**A Guide for Active Reading**

*Fitz’s Active Reading Rubric #1*

Sometimes we read for simply the pleasure of reading. Sometimes we read because we are studying a piece of literature, and we are trying to understand that literature in a deeper and more profound way. When we read a piece of literature in this way, it is a wise idea to practice what is commonly called “active reading.” In active reading, we notate (by adding notes or highlighting certain parts of the text) so that we come away from the reading with an understanding not only of the plot of the story, but also with a richer vocabulary, an appreciation for how the author uses these words in phrases and sentences for greater effect, and, perhaps most importantly, to discover the important themes that the story uses to make it a great (or sometimes not so great) story.

**Five New or Cool Words: Find five new or cool words in use them in sentences.**

Knowing a lot of words is pretty useless unless we actually know how to use and understand those words when reading, speaking, and writing. Reading good books and listening attentively is the number one, all-time best way to develop a rich, broad and diverse vocabulary. (The number two best way is to master the vocabulary flashcards I have created for you☺)

As you read a story highlight, underline, or circle words you don’t understand—or you just think are words that are really cool and you want to be able to use in your own developing vocabulary. Believe me, there are plenty of cool words out there! In the space below, share five words you found in the reading that you think are awesome, cool, and interesting words. Put the word in bold and then try and use that word in a sentence. You do not need to write the definition.

**For Example:**

**Edifying:** I never thought that studying vocabulary would such an edifying experience!

1. **Word:** Use the word in a sentence.
2. **Word:** Use the word in a sentence.
3. **Word:** Use the word in a sentence.
4. **Word:** Use the word in a sentence.
5. **Word:** Use the word in a sentence.

**Four Fantastic Phrases: Use four fantastic phrases in sentences**

Jimmy Hendrix was such an amazing guitarist not because he could play a lot of notes (he certainly could), but because of the way he put those notes together as guitar riffs (a series of notes that create a memorable and enchanting musical phrase). Writers do the same sort of thing by using a short group of words to create an interesting and effective phrase. In the space below, share four phrases that you highlighted in the story that you feel are worthy of remembering. Put the phrase in bold and then create your own sentence.

**For Example:**

**Rosy fingers of dawn:** I was as tired, but it is worth getting up early to see the rosy fingers of dawn.

1. **Phrase:** Use the phrase in a sentence.
2. **Phrase:** Use the phrase in a sentence.
3. **Phrase:** Use the phrase in a sentence.
4. **Phrase:** Use the phrase in a sentence.

**Three Enduring Themes: Identify and show three timeless themes**

The themes of any conversation, speech, movie, or book are the ideas, topics, situations and/or points of view used to help tell the story and make it relevant to the listener, viewer or reader. A theme needs to be universal, meaning that people everywhere know and understand what that theme represents in a single word, such as peace, friendship, struggle, loneliness, love, loss, regret, family; moreover, we can understand themes in a more specific way as a short phrase, such as *missing a friend (*loss*)*, *learning to cope with failure* (frustration), or *appreciating your parents* (family).

These universal themes make stories interesting, memorable, and rewarding. Without these universal themes, a story just does not work for us because we need to relate to a story in a personal way in order to like and appreciate that story. Every “good” story has one main theme that is focused on throughout the story (called the main theme or dominant theme) as well as any number of smaller themes (called minor themes) that help to create interesting and often profound parts of the story that we can relate to in any number of emotional and intellectual ways.

1. **Theme:** Describe how and where this theme is used in the writing piece
2. **Theme:** Describe how and where this theme is used in the writing piece
3. **Theme:** Describe how and where this theme is used in the writing piece

**Two Quotable Quotes: Copy and cite two quotable quotes**

Having a bunch of good quotes in your memory is like having a lot of useful tools in your toolbox—they’re good to have because you never know when they might come in handy. A good writer spends a lot of time creating sentences that are clear, concise, and memorable, and his or her best sentences are remembered by generations of readers. A good quote says a lot in a small space. Share two quotes from the writing piece that you feel are worth remembering. It is a good habit to always cite your source for the quote you are using. Use quotation marks and italics for your quote. Cite the source afterwards.

**For Example:**

*“Don’t let school interfere with your education*.” ~Mark Twain

1. *“Put quote in italics here”* ~Source
2. *“Put quote in italics here”* ~Source

**One Thoughtful Response: Post responses on the discussion board.**

If you like something and think it is worth sharing, then it is worth putting in a bit of time and effort to share your thoughts with other people. It is even better when you can have a conversation with other people and share your thoughts and reflection. To do this, go to the discussion board and post your thoughts, questions, and reflections about the reading. Check back later and see what other people have posted, and then respond to each other in an open, honest, and respectful way. You can respond directly to an individual post or you can add your own post to the discussion thread.