Journal Questions

From the list below, please select a journal question. Answer **each** part of the question **in detail** and provide the **question number** on your written response for reference purposes.

1. For the person who chose this book: What made you want to read it? What made you suggest it to the group for discussion? Did it live up to your expectations? Why or why not? Are you sorry/glad that you chose it? Why?
2. Did you think the characters and their problems/decisions/relationships were believable or realistic? If not, was the author trying to make them realistic, and why did he or she fail? Did the male/female author draw realistic male and female characters? Which character could you relate to best and why? Talk about the secondary characters. Were they important to the story? Did any stand out for you?
3. How was the book structured? Did the author use any structural or narrative devices like flashbacks or multiple voices in telling the story? How did this affect the story and your appreciation of the book? Do you think the author did a good job with it? Whose voice was the story told in (from whose point of view is the story told)? How do you think it might have been different if another character was telling the story?
4. Talk about the author's use of language/writing style. Was the language appropriate to the story? Was it more poetic or vernacular? Did it stand in the way of your appreciation of the story, or enhance your enjoyment of the book? If poetic, did the characters speak in vernacular language, or in the poetic language of the author? Was the dialogue realistic sounding? Was there a rhythm to the author’s style, or anything else that might be considered unique about it?
5. Was the author fairly descriptive? Was he or she better at describing the concrete or the abstract? Was the author clear about what he or she was trying to say, or were you confused by some of what you read? How did this affect your reading of the book?
6. Talk about the plot. What was more important, the characters or the plot? Was the plot moved forward by decisions of the characters, or were the characters at the mercy of the plot? Was the action believable? What events in the story stand out for you as memorable? Was the story chronological? Was there foreshadowing and suspense or did the author give things away at the beginning of the book? Was this effective? How did it affect your enjoyment of the book?
7. What were some of the major themes of the book? Are they relevant in your life? Did the author effectively develop these themes? If so, how? If not, why not? Was there redemption in the book? For any of the characters? Is this important to you when reading a book? Did you think the story was funny, sad, touching, disturbing, moving? Why or why not?
8. Compare this book to others you have read. Is it similar to any of them? Did you like it more or less than other books you've read? What do you think will be your lasting impression of the book? What will be your most vivid memories of it a year from now? Or will it just leave a vague impression, and what will that be? Or will you not think of it at all in a year's time?
9. Talk about the location. Was it important to the story? Was the author's description of the landscape/community a good one? Talk about the time period of the story (if appropriate). Was it important to the story? Did the author convey the era well? Did the author provide enough background information for you to understand the events in the story? Why or why not for all of the above? Was pertinent information lumped altogether, or integrated into the story? How did this affect your appreciation of the book?
10. Finally, what else struck you about the book as good or bad? What did you like or dislike about it that we haven't discussed already? Were you glad you read this book? Would you recommend it to a friend? Did this book make you want to read more work by this author?
11. Explain a character's problem and then offer your character advice on how to solve his/her problem.
12. Explain how a character is acting and why you think the character is acting that way.
13. From what you've read so far, make predictions about what will happen next and explain what in the text makes you think it will happen.
14. Pick one character and explain why you would/would not like to have him/her as a friend.
15. Describe and explain why you would/would not like to have lived in the time or place of the story.
16. What real-life people or events are you reminded of by characters or events in the story? Explain why.
17. Write about what would happen if you brought one of your characters to school or home for a day.
18. Pick a scene in which you disagreed how a character handled a situation/person and rewrite it in the way you think it should have happened.
19. What quality of which character strikes you as a good characteristic to develop within yourself over the years? Why? How does the character demonstrate this quality?
20. Who tells the story? Is this the best person to tell it? Why?
21. How would the story be different if told through another character's eyes?
22. Why do you think the author wrote this story?
23. If you were the author, would you have ended the story in a different way? Why? How so?
24. How do the character's actions affect other people in the story?
25. How does the author provide information or details to make the story seem realistic?
26. How does the author help you feel that you are really there (in both realistic stories and fantasy)?
27. Do you have any unanswered questions about the story? Explain.
28. Copy an interesting/confusing/important/enjoyable passage and explain why you chose it.
29. From what you've read so far, make predictions about what will happen next and explain what in the text makes you think it will happen.
30. Copy a short passage that you found to be interesting. Explain what made it interesting for you.
31. Write a summary of what you read in your book today.
32. Explain some of the things that you have learned so far that you are not likely to forget in the near future when considering other plot events or character actions. How has this information influenced your feelings as a reader?
33. Write to inform us about the author. What other articles and/or books has the author written? Is he/she one of your favorite authors, and if so, why?
34. What ideas might you have for turning this work of nonfiction into a work of fiction? Give a brief summary of what your story might be like.
35. Explain the basic information that is being presented in the current chapter or section of the story in terms of the 5W's: Who? What? When? Where? Why
36. What did the author want you to think about the main character? What things in the story made you think this is what the author wanted you to think? In other words, can you prove why you think as you do about the main character?
37. What was the cause of any one of the happenings in the story? In other words, what made something happen? Was it something someone did, or said, or something that just happened?
38. Think of one way that a person in the story solved a problem. When you have decided on the person (or animal, or . . .), tell or write what you learned about solving the problem that you could use sometime in solving a problem of your own. What kind of trouble was he/she in? What was the problem to be solved? Do you have any of the same problems?
39. Think of a situation that happened to a person in the story and decide whether you would have done the same thing he/she did or something different. Tell or write what you might have done in the same situation.
40. Make a colorful illustration of an exciting scene in the book. Glue your picture to a piece of cardboard, laminate it and then cut it into puzzle parts. Be sure to put the title of the book and the author on your puzzle. Put your puzzle in the class reading center for others to enjoy.
41. Select any one of the characters in the story and think of some things each would do if he/she came to your class during reading. Try one character first, then another, and see if you can decide how they would act in P.E., science, etc.
42. Make an illustrated dictionary for the NEW words you found in the book as you read it.
43. Write a letter to a friend telling about the book. Be sure to include what or who the book is about, something about the author, the high point in the book, and the ending.
44. Make a map showing the setting of the book.
45. What if you were involved in an exciting part of the story. How would you feel?
46. Write another ending to the story that is different from the one the author wrote. Write a least one paragraph.
47. Write a poem about the story or one of the characters or events.
48. Think back in the story and try rewriting an incident from it. Substitute setting, a secondary character, or add on to the incident. For example, substitute a cat for a wolf in the THREE LITTLE PIGS.
49. If there was anything you could change about the climax, the falling action, or the resolution, what would it be and why?
50. If you were to cast this book as a film, which actors would you choose for the main characters, where would you put the setting, who would be your antagonist, what would your overall tonality be of the film?