

## Keeping a Reading Journal

A reading journal is a space to slow down, reflect, and engage more deeply with what you're reading. It helps you:

- Capture your evolving thoughts as a reader,
- understand the story more fully, and
- Notice how your reading habits and insights grow over time.

Each journal is unique, and your entries should reflect how you see and feel about the story.

### What Can You Write About?

There's no one-size-fits-all approach, but here are a few ideas to get you started:

- Your guesses or predictions about what might happen next
- Connections between the story and your own life
- Memories or personal experiences the story brings to mind
- Characters you relate to — or ones that frustrate you
- Moments or ideas in the story that struck you
- Observations about the author's style or how the story is told
- Reminders of other books, movies, poems, or plays you've experienced
- Questions that come up while reading
- Anything that confuses or intrigues you
- Any thoughts or feelings you want to remember

### When Should You Write?

Writing as you go is best, not just when you finish a book. Even a few lines after a chapter can capture your rawest, most honest reactions. Aim to write regularly rather than all at once.

### What Should a Journal Entry Look Like?

- Always include the **date**, **book title**, and **author**
- Note the **page or chapter** you're responding to
- Write in a separate notebook or section dedicated to your journal
- Keep the focus on your responses — don't just retell the story
- Use the **first person**: *"I feel..."*, *"I wonder..."*, *"This reminds me of..."*

Think of it as a quiet conversation with yourself, your teacher, or your reading group.

### **Tips to Enrich Your Entries**

- Include quotes that stood out and explain why they moved you
- Comment on elements like the **setting, tone, dialogue, plot, themes, or character development**
- Be honest — it's okay if you didn't love a section, explain why
- Don't be afraid to ask questions or express confusion

You can also write before you begin reading:

- What does the title make you expect?
- How do you respond to the first sentence?
- Does the cover make a specific promise about the story?

### **Starters to Help You Begin a Journal Entry:**

- *I notice...*
- *I wonder about...*
- *This part reminded me of...*
- *What puzzles me is...*
- *I didn't expect...*
- *I now understand...*
- *What stands out to me here is...*

### **Remember the Ending**

How did the story leave you feeling? Was the ending satisfying, surprising, predictable, or disappointing? Would you imagine a different one?

Whether you loved the book or didn't connect with it, try to reflect rather than judge — each story teaches something, even when it challenges us.

And if you ever need to write a review, reflection, or essay later on, your journal will be a treasure trove of insight.