

English 11 - AP - Reader's Journal Criteria

NAME _____

Set aside one section of your binder for a Reader's Journal, a place you'll personally respond to assigned readings, such as a novel or an essay.

A reading journal is an effective way to keep a record of your reading responses - positive or negative, sure or unsure. It offers a chance to respond personally, to ask questions, wonder, predict, or reflect on the characters, events, literary elements, or language of a text. As you read, take time to record your observations. You may do this as ideas strike you or after you have read a small portion of the text, for example ten pages. Write often and record as many of your observations as possible. Do not summarize. Instead, record your textual observations. Some of your first essays may well result from your journal responses, so take time and care when writing in your journal.

If you are having trouble beginning an entry, try some of these "starters." I was impressed by...I noticed that...I wonder about...Some questions I have are...I don't understand...I now understand why/how/what...Something I notice appreciate/don't appreciate/wonder about is...I predict...An interesting word/sentence/thought is...This reminds me of...I never thought...I was surprised by...

Please keep in mind that these logs are not meant to be a personal diary. They are meant to be read by others and should relate only to the assigned material. You will be sharing your journal in class, so keep this in mind as you write. When sharing, you will have the opportunity to confirm, clarify, and modify your responses through discussion.

Generally three stages of student work are exhibited in these journals. You should *strive for stage three*.

Stage I: A literal, surface encounter with the text. The work of students at this level will have some or many of the following characteristics:

- lacks a critical interest in the narrative,
- primarily summarizes the selection,
- is unsupported by evidence from the text or from experience,
- predicts unrealistically or improbably,
- fails to ask questions or hypothesize,
- uses stereotypical responses,
- uses images drawn from movies or television,
- is too short,
- shows confusion about the text and the story, or
- includes off-topic responses.

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Stage II: Evidence of understanding and appreciation of text. The work of students at this level will have some or many of the following characteristics:

- does not summarize, but rather reflects upon the narrative,
- makes relevant connections between text and student's own experiences,
- predictions are plausible given the scenario (but may change after further reading),
- demonstrates an ability to understand characters' motivations,
- quotes from the text for support,
- hypothesizes and predicts logically, or
- shows evidence that student is engaged by the text.

Stage III: Synthesis and evaluation of the text. The work of students at this level will have some or many of these characteristics:

- shows a strong interest in the material as evidenced through an awareness of levels of meaning,
- passes judgments that are textually and experientially based,
- predicts thoughtfully and keenly,
- analyzes character consistently with the material presented,
- shows an understanding of character motivation,
- discovers comparisons (connections) and contrasts between the text and other literary and artistic works,
- recognizes the author's writing choices and reasons for those choices,
- recognizes the energy and deliberateness of the writing process,
- is aware that his/her own personal beliefs may differ from those expressed in the text, and
- demonstrates an awareness of point of view.