

Responding to Fiction

There are many ways to respond to the text you are reading. Below are just a few ideas you could write about.

Connect to the Text

- The reminds me of ...
- This reminded me of a time when...
- I read a book where...
- This story is similar to...
- This story reminds me of the song...
- One of the characters in the story reminds me of...

Theme

- Write about the author's theme. (The theme is the "big idea" about humans, life, or the world that writer wants the reader to "get.")

Setting

- Write a paragraph describing the setting. Use descriptive words so the reader can *see* the setting in his or her mind.
- How would the story be different if it took place in *another* setting? (For example, if the story occurs in the past in California, how would it be different if it occurred today in China? If the story takes place in winter, how would it be different if it took place in summer?)
- Was the setting important to the story? Why? Explain.
- If the story takes place in more than one setting, choose two of the settings and compare and contrast them.

Character

- Which character stands out most in your mind? Why?
- Do any of the characters remind you of someone you know? How? Why?
- Choose one of the characters in the story. Compare yourself to the character. How are you alike? Not alike?
- Who is your favorite character in the story? Explain why he/she/it is your favorite.
- Is there a character in the story that you dislike? Why? Explain.
- Choose one of the characters in the story and tell how they changed from the beginning of the story to the end. What caused him or her to change? Was the change for the better?
- Pretend that one of the characters in the story is your good friend and it is his or her birthday. What birthday gift would you buy him or her? Why?

- Pretend that one of the characters in *this* story is meeting another character in *another* story you have read recently. Would they get along? Would they like each other? Do they have anything in common?
- Pretend that you are going to send one of the characters on vacation. Where would you send him or her? Why?
- Choose one of the characters in the story. Write about his or her strengths and/or weaknesses.
- Choose one of the characters in the story. Write about his or her character traits. (Is he or she honest, cruel, generous, excitable?)
- Choose two characters in the story and compare and contrast them. (Use a Venn diagram if you think it will help you.)
- Choose one character in the story and write three interesting things you discovered about the character.
- Would one of the characters in the book make a good friend? Why or why not?
- Pretend that the main character in the story is looking for a job. What kind of job would he or she want? Would he or she be good at it? Why?
- If you could trade places with one of the characters in the story, whom would it be? Why? Explain.
- Write a note from one of the characters to another.
- Write a haiku about one of the characters.
- Pretend you are one of the characters. Write a diary entry.
- If you were a reporter and were going to interview one of the characters, what questions would you ask? Why? (Write at least 5 questions.)
- Pretend that one of the characters is “wanted” by the police. Create a wanted poster, making sure to give a complete physical description of the character.
- Pretend that you are “Dear Abby” and one of the characters writes to you about his or her problem. How would you respond to him or her?
- Rewrite one scene in the story from *another character’s point of view*.
- Rewrite one scene in the story and put yourself in the story as a character.

Plot

- Pretend that you are writing a summary of the plot for the book jacket. What would you say about the story that would make someone want to read the book?
- Pretend that you are one of the characters in the story. Write a friend a *postcard* about what has happened to you or what you are doing.
- Write about the most interesting or exciting part of the story.
- Write about the funniest moment in the story. Explain why it was funny.
- Write about the saddest moment in the story. Explain why it was sad.
- What was the main conflict in the story? Explain.
- Make a brief timeline of the events in the story.
- Write a rap song about the plot of the story.
- Pretend that you are a 2nd grade teacher. Retell the plot of the book to your students, using the appropriate vocabulary.

General Responses

- Write a brief note or letter to the author telling him or her what you liked and didn't like about the story.
- What is the *one thing* that sticks in your mind most about the story? Was it the plot? A character? Why?
- Pretend that you are a reading teacher giving a "book talk" about the story. What would you tell your students to get them interested in the story?
- Write a short scene that *did not happen in the book but could have*. Would it have changed the story? How?
- Pretend that you work for a newspaper writing book reviews. What kind of rating would you give this book? (On a scale of 1 to 10). Why?
- Would you recommend this story to a friend? Why or why not?
- Did you learn something while reading the story that you could use in your own life?
- What kind of reader would like this story? Age? Interests?
- Is there anything that made you mad in the story?
- If you had to give the story *another* title, what would it be?
- Would you read another story by this author? Why or why not? Explain.
- If you could change the ending of the story, would you? Why?
- Pretend that the story is being made into a movie. Who would you have star in the movie? Why?
- Pretend that you are a teacher who is going to use the story in class. Write 5 questions that you could use on a quiz. (Make sure you include questions that require your student to *think*. Include some "how" and "why" questions.)