

Tips for Keeping a Reading Diary

Effective readers connect with, reflect on, and challenge the text. On your way to becoming such an effective reader use your response journal to try out some of the following tips and techniques.

Read slowly and carefully. Try to imagine the scenes as vividly as possible and try to see life through the main characters' eyes. After reading sit back and think about it for a while, then write a personal response.

- Decide how much time you want to commit and stick with it (10 – 15 minutes!)
- Write quickly, without worrying about spelling, punctuation, grammar.... Do not pause to think, just keep writing.
- As you write, follow your thoughts and ideas, do not worry about good organization and coherence. Just let your ideas flow.

Consider **some** of the following questions:

- Do you enjoy reading this novel or story? Why? Why not? What emotions does the book invoke: laughter, tears, smiles, anger? Record some of your reactions.
- Does the book or its characters remind you of any real life situations or people you know?
- Are the characters interesting and believable? Who is your favorite character? Why is he/she special to you? Is there a character you don't like at all? Why don't you like him/her? Would you like to be one of the characters (acquire a personality trait)? Which of the characters would you become, if you could? Why?
- What are your favorite lines/quotes? Copy them into your reading diary and explain why these passages caught your attention.
- Which are your favorite scenes in this novel? Explain why you enjoyed them.
- Make predictions: What do you think is going to happen next?
- Is the author able to hold your interest throughout the entire novel? How did he or she manage to do this? Or are you bored at times? What exactly makes the chapter/scene boring?
- Is there an idea in the book that makes you stop and think, or prompts questions? Identify the idea and explain your responses.
- Does the book leave you with questions you would like to ask? What are they? Would you like to direct your questions at a particular character? What questions would you like to ask the author of the book?
- Are you confused about what happened (or didn't happen) in the book? What events or characters do you not understand? Does the use of language in the book confuse you?
- What changes, if any, would you have made in this novel?
- Are there any symbols, symbolic acts or names in the novel?
- Think of the main themes of the novel? What might the author be saying?
- Who else should read this book. Should anyone not be encouraged to read this book? Why?
- Would you like to read more books by this author? Have you already read other books by the author?