Reading Response Paragraph Rubric

*Crafting a Personal Response to Literature*

A personal reading response needs to feel and sound like “you” speaking at your very best. A personal response needs to be both honest and “thoughtful.” Being thoughtful means that you are careful and considered in your writing. Use this rubric when you are asked to or want to craft a brief, yet full-bodied, personal response to a piece of literature. Read the descriptions of each step of the rubric on the left side, and then insert your sentences into the boxes on the right side of the rubric. When you are completed, cut and paste the full piece into a separate document.

**Formatting & Layout**

**1. Assignment Details:**

* + Follow all of the formatting requirements.
  + Follow the directions for each step of the rubric.
  + Be sure to “try” and match what you write with the directions for each stage of the rubric.

[Put text here]

**2. Title:**

* + A writing piece without a title is like eating food blindfolded: you are not quite sure what you are going to get.
  + Try to craft an interesting, relevant and pithy title that clues your reader in on the thematic direction your reading response is going to go. It helps you, too!

[Put title here]

**3. Quote:**

* + Though a quote is not needed for a writing piece to succeed, it certainly does not hurt to insert a quote that reinforces the theme of your response.
  + It would be a good idea to use a quote from the writing piece itself!

*[Put quote here]*

*[—Put author’s name here]*

**The Opening Paragraph**

**4. The Hook**

***Get the Reader’s Attention***

Every writing piece needs a good and pithy “hook” to gain and grab the readers attention. Without even mentioning the title, write a brief, single sentence that tries to capture the attention of your audience by stating the major theme of your personal reading response.

[Put hook here]

**5. Narrow Theme:**

***Get Detailed & Specific***

In the second sentence, introduce the piece of literature, the genre of the piece, and the author, as well as the major effect the writing piece had on you personally.

* Remember that book titles are italicized.
* Short story, song, chapter, and poem titles are put in quotes.

[Put narrow theme here]

**6. One/Two Punch:**

***What is the Author Trying To Do?***

* + Every writer writes for a reason, wind in doing so  he or she tries to get the reader to feel or think in a certain way.
  + Write two or three more sentences that tells your reader what "you" feel the author is trying to do and accomplish in the writing piece.

[Put one/two punch here]

**The Second Paragraph**

**7. Smoking Gun:**

***Summary & Text Reference***

* + How does the author do it?
  + In what way does the author tell his or her story.
  + Briefly, using three to five sentences, summarize the story, poem, chapter, or song. It is important to give a brief summary of the writing piece because it helps your reader put the writing piece in context. This does not mean, however, to give away all of the details and spoil it for your reader.
* Who: who is are the major characters?
* Where: where is the action happening?
* When: when is the action taking place?
* What: what is the main conflict that is happening?
* Why: why is this conflict happening?

[Put smoking gun here]

**Third and/or Additional Paragraphs**

**8. Head & Heart:**

***Metacognition: You Writing About You***

*Remember that in a personal response, you can’t be wrong―as long as you are truthful and thoughtful. In this section of your paragraph write honestly from your head and heart about your experience reading and understanding the text. Below are some ideas for how to approach this paragraph, but please expand the list to suit your response.*

Some ideas, but don’t answer these like a list of questions; rather, try to weave them into your natural narrative voice.

* How did the writing piece affect you? Was it exciting, boring, interesting, dull...why?
* What emotions did it make you feel?
* Did you relate to the content or the characters in some way, shape or form?
* Did it challenge you to think and feel in a different way?
* Did it change any part of your own world view?
* Did it bring up memories of other books or authors you have read?

You can’t be wrong here, but you can write in a way that is dull and boring to your readers! When you find yourself going in a new direction, create a new paragraph.

[Put smoking gun here]

**Final Paragraph:**

**9. Conclusion:**

***The Elevator Review***

The conclusion is as important as the hook, so do your best to make the end of your paragraph as interesting and refreshing as your opening sentence.

* Imagine that someone in an elevator asked you about what you are reading, and you only have ten seconds to respond.
* You can touch on what you have already written, but don’t use the same words again.
* Really, it should not take more than fifteen seconds to read this last paragraph!

[Put conclusion here]

10. Paste Full Response Here:

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###### The Potsaid Rule of Three:

***Proofread, Edit, Revise, & Submit***

###### Literature is abandoned, not finished! Go back and re-read what you have written.

###### Find three areas or sentences that you can make better. If you can't or won't do this, then you are light years away from being a writer.

###### **Often you can find a better broad or narrow theme sentence somewhere else in the paragraph**. You can almost always find a more clear and effective way to write a sentence than you wrote on your first try.

###### If the rule of three was too easy (meaning you easily found mistakes) do it again...and again if you have to.

###### \*When you are convinced you have done all you can, submit your final review as required by your teacher or editor.

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