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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.

Rebecca

CHAPTER ONE

1. "Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again" is *Rebecca's* famous first line.

Some psychologists believe that through our dreams we are able to resolve our problems. What problem do you think the narrator is able to resolve by dreaming about Manderley? Write a dialogue between the narrator and her psychologist in which they discuss the meaning of her dream.

2. The narrator describes how, in her dream, she is able to pass through the locked gate leading to Manderley:

"Then, like all dreamers, I was possessed of a sudden with supernatural powers and passed like a spirit through the barrier before me." (Pg. 1)

Write about a dream you have had in which you were "possessed" with special or supernatural powers. If you cannot remember having one, write about which supernatural power you would choose if you were able to have one, and why.

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Rebecca

- 7. Based on the information given in this chapter, write a one-paragraph character sketch of the narrator as she is today.
- 8. One recurrent observation in *Rebecca* is that servants provide their best service only to those they consider socially superior. On page 10, for example, a waiter senses that the narrator is "inferior and subservient" to Mrs. Van Hopper and serves the narrator a bad piece of meat.

Write a paragraph about a time when you received poor service in a restaurant or store. Give details and speculate as to why you were treated poorly. Do you think the server or salesperson slighted you for a discriminatory reason or is there another explanation?

9. Mrs. Van Hopper uses her lorgnette to stare openly at Max de Winter, embarrassing the narrator. The narrator does not say or do anything to stop Mrs. Van Hopper's behavior. Write about a time when the actions of someone you were with embarrassed you. How did you react to the situation?

CHAPTER THREE

10. In the first line of this chapter the narrator writes, "I wonder what my life would be to-day, if Mrs. Van Hopper had not been a snob." (Pg. 13) If it was not for Mrs. Van Hopper's embarrassing behavior, the narrator might never have received her first note from Max de Winter. Write about a person whose presence in your life has changed your life considerably. Describe the ways your life might be different if you had never met this person.

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Rebecca

CHAPTER SIX

20. In this chapter, the narrator reveals her doubts and insecurities about her upcoming marriage. Write a dialogue between the narrator and her best friend discussing Maxim's unusual proposal and the narrator's fears. The dialogue might begin as follows:

Friend: Do you mean he just asked you to marry him while he was eating a tangerine? He just asked? Did he declare his love for you right there in the restaurant?
Narrator: No, no. Of course not. He didn't say he loved me at all. But of course, he couldn't say it – there – in front of the waiters.
Friend: How old is he?
Narrator: Forty-two – but I...

- 21. As the narrator, write a diary entry discussing your reasons for burning the title page that contained Rebecca's signature.
- 22. Mrs. Van Hopper accuses the narrator of sleeping with Maxim to get him to propose.

Why do you think Mrs. Van Hopper makes this accusation? As Mrs. Van Hopper, write a letter revealing to your daughter explaining your actions.

23. Suppose the narrator does not immediately answer Maxim's proposal, but writes a letter to Dear Abby asking for advice on whether or not to accept it. As Dear Abby, write a response to the narrator offering specific advice.

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Response Journal

39. Maxim worries that his new bride is not having fun and that he is a difficult man to live with. She assures him that he is not:

"You are easy, very easy. Much easier than I thought you would be. I used to think it would be dreadful to be married, that one's husband would drink, or use awful language, or grumble if the toast was soft at breakfast, and be rather unattractive altogether, smell possibly. You don't do any of those things." (Pg. 145, 146)

How do you picture married life? In one or two paragraphs, describe how you think being married yourself would be.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

40. After she receives the news that Maxim has arrived safely in London, Mrs. de Winters feels happy in a way that surprises her:

Now that Maxim was safe in London, and I had eaten my biscuits, I felt very well and curiously happy. I was aware of a sense of freedom, as though I had no responsibilities at all. It was rather like a Saturday when one was a child. No lessons, and no prep. One could do as one liked. (Pg. 150)

Assume that you are Mrs. de Winter's psychologist, and that she has come to you because she wants to understand why she feels this way about her husband's absence. Write the dialogue the two of you have.

41. On page 154, Ben tells Mrs. de Winter that Rebecca gave him "the feeling of a snake," that she came to the cottage at night, and that she once told him, "If I catch you looking at me through the windows here I'll have you put in the asylum." (Pg. 154)

Mrs. de Winter decides that Ben does not know what he is talking about. Assume that you overheard Ben and realize he was telling the truth. Write a letter to Mrs. De Winter explaining what Ben was trying to get at.