Keeping a Reading Journal

Students write Reading or Response Journals as they read and interact with various forms of literature.

# The purpose of your reading journal is to:

* help you capture your developing responses as a reader
* help you understand what you are reading
* show how you are improving as a reader.
* It is your record of your thoughts as you read and should be completely different from anyone else's.

# What should you write about?

* speculations about how the story might develop (what you think might happen next)
* comparisons with things that have happened to you
* accounts of things that have happened to you that you are reminded of by events in the book
* reflections on things in the book that really strike you
* reactions to characters and what they do
* comments on how the author is telling the story
* comments on other books, films, plays, or poems that you have read which you reminded of by parts of the book
* questions that you think of as you are reading
* things that are puzzling you as you read
* anything else you think of as you are reading

# How often should you write?

* It's best to write often, while you are reading the book as well as when you finish it.
* You should be writing once a cycle at the very least. Do not write it all at the end!

# What should entries in your reading journal look like?

* Always date each entry, and note the book's title and author on your first line.
* Write down the page or chapter number at the beginning of your entry.
* Use a separate part of your book for your journal.
* Ideas to help you write a better journal
* Do not retell the story - the teacher has read the novel/play before and does not need to be told the story.
* Write in the first person eg. "I feel" or "I wonder"
* Reading Journals are the place for you to write about your response to the literature or film. It is not the place to write about your private life.
* Think of your journal as a conversation with yourself or your teacher.
* Have you commented on setting, time, character development and theme? Is the dialogue successful? Is the plot complicated?
* Use quotes from the novel or play to back up your ideas.

# Write a journal entry before you start reading. Here are a few ways to begin:

* Write about how you respond to the title and cover. Compare your cover with another edition if available.
* Write a response to the first sentence. Does it intrigue you?
* Write a response to the first page

# Possible ways to start your journal entries

a. I notice………..

b. I wonder about…………

c. What puzzles me is…………..

d. I predict……………….

e. I do not understand…………….

f. I now understand……….

g. What impresses me about this section is…….

h. What I dislike in this section is……….

* Don't forget to comment on the ending of the story. Was it predictable? Did you feel 'let down'? Suggest a more realistic ending.
* You do not have to love the novel but try not to be completely negative.

Your journal will help you if you need to write an essay about the novel/play/film/poetry.