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Reflections: A Student Response Journal



The Sun Also Rises
Ernest Hemingway



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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Chapter One

1. Robert dislikes boxing, but he pursues learning in order “to counteract the feeling of inferiority and shyness he had felt.” Relate a time when you or someone you know felt intimidated by something. What was done about the situation?
2. Imagine yourself ten years after senior graduation. What accomplishments or traits do you want your classmates to remember about you? What do you think you’ll be remembered for?
3. “I mistrust all frank and simple people, especially when their stories hold together...” What do you suppose this comment means, and does it bring to mind anyone you know?
4. Just as Robert has a literary friend and a tennis friend, we all have made friends for different reasons. Think about two of your closest friends. Why did you become friends with each person and how do the friendships differ?

Chapter Two

5. Describe a character from a movie or book whose personality changes due to fame or wealth. Do you think the change is justified? How do you imagine you would react under similar circumstances?
6. Have you ever read about a place, either real or fictional, and then wanted to go there? In what way and for what reason was the place so appealing?

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13. Brett has mixed feelings for Jake and is torn between not wanting to see him and having to see him. Do you think this indecision stems from love, selfishness, or from another factor?
14. Relate a time when you or a friend was forced to make a difficult choice. What were the options weighed and how was a decision reached?
15. While reminiscing about his first encounter with Brett, Jake says, “I suppose she only wanted what she couldn’t have. Well, people were that way.” Do you agree or disagree with this thought? Can you think of an example from a book, movie, or your life to support your opinion?
16. Suppose Jake asks for your advice on what to do about his dilemma with Brett. As his friend, would you suggest he maintain the strenuous relationship or sever contact with her? Explain.

Chapter Five

17. Complete this dialogue:
First Student: The more Robert discusses Brett, the more Jake seems to get upset.
Second Student: Who can blame him? His friend is attracted to the woman he loves.
Third Student: Then why doesn’t Jake tell Robert how he feels? Maybe then Robert will back away from Brett.
You: I think Jake doesn’t mention it because...
18. Jake does not describe Brett with the positive terms Robert wants to hear and, as a result, Robert causes a little scene. Do you feel Robert has a good reason to be upset? Do you consider Jake’s remarks insulting?

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47. Complete this dialogue:
Friend: Montoya is lucky to have so many good bull-fighters stay at his hotel.
You: Yes, but only those with aficion matter to Montoya. The rest of the fighters are of no consequence.
Friend: That's what I don't understand. Why would Montoya throw out signed photographs of celebrity fighters if he has such a love for bull-fighting?
You:
48. "Montoya could forgive anything of a bull-fighter who had aficion. He could forgive attacks of nerves, panic, bad unexplainable actions, all sorts of lapses." Is there anyone in your life to whom you hold such a high esteem? Why do you have so much respect for this person?
49. Look at the comment about forgiveness from the previous question. Do you know of someone famous, in literature, or in popular culture, who seems to be accepted, even idolized, despite public flaws? Explain why you think this sort of worshipping exists.
50. Mike makes harsh and insulting remarks to Robert in front of everyone, thus creating discomfort for the group. Do you feel Mike's behavior is justified, or should he have waited for a better time? Does his attack stem more from anger, humiliation, drunkenness, or something else?
51. The dinner atmosphere is pleasant and Jake admits, "Under the wine I lost the disgusted feeling and was happy. It seemed they were all such nice people." Give a brief description of how you think Jake views Brett, Mike, Robert, and Bill in regard to character and behavior.

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65. Running with the bulls is obviously a dangerous feat, but apparently some people find the thrill irresistible. Where do you suppose the appeal lies? Would you ever engage in the event and why or why not?
66. After beating up Pedro, Robert's repeated gesture to shake hands is a pathetic attempt to reclaim the values he has destroyed. In your opinion, what does Robert's value system of good sportsmanship entail, how has he lost those values, and what can he do to restore them, if possible?
67. How probable do you think it is that Brett's current treatment of men stems from her past abusive marriage?

Chapter Eighteen

68. Brett's failed attempt to be religious displays her loss of faith and she tells Jake, "Never does me any good. I've never gotten anything I prayed for." To what do you most attribute Brett's loss of faith: her disastrous marriage, the war, or something else? Explain your answer.
69. When passed on the stairs Montoya "bowed and did not smile." All of us have had the experience of having been snubbed by someone. How does it make you feel when it happens to you?
70. Bull-fighting has its set of noble features and has a way of eroticizing violence. In the case of Pedro's fighting style, explain how bull-fighting symbolizes ritual warfare.