READING JOURNAL PROMPTS

Directions: Choose at least one question to answer from each category. Write in complete sentences. Write about literature in the present tense.

Characters:
1. Describe the personality of a particular character. Include examples from the story that support your description.
2. Do any of the characters change during the story? If so, how are they different? What changed them? Did it seem believable?
3. How did the main character change from the beginning to the end of the story?
4. Select a relatively important event in the book and describe why it was a turning point in the character’s life? What was it that the character decided or learned to do?
5. Pick a paragraph or a page which describes the way another character treats the main character. Would you treat the person the same way? Find an incident in your own life which is similar and explain why you treated someone the way you did. Have you changed from that experience? How would you treat that person now?
6. Often main characters will grow in confidence and learn how to accept themselves in some new way. Cite an example of how the protagonist found a source of strength. Describe how you felt as the reader when this happened.
7. List the characters in the story and describe qualities which you admire. Tell what and why you respect the individuals. Point out classmates who possess the traits you admire.
8. Who are the main characters in the story? What kind of people are they? How do you know?
9. If you had an opportunity to interview the main character, what would you ask them and what might they say in reply? (Interview?)
10. State your opinion whether you like or dislike the main character(s). Why do you feel this way?
11. Is there a character that reminds you of yourself or someone else you may know? Explain your reasoning.
12. Choose any character and explain why they are important to the story.
13. Do any of the characters do things you feel are wrong? Explain.
14. Some characters play small but important roles in the story. Name such a character. Why is this character necessary for the story?
15. Would you like to be anyone in the story? Who? Why?
16. Think about the characters in the story. Are any of them the same type of characters you have met in other stories, but not the same series? Explain.
17. Who are the most important characters in the story? Tell why you think so.
18. Is there one character you know more about than any of the others? Who is this character and what kind of person is she/he? How does the author “reveal” the character to you?
19. What different emotions do you think the characters experience in the story? How can you tell?
20. Assess one of the characters strengths and weaknesses.
21. If you were to add a new character, who might you create and what would you have them do in the story?
22. What movie star might you have portray the main character in a film version of the story and why?
23. If the character were to leave it up to you to find them a job, what career do you feel they would be best suited for and why?
24. How were the character’s thoughts and feelings shown? Were they believable? Could the reader enter the characters’ hearts and minds and “see” through their eyes?
25. Did the author develop the characters well? Explain.
26. Write an obituary for one of the characters.
27. Choose a character and tell what else they could have done in the story.
28. Tell about your favorite character in the book. What kind of person is he/she and why is he/she your favorite character?
29. How do the character’s qualities affect and influence the events in the plot?
30. Identify the protagonist and antagonist. How does the protagonist differ from the antagonist? How are they the same?
31. What factors, relationships, or events helped form the character’s traits?

Setting:
1. Where does the story take place? Tell what the place is like. If the story took place somewhere else or in a different time, how would it be changed?
2. Compare the setting to a place you have been before, or a place you hope to visit.
3. When does the story take place? Past? Present? Future? How does this story seem believable or not believable?
4. If the setting is important to the novel, tell three reasons why it is.
5. Tell about your reaction to a particularly interesting passage where the author creates an image of the setting.
6. Compare where you live with the neighborhood, town or city in the book. Would you rather live in the place where this story takes place? Why or why not?
7. Would you like to live during the time this story takes place? Why?

Plot:
1. What incident, problem, conflict, or situation does the author use to get the story started?
2. Were you able to guess events as they happened? Why do you think you were able to guess the sequence of events?
3. Make list of 3 – 6 key events from the book. Tell why each event was important to the story.
4. Did this story remind you of anything that has happened to you?
5. What was the most important event which happened in the story? Why? Was this the climax of the story? What prompted the protagonist to act this way?
6. What was the climax of the story? Who was involved in the action? How do you know it was the climax?
7. What handicaps or hardships did the main character have to overcome? If you were the main character, would you have been able to overcome the challenges? Explain.
8. Would this story have been likely to happen to you? What part of it might have been something you would have done?
Lead:
1. How does the author get you interested in the book?
2. Does the book start slowly or quickly? Explain.
3. Is there a preface or introduction in the book? How is it used and how does it affect the story?

Conclusion:
1. How did the author leave the reader? Was the ending satisfying? Explain.
2. Was there an epilogue in the book? How was it used? What effect did it have on the story?
3. Did you like the way the author ended the story? Make up a new ending that could still fit with the previous events in the plot.
4. Did the story end the way you expected it to? What clues did the author offer to prepare you to expect this ending? Did you recognize these clues as important to the story as you were first reading it?
5. Would you rather guess the ending or be surprised? Were you able to guess the ending? Did you like the way it ended? How would you have changed the ending? Explain.

Foreshadowing and flashbacks:
1. Were there clues that led you to believe that something would happen?
2. Discuss a particular event in the book that used foreshadowing or flashbacks.
3. Does the author use shifts in time? Why?
4. Describe the foreshadowing/flashbacks. Did you know they were clues when you first read them?

Main Idea:
1. What is the story mainly about? (it’s message, not what happened)
2. Do you agree or disagree with the main idea of the story? Why?
3. What other story(ies) does this book remind you of?

Conflict:
1. What was the main problem in the story?
2. Were there other less significant conflicts in the story? Discuss the role they play in the story.
3. Describe a conflict and identify it as either internal or external. Tell why you chose that label.

Narrative:
1. Who is the narrator in the story and why do you think the author chose this narrator?
2. Is the story written in the first person? Third? Give an example from the book to support your pick of point of view.
3. Did the author switch between narrators? Who are they? Why do you think they did that?

Vocabulary:
1. Did you find many new words in the story? What were some of them? How did you figure out what they meant? Are there any words you are not sure of?
2. Has your vocabulary increased because of this book? What were some of you favorite new words? How did they add to the images the author created in the story?
Title:
1. Was the title of the book appropriate? Does the title “grab” you and make you want to read the book? Explain.
2. Does the author title each chapter? If not, what would you title at least three of the chapters? Explain. If the chapters are titled, rename at least three and tell your reasons.
3. How do the chapter titles help you predict what might happen next? Are the chapter titles appropriate?

Theme:
1. Why do you think the author wrote this book? Is there a message in the story? What is it? What, if anything, can be learned from this novel?
2. What was the author showing about life and living through the story?

Mood:
1. Overall, how did you feel when reading the book and why did you feel that way?
2. What was the funniest part? Saddest? Why?
3. What was the most exciting or the strangest thing that happened in the book?
4. What do you remember most about the story?
5. Did this story remind you of anything that has happened to you?
6. What made you frightened or angry in the story?
7. Does the story create a certain mood or feeling? What is the mood? How is it created? How did the author achieve the mood of the story? Does the mood change or remain the same throughout the book?
8. How does the author use words to achieve a certain mood? Give examples.

Author Knowledge:
1. What do you know about the author and how can you tell?
2. What did the author have to know to write this book?
3. What sorts of things does the author like or dislike? How can you tell?
4. Who is the author? What do you know about her/his family, home, background, etc?
5. Discuss other books the author has written and compare them to this one.
6. What would you like to tell or ask the author if you could meet him/her?
7. How do you think the author feels about animals, people, or places?
8. Who do you think the author intended to read this story and why?
9. What particular style does the author use in her/his writing? Do you like or dislike it? Why?