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Response Journal

Reflections: A Student Response Journal



*And Then There
Were None*
Agatha Christie



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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.

Pre-Reading

1. You've just been assigned *And Then There Were None* to read for class. Write a discussion between yourself and a classmate about what you think the book might be about. You may choose to begin like this:

You: I have to read this book for English class. It's called *And Then There Were None*. Have you read it?

Classmate: No. What's it about?

You: I'm not sure, but I think...

2. Written in the 1920s, this novel contains vocabulary and phrases used by characters that might be unfamiliar to you. People of that era simply spoke differently from how people speak today.

As you read *And Then There Were None*, keep a list of all the words you don't know. As you finish each chapter, look up their definitions and write them in your reading journal, along with a sentence of your own for each word.

And Then There Were None

I

3. Mr. Justice Wargrave and Vera Claythorne are the first two characters we meet in the first chapter. Both are on a train, but Wargrave travels in first class and Vera travels in third.

What other differences do you notice between the two characters? Write a paragraph or two in which you contrast Vera and Mr. Wargrave.

4. In part three of the first chapter, Philip Lombard reveals his racist views when he thinks to himself, “that was the damnable part about Jews, you couldn’t deceive them about money—they knew!”

Write a response to this sentiment, in which you explain your opinion of Lombard’s thoughts and give other examples of racial stereotypes you’ve encountered.

5. By the end of the fourth part of Chapter I, you’ve met four characters; all of them seem to be en route to the same place—Soldier Island.

Given the nature of these four characters and the title of the novel, write your prediction of upcoming events in the novel. What do you think is in store for these characters? What will happen to them on the island? How will they interact with one another?

6. After reading the seventh part of Chapter I, it’s clear that for some of the characters, the only thing they have in common is their destination. Agatha Christie makes a deliberate effort to create characters who have opposing perspectives. Why might that be?

Write a paragraph or two in which you identify those characters which seem to be natural adversaries. What problems might the characters face when they reach the island?

VII

28. Suspicions continue to deepen in Chapter VII. As the characters become increasingly paranoid about each other, they become more protective of themselves and less willing to openly share their thoughts and feelings. At the beginning of this chapter, Vera and Emily walk to the summit to watch for the boat they hope will rescue them. As they speak, Vera feels she is putting on a brave face. She is suppressing her true feelings, but why?

Write in a diary entry about a time you acted in a way to cover up your true feelings, and explain why you did so.

29. At the time this novel was written, women did not frequently forge deep friendships with men; it was considered inappropriate behavior. Being the only two females in the house, Vera and Emily would naturally gravitate toward each other. However, they seem to be complete opposites.

Write an article for a magazine that is aimed primarily at women explaining your thoughts on the progress women have made in the past 50 years, socially and economically, as well as in any other way you can think of. If you have a different opinion about the role/progress of women, write the article from that point of view.

30. All ten people, according to Lombard, have committed crimes that cannot be prosecuted. For example, Wargrave did not kill Seton with his bare hands, but he did sentence him to death, perhaps wrongfully. Vera Claythorne did not drown Cyril herself, but while he was in her care, she allowed him to swim into a dangerous area, where he then drowned.

Write an email to a friend discussing a time you did something wrong and got away with it, or did not receive an adequate punishment. Write the email as if the event you are discussing has happened recently.

XIII

44. Revisit your earlier journal entry in which you compared each character to an animal. In this chapter, Wargrave is compared to a tortoise, Vera to a bird, and the others are given animal characteristics, too. Were you correct in your earlier comparisons?

Make a chart in which you list the name of the five remaining characters in the first column; in the second column, write which animal you assigned to them in Chapter II; finally, in the third column, write which animal each is compared to in this chapter.