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# Sample

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**Prestwick House**

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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. Marija has difficulty directing the coachman because he does not understand her native tongue, Lithuanian. Only when Marija speaks Polish does the coachman understand. Think of a time when you or someone you know had trouble communicating with another person. Write a paragraph describing the event. What was the source of the problem, and how was it resolved?
2. According to tradition, any person who enters the wedding feast is offered food. The family, despite poverty, manages to uphold its tradition and feed the numerous strangers that drift in to the reception. Write a journal entry about one of your family's traditions. The tradition may be a daily occurrence or an annual event. How does the custom affect your family? For example, are family members closer or more functional? Also include how you feel about the tradition.
3. The family is dismayed to find that several wedding guests are leaving the feast without contributing to the wedding purse. Young men, instead of giving a gift to the bride, "would come in crowds and fill themselves with a fine dinner, and then sneak off." Other guests, however, give more money than they can afford. Complete the following conversation by telling a friend about an extremely generous character from a book or movie that sacrifices something to help another person.

**Friend:** I can't imagine how some of these people gave any money at all to Ona and Jurgis. Aniele, for instance, scrubs clothes for a pittance to support three children, but she gives the couple several months of her salary. I never heard of someone so nice.

**You:** I've seen the same generosity in...

## **Chapter Eight**

17. Tamoszius is a passionate fiddle player, and his love of music is evident in his playing. The fiddle serves as a way for Tamoszius to express himself while entertaining his listeners. Choose one of the following questions to complete:
- A. Write a paragraph about an instrument that you play. What type of music do you enjoy playing, and how does playing music make you feel?
  - B. Write a paragraph about an instrument that you enjoy listening to or that you'd like to learn how to play. Why does this instrument appeal to you?
18. Marija accompanies Tamoszius when he plays at parties and state functions. When she returns home, Marija brings treats for the children and gossip for the adults. How do you feel about gossip? For example, are certain types of gossip acceptable, or is gossip always improper? Have you or someone you know ever been hurt by rumors? Answer these questions using complete sentences.
19. In Packingtown, Jurgis experiences the brutal conditions that the workers endure. He becomes convinced that the union is a wonderful way for workers to unite and conquer the packers. Jurgis eagerly joins the union and, in a short time, he also enlists all the working members of his family. Consider a group or non-profit organization that you respect for its work. Write a brief paragraph explaining how the group functions and the qualities that you admire.

## **Chapter Twelve**

27. Jurgis' swollen ankle worsens, and he is unable to walk. To the family's dismay, the doctor instructs Jurgis to stay off his feet for two months. Jurgis knows that, without his income, they will barely be able to survive, but he is powerless to help. Think of a time when you or someone you know felt helpless. Describe the situation in the form of a journal entry.
  
28. Jonas, Teta Elzbieta's brother, fails to return home one Saturday. The family fears that Jonas may have died in a factory accident, but they realize that he most likely abandoned them. Jonas is a single man who earns good money; living with a starving family and irritable children is more than he wants to endure. Write a paragraph discussing what you think about his desertion. In your opinion, is Jonas obligated to sacrifice his money to help the family, or is he entitled to be on his own?

## **Chapter Sixteen**

36. The pride that Jurgis feels from beating up Connor begins to fade, and he realizes that his actions have further endangered his wife and child. Ona will certainly lose her position, and Jurgis is unable to support his family while in prison. Recall a time when you or someone you know regretted doing or saying something. Write a journal entry about the incident.
37. The ringing church bells remind Jurgis that it is Christmas Eve. Jurgis reminisces about Christmastime in Lithuania with his father and brother, and with Ona the previous year. Write a journal entry about your favorite holiday. Why is the holiday special to you?
38. Jurgis is tortured by the thought that his family is starving while he sits in jail, and he assigns blame for his situation. Write a paragraph explaining who or what Jurgis means by “they” in the following passage:

They had ground him beneath their heel, they had devoured all his substance; they had murdered his old father, they had broken and wrecked his wife, they had crushed and cowed his whole family; and now they were through with him, they had no further use for him—and because he had interfered with them, had gotten in their way, this is what they had done to him!