

Literature Circles • Blogging

The online discussion is a place where you will respond to your selected work by recording your thoughts, feelings, reactions, and questions. Two key questions to ask yourself when you are preparing each blog post are:

- *What was going on inside my head?*
- *What was I visualizing?*

Your blog posts should arise from your thoughtful reading. Here are four possible ways to structure your post during each reading section.

COMMENT

Consider what the author is doing and offer criticism or questions concerning the author's style:

- a. Tell what you like about a particular phrase/part: include the reference.
- b. Discuss the writer's style of writing, explain what you like or don't like about it. Explain how it is effective in conveying a meaning. Why would the author choose to use it? *Make sure to include a brief example of it.*
- c. Write down striking words, images, phrases, or details. Speculate about them. Why did the author choose them? What do they add to the story? Why did you notice them?
- d. Identify any gaps or ambiguities in the text.
- e. Try arguing with the writer. On what points, or about what issues do you agree or disagree with them on?
- f. Point out effective examples of figurative language (or other literary devices) and explain why they are effective.
- g. Discuss an emotional response you felt towards a character or event in the novel (shock, surprise, fear, happiness, relief, etc.). Why do you think it affected you the way it did?

ANALYZE

Look closely and critically about the characters, setting and events (plot):

- a. Give your opinion about how a **character** should have worked out a conflict.
- b. Tell what makes a particular **character/setting** appealing to you.
- c. Explain the importance of one of the secondary **characters**.
- d. Share how **events** of this novel have caused a change in your views.
- e. Discuss the qualities of a **character** you dislike and explain why.
- f. Analyze whether your knowledge of a **character** was gained mostly from what s/he does, what s/he says, or what is said about him/her by others.

- g. Discuss ways in which the **character** changed throughout your reading and what caused those changes.
- h. Examine the values/personality of a **character** you like and explain why.
- i. Examine the values/personality of a **character** you dislike and explain why.
- j. Discuss how the **setting** contributes to or affects the events/characters of the novel.

CONNECT

Explain the relationship between the *text and self*, *text and other text*, or *text and world*:

- a. Compare an event/belief in the story with a similar one in your own life.
- b. Compare a character's emotional response with yours in a similar situation.
- c. Compare and/or contrast the society of this novel to the one you live in.
- d. Compare and/or contrast two characters/ideas/beliefs that appear in the same book, or in a different novel, movie, etc.
- e. Compare and/or contrast events/beliefs in the novel to events/beliefs in the real world.

QUESTION

Raise questions about the text:

- a. Question the author's writing style, character's actions, events that unfold, etc.
Ex. "Why would the author choose to omit details about Mason's childhood when....."
- b. Offer a suggestion or prediction for your questions.
- c. What perplexes you about a particular passage?
- d. Try beginning with, "I wonder why..." or "I'm having trouble understanding how..."
- e. Think of your journal as a place where you can carry on a dialogue with the author or with text in which you actually speak with him or her. Ask questions and then have the writer or character respond.

Blog Responses/Replies

Since the online environment is a kind of conversation, you will also be expected to respond to others' posts. To create a response:

1. Read the original post carefully.
2. Consider the type of response in the original post to help you tailor your response. You might extend on a COMMENT by adding additional information, deepen the ANALYSIS offered, CONNECT further or suggest a different relationship, or provide textual evidence as a potential answer for a QUESTION.
3. Your response does not have to be as long as an original post, but it should be thoughtful and complete.