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Through the
Looking Glass
Lewis Carroll

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Looking Glass*

Lewis Carroll



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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 – Looking-Glass House

1. Alice lists all of Kitty's faults. In a similar playful paragraph, write a list of your pet's faults. If you don't have a pet, you may write about a friend or sibling.

2. Alice uses personification to describe the snow:

I wonder if the snow *loves* the trees and fields, that it kisses them so gently?
And then it covers them up snug, you know, with a white quilt; and perhaps
it says 'Go to sleep, darlings, till the summer comes again.'

In one or two paragraphs, write a description of a different season of the year. Try to imitate Alice's imaginative description of winter, and make sure to use personification at least one time.

3. Alice describes the way her room looks in the "Looking-glass House." Find a large mirror in your home and, in one or two paragraphs, describe what the room looks like through the mirror. Remember that Alice could not see all of the room in her mirror. What parts of the room are hidden from your view when you look in yours?
4. When Alice goes through the looking glass, she remarks on how nice it will be to be able to go near the fire without anyone scolding her away, saying, "Oh, what fun it'll be, when they see me through the glass in here, and ca'n't get at me!"
Write about the three things you would most like to do if you knew your parents could see you but wouldn't be able to punish you for doing them.
5. In the Looking-glass House, the chess pieces come alive and are able to talk and move around the room. Think about your favorite board game. Suppose some of the pieces were able to talk and move. Write a conversation you might have with one of these game pieces.

Chapter Four – Tweedledum and Tweedledee

13. Write an additional stanza to add to the poem about the Carpenter and the Walrus. You may place the stanza at the end or anywhere else in the poem you wish. For example, the following new stanza could be placed after the line “And whether pigs have wings” :

We are Oysters fresh from the sea,
And we are no fools;
The things you describe are wrong—
They break all the rules.
Yes, we are young and new
But even we went to school.

The second, fourth, and last lines of the 6-line stanza should rhyme. Be sure to indicate where in the original poem you would place your stanza.

14. Tweedledee says that Alice only exists as a part of the Red King’s dream. Over the centuries, a number of philosophers have suggested that humans have no way of knowing beyond a doubt that we ourselves are not simply pieces of a larger creature’s dream. Imagine that you are merely something in somebody’s dream. Describe the person or creature that might be “dreaming you.” Are you part of a good dream or a nightmare?

Chapter Six – Humpty Dumpty

20. Humpty Dumpty acts as though every question Alice asks him is a riddle. For example, when Alice asks Humpty Dumpty why he is sitting on the wall all alone, he replies, “Why, because there’s nobody with me!” and “What tremendously easy riddles you ask!” Make up Humpty Dumpty’s riddle-like answers to the following common questions:

How are you?
What are you doing?
Where are you going?
What time is it?

21. Humpty Dumpty tells Alice that all names must mean something. Surprisingly, Humpty Dumpty is partially right: most names *do* mean something, and some parents take the *meaning* of a name as well as its sound into consideration when choosing a name for their child. There are countless dictionaries of baby names both in print and online in which you can find the meanings of names. “Alice,” for example, means “good.” Find out what your name means and respond to what you’ve discovered in a paragraph. Are you pleased or disappointed about what your name means? Does the meaning seem to describe you or have nothing to do with you? If you ever have the chance to name a child, will you take name meanings into consideration?
22. Write a short poem about Humpty Dumpty, describing how he looks and acts using made-up *portmanteau* words. In parentheses, after each made-up word in your poem, list the two words the new word combines. The poem might begin as follows:

Humpty Dumpty peroosted on a wall (peroosted – perched/roosted)
Proud that...

Chapter Nine – Queen Alice

41. Alice stops herself from “lolling about on the grass” because she thinks that, now that she’s a queen, she needs to act more dignified. Do you think being a member of royalty (or a politician in America) would be worth having to change your habits, act more “dignified,” and be constantly in the public eye? Explain your answer.
42. The Red Queen tells Alice that she can’t be a queen until she has “passed the proper examination.” Imagine that, to be ruler of your country, a person had to pass a certain examination—and that you are the person who gets to write the test questions. Write a “test” of ten or more questions you think someone should have to answer before he or she could gain leadership of your country.
43. Do you think it would bother you to eat food if it could talk to you? Does it bother you to eat meat, knowing that it was once a living animal? Explain your answer.
44. Alice thinks she should be able to invite whomever she wants to her dinner party, but the Red and White Queens take over the task. Imagine that you could invite any five people to a dinner party—famous or non-famous, living or dead, real or fictional, or any mixture of these. Name the five you would invite and explain why you’d choose each one.
45. Would you agree that Alice’s character grows and matures as the story progresses? Explain your answer, citing incidents from the text to illustrate your points.