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Lyddie
Katherine Paterson

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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.

1 The Bear

1. The novel *Lyddie* is set in 1843 in a section of America known as New England. Research this part of the country. Then
 - 1) give the names of the states that comprise New England.
 - 2) draw a small map of the New England states.
 - 3) write down the name of the New England state that is the home of Lyddie Worthen, the main character in the novel. Then explain how large it is; what the state bird, tree and motto are; what the name of its capital is.

2. Except for the pain the bear must have felt by the hot oatmeal all over him, the scene of his stumbling around the small cabin and knocking into everything in sight is really quite funny. Imagine that you are the Storyteller Guest in a first grade class in your school and decide to tell the story of the bear in the Worthen cabin to the children. Write out the story as you would tell it to them. You could begin your story with the following sentence or one of your own:

What would *you* do if a huge, hungry black bear stomped into *your* kitchen?

3. The author introduces many of the characters of the novel in this first chapter. Make a list of the names of all the characters who are mentioned. After each name, write in a sentence one fact that you learn about that person. Set up your list as shown below. The first character is given as an example.

Character	What the Reader Learns about the Character
Lyddie	She is resourceful and takes care of her brother and sisters.

3 Cutler's Tavern

7. Lyddie arrives at Cutler's Tavern to work as a housemaid because her own mother has "hired" her out to them. Lyddie, who is only thirteen years old, is not to be paid for her work, but supposedly a small amount of money will be sent to her mother. The same arrangement is made for Lyddie's younger brother, Charlie, to work at Baker's Mill. Imagine that the year that this is taking place is 2002, not 1843 and that you are the police chief of your town. You have received an anonymous letter that a thirteen-year-old girl and a ten-year-old boy are being made to work long hours in a tavern and a mill for no wages. You know that this is against the law. Write out the plan of action you would take with regard to 1) Lyddie 2) Charles 3) the owners of Cutler's Tavern, and 4) the owners of Baker's Mill. Follow the format below to complete your answer.

Plan of Action for the Underage Working Children

1. With regard to the girl known as Lyddie Worthen...
 2. With regard to the boy known as Charlie Worthen...
 3. With regard to the owners of Cutler's Tavern...
 4. With regard to the owners of Baker's Mil...
8. In this chapter, we find a description of what a hotel kitchen was like in 1843. Think about the kitchens in public places today. You have probably been to a McDonald's, Taco Bell, or one of the many other fast-food restaurants. Compare the kitchen of Cutler's Tavern in six ways with one of any of the fast-food restaurants you have visited. An example of how to do this is below. Set your example up as follows:

Cutler's Tavern

1. Huge fireplace

Fast-food Restaurant

1. No fireplace

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24. Lyddie finds herself feeling unexpectedly happy the following day at work. She realizes it is because Betsy will be reading aloud for her again that night. Being skillful at reading is not just a necessity; it can also be a pleasant and relaxing experience. Think about your own feelings about reading. Perhaps you, like Lyddie, have had difficulty with reading in the past or even may still be having some difficulty. Imagine you have a younger friend who is somewhat discouraged about his or her reading ability. Write a letter to that young person telling about your experiences with learning to read and what steps might be taken to help. Begin your letter as follows:

Dear _____,

If you think *you're* having a reading problem, let me tell you about how it was with me when...

25. As another part of the restrictive labor practices at the Concord Corporation, Lyddie has to sign on to work for one full year. This means that she has no vacation from her thirteen-hour a day, six-day-a-week job for an entire year. Not only that, but she will be "blacklisted," and no other mills will hire her if she does not live up to this contract. Imagine that Lyddie goes to a lawyer to sue the Concord Corporation for not letting her have a vacation to go home to Vermont. Complete the dialogue she would have with the lawyer whom she is asking to represent her in the lawsuit:

Lyddie: Thank you, Mr. _____, for seeing me. I haven't much money to pay you. But I don't think it's fair that the mill...

13 Speed Up

30. Lyddie is finding herself more and more angry over the petitions to improve the working conditions of the factory girls. Though Lyddie likes Diana, she wishes Diana would stop agitating to lower the daily working hours to ten. Her friend Betsy accuses Lyddie of loving money too much to risk trouble, and Lyddie accepts the criticism silently. Imagine that you are Lyddie and want to vent your anger somewhere safely. You decide to use your secret journal. Write the entry you would make that night about why you feel Diana, Betsy, and Amelia do not understand you and what you need to do. Begin your entry as follows:

Date: _____

I could just scream! Why doesn't everyone understand that...

31. Another practice of the overseers at the mill to exploit the factory girls is to speed up the weaving machines to make the girls work faster. The overseers are given prizes for whichever of their girls produces the most goods. Imagine you are a female investigative reporter for the *New York Times*. You've heard about this practice which is unfair to the young factory girls. You manage to get a job in the Weaving Room, and the owners do not know you are a reporter. Write an article you would write about why the mill is a terrible place to work for young girls. The title of your article would be "Unscrupulous Owners, Exhausted Girls: The Concord Corporation Story."