

Character

Think of two questions you have about the protagonist. Do you think the questions will be answered as you continue with the story? Why or why not?

Describe the protagonist of the book in five or fewer words. Avoid using trite words (nice, good, bad, mean, etc.).

Identify a decision or choice made by a character. Do you agree with this decision? Why or why not?

Describe a character's action that surprised you. In what ways was the action consistent or inconsistent with what you know about the character?

Character

Who is the antagonist in the story? What clues from the text help you to determine this?

How would you feel if you were one of the characters in the book? Explain.

Describe a gift that you would give to the protagonist, and explain what details from the book influenced your decision.

What is a question that one of the characters seems to be struggling with in the story? How does this character seek answers or advice to resolve the question?

Character

If you could choose to become one of the characters, who would you choose? Why?

How would the book be different if told from another character's point of view?

Compare and contrast the protagonist in this story with a character in another book.

Create a new problem for the protagonist that is similar to a problem you once faced. Do you think the protagonist would respond to the problem the same way you did? Why or why not?

Character

Describe a scene in the book in which a character's thoughts differed from his or her actions. Why do you think this happened?

How does the setting of the book influence the characters' actions and decisions?

Compare and contrast two characters in this book. Which one do you think is a more interesting character? Why?

Rank order the story characters from your favorite to least favorite. What details about the characters influenced your decisions?

Character

How might the characters behave differently if the story were set in a different place or time? Why?

Is the protagonist someone you would want to "hang out" with? What qualities does the character display that lead you to that decision?

Which character's point of view is used to tell the story? Tell one event from a different character's point of view. What evidence from the text helped you decide how to change the description of the event?

Character

If you could change the behaviors of any character, which would you change? Why? How would the change affect the story overall?

Which character in the book faces the biggest problem? Why do you think this is the biggest problem?

Would you want to read about other characters this author has created? Why or why not?

Imagine one character's closet. Describe at least five things that you would expect to find there. (Remember, many people's closets contain more than clothing!)

Character

How does the personality of one character contribute to his or her eventual success or failure?

Who narrates the book? Why do you think the author made this choice?

Describe two events in the story that the author used to portray the protagonist's personality. What did you learn about the character from these parts of the book?

What advice would you give the main character if he or she was starting as a new student at your school? Whom do you think he or she would sit with at lunch?

Character

If you could eliminate one character from the book, whom would you choose? What effects would the removal of this character have on the story?

If you were writing a sequel or companion book to this one, which character would you make your protagonist? Why?

In what ways does the main character stand out from other characters? Do you think this person would stand out in real life, or only in the context of the story? Why?

Is the antagonist a believable character? Why or why not?

Plot

What do you think was the most important event in the story? Why?

Think of what has happened in the story so far. Why do you think the author chose to order the events as he or she did?

Describe a conflict that occurred in the book. What were the sources or causes of the conflict?

Mark Twain once wrote, "Truth is stranger than fiction.... Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities." Explain how this book is an example or nonexample of this saying.

Plot

Choose one scene from the book that you would like to illustrate. What color palette and artistic media would you use? Why?

Summarize a chapter from the book in...

- 25 words or fewer;
- 10 words or fewer;
- 5 words or fewer.

At the beginning of the book, how does the author set the stage for subsequent events?

Describe a suspenseful moment in the story. How did the author build the suspense?

Plot

What mood or atmosphere is the overall structure of the story intended to evoke? How do you know?

What one thing would you ask the author to change about the plot if you were to write to him or her?

Visualize a timeline for the events of the book. Should it be drawn in a straight line, or would another shape (web, circle, triangle, etc.) capture the sequence of events more effectively?

Select a chapter of the book and give it a new title. Explain your rationale for your title.

Plot

What are the main problems that have arisen thus far in the book? At this point in the story, which problem is most significant? Why?

If you could only choose one event from the story to use in describing this book to a friend, what event would you choose? Do you think you could convince your friend to read the book based only on this one event?

Describe a point in the story at which you didn't want to put the book down or couldn't wait to find out what happened next. What made that moment in the plot so compelling?

Plot

What events would you include if you were to make a movie of this book?

List what you consider to be characteristics of a good story. Which ones apply to this book?

Describe times when you were able to predict accurately what would happen next in the story. What clues did the author give that helped you make your predictions?

Find a scene in the book that left a strong picture in your mind. What language did the author use that helped to create that visualization?

Plot

Would you change the ending of the book if you could? If so, what changes would you make? Why?

Why do you think the author wrote this story?

Predict the reactions of the following people to this story:

- someone in your family
- a close friend
- your teacher

Think of three or four songs that you would want to include on a “soundtrack” for this book. Why did you choose each song?

Plot

What clues did the title give you about the plot? Would you change the title if you could? Why or why not?

How are the events in the story similar to events in your own life?

Does the book have a table of contents? If so, what clues does it give you about the plot?

What is the central conflict in the book? In what ways did the resolution of the conflict help one or more characters to grow and change?

Plot

Describe any part of the plot that confused you. Do you think this was the author's intent? How did you resolve your confusion?

Describe a scene that you would include in a movie preview for this book. Why would you choose that scene?

What was the turning point or climax of the story? How do you know? How did it affect the main characters?

Is the plot believable? What aspects of the book added to or subtracted from this realism?

Setting

Visualize one location from this book. What three adjectives would you use to describe this setting?

Would you want to live in the setting of this book? Why or why not?

Describe an alternative setting for the book, including details about location and time period. How would these changes affect the characters and plot?

How does the author use the setting to build the mood for the story?

Setting

If you were to plan a trip to the setting of this book, what would you pack and why?

Connect the setting of this book to that of another book you have read. What do the settings have in common? How are they different?

Is the setting an appropriate location for the story? Why or why not?

What kind of background information do you think the author needed to collect in creating the setting for this book? What resources could the author have used to gather this information?

Illustrations/Layout

Could the illustrations in this book tell the story without words? Why or why not?

What medium did the illustrator use? How did this affect your response?

What observations can you make about the overall layout of the book? How did the layout affect the way in which you are reading the book?

How did the cover and layout of this book influence your decision to read it?

Choose an illustration you like from the book. Why do you think the illustrator chose to depict that moment?

Illustrations/Layout

Is the cover of the book a good match for what you find inside? Why or why not?

How do the illustrations or page layouts differ from those in other books you have read? What do you find useful or appealing about the layout of this book?

If you were in charge of developing a new edition of this book, what changes would you make to the layout and/or illustrations?

Would this book be as interesting or helpful to you without the illustrations and/or diagrams? Why or why not?

Biography

If you were going to write a biography, who would you write about? Why?

What do you admire about the person in this biography? Why? How might you develop some of these admirable qualities yourself?

What do you think school was like for the person about whom this biography was written? Explain.

How did the author organize events in writing about this individual's life? Why do you think particular details were included or omitted?

Biography

What challenges did this person face? How did he or she work to overcome these challenges?

Describe a difficult decision the person had to make. Do you think you would have made the same choice? Why?

What do other people consider this person's most significant accomplishment? Do you think the person would agree with this assessment?

Was the person alive at the time the biography was written? How might this have affected the author's work in collecting information and writing the book?

Biography

Why would an author write a biography about this individual?

What additional questions do you have about this person and his/her experience that this book did not answer?

What do you have in common with the person about whom you are reading? Do you think you would be friends with this person if you had the opportunity to meet?

Describe the significance of the dedication in the book, if there is one.

Biography

From what you have read so far, describe an event that was very influential on the choices the individual made in his or her life.

What did you learn about yourself while reading this biography?

Describe a situation in which the person faced a setback or failure. How did he or she respond?

If the book you are reading is a biography, how might it be different if it were an autobiography? Or vice versa?

Courage

How do characters show courage in the book? In what ways do their acts of courage differ?

Describe an act of courage that surprised you as you read. Look back through the book to determine whether this act was consistent with the character and his or her development.

Describe an example of bravery through restraint rather than action. Do you agree with the character's decision? Why or why not?

Identify a character's courageous act. Predict how other characters might be inspired by this.

Courage

Identify a courageous act by the main character. What made this act courageous?

Think about the challenges that caused characters in this book to show courage. Explain which challenges you would be most willing to tackle and which would require the most courage for you to face.

Explain how a character's prior experiences and interactions contribute to his or her courage.

Mark Twain wrote that "Courage is resistance to fear... not absence of fear." In what ways does this book demonstrate that idea?

Integrity

A person shows integrity by consistently sticking to a clear set of moral and ethical principles in decision-making and action, even in the face of other pressures or attractive options. Describe a character in the book who shows integrity.

Give an example of a decision a character made that required weighing his or her principles against other pressures.

Describe the relationship between integrity and power in this book. In what ways does a desire for power challenge a character's integrity?

What advice would you give to a character facing a moral dilemma in this book?

Power

Identify a powerful character in the book. Does the character's power derive from his or her expertise, personality, position, strength, or some other source?

Compare a character who uses power for good with one who uses power for evil. What are the similarities and differences in how they view power?

How do characters in the book demonstrate their power? What is the purpose of these demonstrations?

Imagine you are transported to the world of the book. How would you prepare to resist or fight the influence of a powerful antagonist?

Power

Can you identify a character in the book who is completely powerless? What message is the author sending by including this character?

Imagine you are painting a portrait of a powerful character in the book. What signs or symbols would you include in the portrait to represent the character's strength?

Does a power struggle in this book represent a conflict of good vs. evil? Why or why not?

Identify a character that you would describe as a bully. What advice would you offer other characters for how to diminish the bully's power?

Power

Describe a character whose power increases in the book. What are the consequences and casualties of this rise to power?

Describe a benevolent act on the part of a character in the book. What inspired the act, and how does it change the balance of power in the story?

Identify a point in the story at which the balance of power shifts. Predict the consequences of this change.

How does a powerful character use his or her strength for personal gain or personal freedom? At what point does this use represent corruption?

Power

What conditions enable sharing of power in the book? How does this undermine or enhance a character's strength?

Describe choices made by powerful characters in the book. How do these choices reflect their moral judgment and personal beliefs?

What motivates resistance to power in the book? What sacrifices are characters willing to make to stand up for what they believe is right?

Identify someone whose power wanes as the plot progresses. What are the main characters learning from this change?

Nature

How is nature used as a character in this book? What message does its role convey?

What does the book show about the power and patterns of nature? What do the characters need to learn about nature as the plot progresses?

Compare the role of nature in this book to its role in a book with a very different setting, but a similar theme (for example, survival).

What would you include in a painting intended to represent the main character's view of nature at one point in the book? How would it differ at another point?

Stewardship

What message does the book convey about human responsibility for caring for the Earth and its inhabitants?

In what ways does the author try to persuade readers to take action in response to some problem or concern? To what degree is the author's argument convincing?

How might the information in this book help people engage in stewardship? What other information might you seek to further your understanding?

Describe a project you might do in your community to advance the message of this book.

Growth & Change

Describe 3 significant changes that have happened in this book. What were the primary causes of these changes?

Identify a moment in the book that caused the protagonist to experience a change in how he or she sees the world. Predict how this change will contribute to the character's growth.

Describe how events in the story alter characters' perceptions of each other. Explain whether these changes happen suddenly or gradually.

What changes in the book result from careful planning and deliberate action? What can you learn from these actions?

Growth & Change

How does a learning experience lead to growth for a character in the book?

Identify a change in the book that you would characterize as negative. What evidence supports your judgment? Would all the characters perceive the change as negative? Why or why not?

How does the book demonstrate that not all changes can be predicted or controlled?

Identify a change that led to multiple other changes. How would you diagram the connections among these changes?

Growth & Change

In what ways does the protagonist's growth within the book change his or her relationships with others?

How does the protagonist deal with a difficult event in the book? To what extent did he or she have control over the event and its outcomes? How did he or she grow as a result?

Can you identify changes in the book that are potentially reversible? How do these differ from changes that seem more permanent or one-directional?

How do a character's actions demonstrate the internal growth and change the character is experiencing?

Relationships

Describe the interactions between two important characters. What are the benefits and costs of the relationship for each person?

Identify a relationship in the book that might be unhealthy. What concerns you about the relationship?

Explain how the protagonist interacts with his or her environment. What changes result from the relationship for the environment, the character, or both?

Describe a character who is skillful at maintaining relationships. What makes this person successful?

Relationships

Give an example of how characters work together to solve a problem in the book. How is their relationship changed by the experience?

Describe a relationship between two enemies in the book. Is the relationship believable? Why or why not?

What makes a friendship healthy? Give and explain examples of this kind of relationship from this book.

Identify a relationship in this book and give it a “theme song.” Explain whether the same song would apply to the relationship throughout the book or change.

Relationships

Describe a relationship between two characters in this book. What experiences have brought these characters together? Do you expect the relationship to continue throughout the book? Why?

Think about power and empathy as potential factors in the development of relationships. Describe how each of these concepts plays a role in this story.

Identify a character who you think needs a friend. How might a friendship enhance his or her life? What qualities would the friend need to bring to the relationship?

Conflict

What is the central conflict in the book? Would you describe it as an example of *man vs. self*, *man vs. man*, *man vs. nature*, or *man vs. society*? Why?

Identify a character who plays a peacemaker role in the book. Explain how he or she uses diplomacy to neutralize conflict.

Describe a conflict between characters in the book. Which character has greater control in the conflict? How do you know?

What are the potential positive and negative effects of the story's central conflict? How might it result in growth and change? Who might be hurt or helped as a result and why?

Conflict

What are some decisions with which the main character has to struggle? How do these situations contribute to internal conflict for the character?

How does a character's quest for power or control play a role in the book's central conflict?

Identify a central conflict in the story. What are the roots of the conflict? How do you think these causes will influence the overall plot?

What do the characters have to give up to resolve conflict? How do these concessions change the characters?

Conflict

Describe a conflict that one or more characters have with their society or culture. Predict whether this conflict will lead to a change in society or conformity in the characters.

How is the conflict in this book similar to those you have explored in other texts?

Evaluate the choices an important character makes about avoiding conflict. Do these choices represent strength or weakness? Why?

Describe how the antagonist engages in the conflict. What physical and metaphorical weapons does this person use?

Fantasy/SciFi

What elements of traditional fairy tales can you find reflected in the setting, plot, or characters? Why do you think the author included these elements?

Frequently, fantasy or science fiction features characters who are orphans or otherwise on their own. Does your book have such a character in an important role? How does this affect the plot?

Were you able to predict the ending of this story? What clues from the text helped you with this? If not, what elements in the text made it difficult to predict?

Fantasy/SciFi

What aspects of this book would be challenging to depict in a movie? What kinds of special effects might moviemakers need to use?

Identify any magical powers in this book. How and why were these powers necessary to the plot?

How does the author allow you to “suspend disbelief”? Or, how does the author make the book believable within its fictional setting?

What do you notice about the settings of the first and last scenes? Why might these settings be important?

Fantasy/SciFi

How does this novel demonstrate the theme of good vs. evil? How does the fictional setting emphasize this conflict?

In what ways does the author exaggerate something from the “real world” to show something about his or her fictional world?

Are there nonhuman characters in the book that reflect human characteristics? What can you learn from these characters about human feelings or behavior?

What do you think is the moral of the story? Why?

Fantasy/SciFi

Imagine if we had the creatures/gadgets/modes of transportation from the book in our own society. How would your life be different?

What have you found to be the most creative part of the book? Why?

If you were unexpectedly dropped into the world of this book, what would you miss most? What would you find most difficult to get used to?

Does this book seem to offer a warning about the effects of some choices we might make with scientific knowledge? What message is the author trying to convey?

Self-Help

Explain how the title of the book connects to the strategies that the author is trying to provide. What audience do you think the title was intended to attract and why?

What kind of evidence does the author provide to suggest that his or her strategies are effective for others?

Describe any strategies from this book that you plan to use yourself. Why have you made these choices?

Which strategies from this book would you not want to try? Why?

Self-Help

Why did you select this book to read? What questions did you have when you started to read the book? Were your questions answered?

What observations can you make about the organization of this book? What did you find to be useful about the way information was presented? What might you change in your own version of this book?

Can you think of a fictional character or someone you know who might benefit from reading this book? In what way would he/she benefit?

Mysteries

How do you know that this book is a mystery (besides the label on the book)?

What qualifications does the character in the “detective” role bring to the story? If more than one person is working to solve the mystery, how do their skills complement each other?

At this point in the story, who would you include on a list of suspects? Why is each person a potential culprit?

Would you say that this mystery is more of an intellectual mystery or an action-based one? Why?

Mysteries

What clues has the author given so far to help you solve the mystery? How do you know they are clues? How has this evidence changed your thinking about the “answer”?

Have you decided that any characters are innocent? Why do you think so? Provide evidence from the story.

Describe an event in the book that was suspenseful for you as the reader. How does the author build suspense throughout the story?

How would reading this book be different if you knew the solution before you started?

Mysteries

A “red herring” is a false clue that the author adds to confuse the reader and/or the detective. Describe any red herrings in the story.

Have you decided that any characters are guilty? Provide evidence from the story.

If you were investigating this mystery, what steps would you take to uncover the truth?

Would you ever read the ending of a mystery first? Why or why not?

Do you feel that the resolution of the mystery was logical and believable? Why?

Humor

What cues or clues tell you that this book is intended to be funny? What audience do you think would most appreciate it?

Describe how a particular character's actions or behaviors remind you of someone you know. Do you find this person to be funny in "real life"? Why?

One element of humor is the use of surprise or of the unexpected. Give an example of how the author uses the element of surprise for humorous effect.

In what ways does the author use the narration of the story to convey humor?

Humor

Would you describe this book as *witty* or does it rely more on *slapstick* humor? Explain your answer.

How does the author use exaggeration to humorous effect in the book?

How would you respond if you witnessed one of the humorous scenes from this book? Do you think the situation would seem funny if it really happened? Why or why not?

How does the author use self-deprecating humor? Why do you think people might find this type of humor appealing?

Humor

Describe something a character did that you wish you could actually do but that would be impossible or inappropriate outside of a book. Why are the rules of behavior or logic different in fiction?

Give examples of how the author uses language to create humor in the book.

Retell a funny moment from the book. What made this moment seem funny to you?

Which character from this book would you like to invite to "hang out" with you and your friends? Why?

Poetry

Select a phrase from a poem in this book that caught your attention while you were reading. Explain why you think you noticed this phrase.

What was your emotional response to this poem?

What sensory images (visual, auditory, etc.) come to mind when you read this poem? How does the language of the poem inspire these images?

If you were to read this poem aloud, would you read it quickly or slowly? Why? What other choices would you make about reading it aloud?

Poetry

If you made this poem into a song, what kind of music would you use? What kinds of instruments would you use? Why?

How would you illustrate this poem? What colors, style, and media would you use? Why?

How do the structural elements of the poem (rhythm, use of repetition, structure of lines, etc.) contribute to its meaning?

Look at the collection of poems in this book as a whole. Why do you think the poet chose to group the poems this way? What theme or themes do you notice that unify the collection?

Poetry

What patterns of rhythm and rhyme do you notice in this poem? How do these elements shape meaning? If no such patterns exist, why do you think the poet chose not to use these elements?

There are many specific poetic forms, such as haiku, limericks, sonnets, etc. What different poetic forms do you notice in this book? Which poetic form or forms appeal to you? Why?

If you were to recommend this poem to an adult other than your reading teacher, who would it be and why?

Nonfiction

How could an idea in this book improve or change the world? Or, if you are reading a history book, how did an idea in the book change the world?

Describe some professions that relate to this topic. What kinds of work do these people do?

How is the information in this book organized? In what ways is it similar to or different from a fictional narrative?

What new information have you learned from this book that makes you curious to learn more about the topic?

Nonfiction

Identify one cause and effect relationship described in this book. Was the relationship between cause and effect predicted or was its discovery a surprise? Explain.

What different perspectives were presented on an issue in this book? How well balanced were the viewpoints?

How do the ideas in this book relate to your life?

How did the Table of Contents and Index help you to use this book? What advice would you give to another student about using these tools while reading this book?

Point of View

Bias happens when the author presents only one point of view on an issue that may have multiple perspectives. Describe how you might investigate whether this book presents information in a biased way.

What point of view do you think the author conveys on the topic? Do you think he or she shows bias? How? If not, how did the author avoid conveying a bias?

Are there points in the book at which you disagree with the author? Explain your perspective and what evidence you have to support your ideas.

Nonfiction

Would this book be a good choice to include in a time capsule? Why or why not?

What information does the book provide on the author's background? What evidence of the author's expertise on the topic did you find in this information? What evidence did you find in the text itself?

If more than one author wrote the book, why do you think their collaboration might have been important?

What is one big question you still have after reading the book? What steps might you take to find answers?

Nonfiction

Identify a part of the book on which you had to spend extra time. Explain the strategies you used to understand the information (rereading, consulting pictures, looking in another book, etc.).

Have you read any fiction books that deal with this topic? How accurate was the content presented in the fiction book?

What is the most important idea the author conveys? How does this compare with what *you* found to be most relevant and interesting?

What inspired you to choose this book?

Nonfiction

Compare what you learned in this book with what you already knew or thought you knew about the topic.

What sections of the book did you want to read first? Why?

Is everything in the book based on fact? How does the author use factual evidence to support new ideas and interpretations? How can you tell the difference between the author's presentation of fact and inference?

Describe how the text formatting contributed to or hindered your understanding of the book.

Nonfiction

Describe how the information in this book added to your existing knowledge. How might what you have learned be linked to what you are or have been studying in other classes?

Describe the format of the book. What other topics could be covered using this format? What topics would **not** be appropriate for this format?

Suggest a plot for a fictional story in which this information plays an important role.

What questions would you want to ask an expert on this topic after reading the book?

Nonfiction

Compare this book with other books on this topic. In what ways was the information similar and different? In what ways was the presentation similar and different?

Identify a word from the book that was new to you. How did you figure out the meaning of the word?

If you were to write a follow up to this book, what part would you like to research in more depth?

What was the author's purpose in writing this book? How well do you think he or she achieved this goal?

How-To Books

What would you find most challenging about following the directions in this book? Why?

If you had a question about some of the processes in this book, who in your community might you contact for help? What expertise would this person bring to the tasks?

Explain how you would collect any special resources or tools you would need to follow the directions in the book.

As you follow one set of directions in this book, what signs will you look for to be sure that you are completing the task correctly?

Audience

What other topics or ideas might people who like this book be interested in? Why?

Read the summary on the back of the book. To what audience do you think the summary is intended to appeal? What evidence supports your answer?

To whom would you recommend this book? Why? Who do you know that would not like this book? Why?

How would you adapt this book to appeal to a younger or older audience?

Historical Fiction

Describe how the author brings the historical period to life. What details of the time period stand out to you? Why?

From whose point of view is the story being told? Is this person real or fictional? Why do you think the author made the decision to tell the story from this character's point of view?

What would you find appealing about living in the time and place depicted in this book? Why?

What modern conveniences would you most miss if you lived in the time of this book?

Historical Fiction

Anachronism refers to something or someone that is not in its accurate historical time. For example, an electronic object or the use of modern slang would be out of place in a book set in the 18th century. Can you find any anachronisms in this book? If so, how might they distract or mislead a reader?

Does the book contain an intentional juxtaposition of modern and historical details? If so, what purpose does it serve?

What nonfiction resources might help you to develop a better understanding of details of the historical period?

Historical Fiction

After reading this book, what questions do you have about the historical setting and/or the people of this time and place?

Do you identify more with the real or fictional characters in this book? Why?

How would you check the accuracy of the historical information in this book? What resources might you use?

Choose some aspect of daily life mentioned in this book, such as food or clothing or transportation. How would you explain to a character from the book how this aspect of life has changed from their time to yours?

Reading Attitudes

What have you enjoyed most about reading this book? What have you liked the least?

Do you think you would read another book by this author? Explain, using your observations about the author's style.

Have you read other books in this genre? If so, what aspects of the genre appeal to you? If not, what drew you to this book?

Would you like to see a movie based on this book, or would you prefer to keep the images you created yourself as you read? Why?

Reading Attitudes

Do you think you would want to read this book again someday? Why or why not?

What have you found most challenging about reading this book? What strategies have you tried to help you respond? What additional support might you need?

In what kind of setting would you most like to be reading this book? Why?

What would you share with your friends about this book? Why?

What have you learned about yourself as a reader from reading this book?

