



Prestwick House
Response Journal™

Sample

Prestwick House

Response Journal

Reflections: A Student Response Journal



Soldier's Heart
Gary Paulsen

Click here
to learn more
about this
Response Journal!



Click here
to find more
Classroom Resources
for this title!



 **Prestwick House**

More from Prestwick House

Literature

Literary Touchstone Classics
Literature Teaching Units

Grammar and Writing

College and Career Readiness: Writing
Grammar for Writing

Vocabulary

Vocabulary Power Plus
Vocabulary from Latin and Greek Roots

Reading

Reading Informational Texts
Reading Literature



 **Prestwick House**
Response Journal
Reflections: A Student Response Journal



Soldier's Heart
Gary Paulsen



Prestwick House

P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938
www.prestwickhouse.com

800-932-4593

Copyright © 2004 by Prestwick House, Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938.
1-800-932-4593. www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to copy this unit for
classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her personal use. This material,
in whole or part, may not be copied for resale.

ISBN 978-1-60389-647-4

Item No. 202193

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.

Soldier's Heart

F o r w a r d

1. The first line of the Forward is: "War is always, in all ways, appalling." Most of us have an image of war in our minds that comes from real-life experience, from what we have read about in books, or from scenes of war we have seen in the media. For example, in the 1960s and 1970s, the United States was involved in the Vietnam conflict. The images of war that come to mind for people who lived during the Vietnam era include: helicopters flying over jungle-like terrain, longhaired protesters and a young Vietnamese girl fleeing naked down a road because her clothes were burned away.

Think about the images the word "war" stimulates in your mind. In one or two paragraphs, describe these images.

2. The Forward reminds the reader that soldiers are not only harmed by the physical dangers of war, but also by the devastating emotional and mental stresses that war brings. In the First World War, this disorder was called "shell shock." In the Second World War, it was called "battle fatigue." Today, the disorder is called "post-traumatic stress disorder."

This story takes place during the Civil War. Soldiers who were mentally damaged in this war were said to have "soldier's heart."

Think about all of these terms. Which term do you think is most descriptive of the disorder? Write a letter to the United States War Department suggesting that the department adopt the term you prefer as the official term to describe this disorder. Give your reasons for preferring this term over the others.

Response Journal

7. In the following excerpt, Charley is talking to his mother about joining the fight. As part of the discussion, he relates his ideas of manhood and the behaviors he believes are required for a boy to become a “man.”

And I've got to be a man sometime. You've said it more than once yourself. Charley, you said, you've got to be a man. Well, here it is – my chance to be a man. A boy wouldn't go off to earn eleven dollars a month and wear a uniform. Only a man. So I'm going to be a man and do what a man can do.

What do you think of Charley's definition of manhood? In one or two paragraphs, write your own list of the qualities or behaviors you believe a young boy must acquire to be a man.

8. Charley's mother tries to talk Charley out of joining the Minnesota Volunteers, but in the end, she lets him go. As Charley's mother, write a diary entry explaining why you let your underage son go to war.

Response Journal

30. At the beginning of the story, Charley complains about the repetitious drills on loading and firing his weapon. In this chapter, after experiencing a battle, Charley describes his changed attitude toward training.

The training must work, he thought. I'm doing all of this [cleaning his weapon and getting it ready for battle] without meaning to do it. He felt like a stranger to himself, like another person watching his hands move over the rifle, wiping and cleaning.

Have you ever thought to yourself that what you are learning in school is useless in real life, only to discover later that the skills you did not want to develop are really important? For example, some people dislike studying fractions but soon learn they cannot be good cooks without understanding them.

Write about something that you have been forced to study or learn that you initially thought was useless, but later discovered was important.

31. Charley describes the congressmen and their families who have come out to see the battle. He also describes how the spectators quickly leave when they realize they are in danger of being hit by Rebel fire. Does it surprise you that ordinary citizens come to watch the war for their entertainment?

As a local reporter, write a newspaper editorial discussing the spectators and how they “got more than they bargained for.”

32. At the end of this chapter, Charley is shocked to discover that he wet himself while walking through the meadow. As Charley, write a diary entry describing how you feel about losing control of your body in that way and why you think it happened.

Response Journal

41. Charley has seen many men die without shedding a tear, so he is surprised to discover that he is crying as he leaves Nelson on the battlefield. Write a letter to Charley which helps him to understand why he cries over Nelson's death.

Hint: Charley is a young man who has been made old by war. To Charley, Nelson represents innocence. Consider the following question: To what extent do you think Charley is crying for the loss of Nelson? Is he crying for the loss of what Nelson represents to him?

Chapter Seven

Town Life

42. Charley's regiment is in camp for so long that the soldiers "name the paths between the tents street names based on Minnesota towns. Soon signs were stuck on poles: Winona Avenue, Taylor Falls Street..."

Assume you and your friends are in a military camp for a long time. In one or two paragraphs, describe the names your group might assign to the "paths." Include a brief statement discussing why you would select each name.

43. Charley lists three rumors that are circulating in the camp. The first rumor is that McClellan is afraid to fight and that President Lincoln is dissatisfied with him. The second rumor is that a regiment from New York has deserted. This rumor proves to be untrue. The last rumor is that General Grant is a drunk, but is such a good general that Lincoln says he wants to send some of Grant's brand of whiskey to all of his generals. This rumor proves to be true.

Think about rumors you have heard recently in your school. Relate one rumor that proved to be true and one rumor that proved to be untrue. What advice might you give Charley about listening to rumors?