I found the following example of a metaphor:

"_____".

o I found the following example of a simile:

"_____".

Theme

Describe the theme of the book. What important message is the author trying to teach? How does the character grow or what does the character learn in the story? Write what you think the theme of the story is and include evidence from the text.

o The theme of the story is...

o The author wants the readers to learn...

o The character learned/grew...

Finishing a Book:

What made this book good or bad, why? What kind of reader would enjoy this book? Did you enjoy the author's style? Would you recommend this book to a peer? Why? Describe your favorite part or character.

o I thought the ending of this book was

_____ because _____.

o If I could change the ending of this book, it would end with...

o My favorite part of this book was

_____ because...

o After reading this book, I would like to read other books by _____ because...

o I would recommend this because...

Evidence Sentence Starters:

- Based on what I read...
- From the reading, I know that..
- On page____, it said...
- According to the text...
- The author states... (make sure to use quotations around the author's statement)
- For example, ...
- For instance, in the story...
- The author shows this by...
- I know this because...
- I can prove this by...
- The event that helps us understand this...
- My evidence to support my claim is...

Peer Response Sentence Starters:

- I like how you...
- You made a great point when you...
- I thought the same...
- What did you mean by...?
- I agree...
- I disagree...
- I'd like to add...
- In addition, ...
- I don't understand...
- I think the author meant...
- The text says...
- In my opinion...
- Can you explain...