

Literary Journal Logs (Lit. Logs) and Letters to the Teacher
Successful Entries

The "Responses to Reading" are divided into two parts.

A) **Recounting** (worth 30%)

This section deals specifically with you writing a recount of events and/ or details from the pages you have read so far in the book.

- Summarize the important events (in some detail) that have occurred so far in the novel in your own words
- Make predictions about what you think will happen later in the novel and back them up with supporting evidence from what you have read so far

You should not write more than one page (double-spaced) of recounting as this is only supposed to be a short summary of the pages you have read.

B) **Discussion** (worth 70%)

This section is the discussion section of the journal.

You have a few options in this section. The responses here are also based on the pages that you have read so far in the novel. Here is a list of some of the following options you have to write about in this section:

- Why did you choose this book?
- What type of book are you reading: science fiction, adventure, biography, fiction, non-fiction, fantasy? What aspects of this type of writing do you enjoy/ not enjoy?
- What did these pages of the novel make you think about?
- Tell about the setting of the story. Would you like to go there? Did you ever go anywhere like it?
- How did this section of the book connect with your own life experiences? Did something like this ever happen to you or someone you know?
- What do you think of the authors style of writing after reading these pages?
- How did the author make this section of the book funny, scary, mysterious, imaginary?
- What do you think about the character development in the book? Who is the hero or main character of the story? What is he or she like?
- Do you admire any of the characters in the story? Explain.
- Would you like to have a friend like one of the characters in the story? Explain.

- Do you know anyone who reminds you of someone in the story? Describe the similarities between the story character and the person you know.
- Which character do you relate to the most? Why?
- Did you come across any interesting facts in the pages that you read that you did not know before? (e.g. historical, scientific, geographical etc.)
- What did you like/ dislike about the pages you have read so far? What were the best/ worst aspects of the pages you have read so far?
- Did you ever read another story that reminds you of this story? How is it the same/ different?
- Why do you feel the author chose this title for the novel?
- What questions do you have for me the teacher after reading this section of the novel? Examples:
 - "What connection do you think the author was trying to make when he/she compared _____ to _____. This really has me stumped and I'm worried it may affect the rest of the novel for me."
 - "I found this section of the book was really deep. Do you think the author meant for it to be read by kids my age?"
 - "To me the theme of this novel is... Do you agree with my opinion?"
 - "I am really enjoying the novel Paper Dolls by *Lois Duncan*. Can you recommend any other authors that have been written in this same genre?"

You can choose one or more of these to discuss in the second part of the letter. You do not always have to connect the book with your own life experience. You must, however, make sure that you devote time to discuss the book in the second part of the letter. Take time to make sure each point you make is substantiated by facts from the story. You should devote at least one page (double-spaced) of discussion to ensure that the second section has been presented adequately.

The goal of the "*Responses to Reading*" is to encourage you to *think* about what you are reading, and through this reflection, gain more comprehensive understanding of the story. Keep in mind that you might write about only one particular subject in the second section, however, you will probably need to write about three or four different ideas related to that subject to meet the minimal expectations. What I will be looking for is evidence that you are thinking about what you are reading. I **do not** want to see, in the second section, simply a recount on what happened in the story. You can use some of the information from the pages but the goal of the second section of your letter is on your discussion of the effect the pages you have read had on you.