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Reflections: A Student Response Journal



Tangerine
Edward Bloor



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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. Pictures are a type of visual imagery that aims to capture a moment in time. Many times the cover of a book is a picture that captures a moment of action from the story or depicts a character. Other times, the cover can be abstract or very minimal (only featuring the title and author). There is a proverb that states “A picture is worth a thousand words.” It means that an image can visually represent a written idea or story, but how true is this statement?

Write a list of words or phrases in response to the front cover of your book. These words should reflect what you believe the picture, or lack thereof, reveals about possible important themes, concepts, or events from the story.

2. Many people consider it an honor for an author to dedicate a book to them. Authors often dedicate their books to loved ones, people who’ve been supportive, or the people they most admire. If you wrote a novel, to whom would you dedicate it? Consider the people in your life who have been positive influences and have offered you support in your times of need.

Make a list of the top three most supportive people in your life. Next, think of the type of novel that you would write. Then, write an email to the person you would dedicate the novel to, explaining the novel’s subject matter, the dedication, and why you specifically chose him or her.

3. The Bulletin praises *Tangerine* as “A richly imagined read about an underdog coming into his own.” What is it that makes one an underdog? Underdogs are individuals with less-than-favorable odds stacked against them. They are not expected to come out on top of tough situations. Some common examples of underdogs include sports teams with poor records, lesser-known employees trying to advance in the workplace, or even the most average person trying to overcome socioeconomic pressures.

In one to two paragraphs, describe a time when you were an underdog. What odds were against you? What did you do to overcome the obstacles set before you? Reveal the outcome of the situation in a separate paragraph.

Tangerine

We meet Paul and his mother as they are in the midst of a major transition—moving from Texas to Florida. As they are doing some last minute cleaning before taking their final leave of the place they once called home, their thoughts keep them worlds apart. While his mother is concerned about making a positive impression on the people who buy the house, Paul is trapped in his memories.

Compare the emotions Paul is feeling as he prepares to leave his home for the last time to the emotions displayed by his mother. Try to have a total of at least eight points of comparison.

Friday, August 18

7. There appears to be a bit of sibling rivalry between Erik and Paul. This may partially be due to what so far seems like favoritism from their parents. From Paul's perspective, the Erik Fisher Football Dream leaves no room for him. Think about the kind of feelings Paul seems to have toward his family.

Paul is the youngest member of his immediate family. For this reason, he has little to no say in important decision-making. He has been forced to move to a new home, in a new town, and to a new school. Paul is attempting to find his place in the world as a son, younger brother, student, new kid, and athlete.

Think about the different roles you occupy and your specific place in the world. In the very least, you are like Paul in the sense that you, too, are a student. Sometimes it helps to know that you are not alone and that someone can relate to your experience. Write a letter to Paul telling him that you understand how he feels, and offer him a few words of encouragement.

Tangerine

Upon entering the carnival, Paul and Joey run into several students from Tangerine Middle School. Joey immediately informs Paul that these kids are bad news and to avoid them at all costs. Essentially, Joey is relaying the students' bad reputation to his friend.

Have you ever known someone with a bad reputation? Better yet, have you ever thought of your own reputation? Choosing yourself or someone you know as a model, write a paragraph or two explaining the social impacts of having a bad versus a good reputation. How might a person with a bad reputation try to fix it? Better yet, how can a good reputation be maintained?

Monday, September 11

26. Joey and Paul remain calm during the sinkhole emergency and help to ensure the safety of their fellow classmates. The two act bravely and show courage in what is a very dangerous and unexpected situation.

In a narrative essay of three to five paragraphs, describe a time when you showed courage in a scary situation. Try to include thoughts that may have been racing through your mind at the time. Then in a separate paragraph, analyze the situation by recalling what motivated you to stay strong and helped get you through the situation.

27. It's always best to have a plan in case of an emergency. For this reason, many schools have fire drills. Though it may seem both a pain and a disruption to be sent outside at random during the school day, knowing exactly what is expected in an emergency situation can decrease miscommunication and panic.

Create an "Emergency Sinkhole Plan" for Lake Windsor Middle School. You may want to include the following information: evacuation procedures, safe meeting places, alerting parents, keeping track of students, caring for injured students and faculty, important items to salvage. When you have completed this task, you should have a well-written plan of action. Consider numbering the procedures so that they are reader-friendly or even dividing your plan into separate sections for each set of instructions.

Tangerine

36. Friendship is a very important component of basic human interaction. Friendships are formed for many reasons. However, all friendships have one thing in common. They are all based on mutual interest. Friends are not expected to have everything in common with each other; however, there is always at least one common thread that connects people.

Consider the friendship of Paul and Joey and the friendship of Erik and Arthur. What makes them friends, and what makes their friendship work? Write a paragraph that compares the two friendships, and explains which type of friendship you would rather be a part of.

Friday, September 22

37. The Whippoorwills of Palmetto Middle School and their fans turn out to be very unpleasant. They are rude, disrespectful, and don't play fair. The War Eagles of Tangerine Middle School play their best considering the conditions. Not only must they pay attention to the game, but they must also be mindful of interference from fans coming in the form of physical and verbal assaults. The logistics of the game are made possible due to a communal acceptance of bad sportsmanship.

Write an editorial for a local newspaper explaining your views on increasing the emphasis of good sportsmanship in youth sporting events. Make sure to include your views on the roles of spectators, parents, coaches, and the players themselves.

38. On the bus ride home after defeating the Whippoorwills, Victor apologizes and has a heart-to-heart conversation with Paul. He first apologizes for threatening him during the game, and then commends him on his performance. More importantly, Victor explains the closeness of the team to Paul in terms of a brotherhood. He is offering Paul a chance to be a member of their supportive group but wants to make sure that Paul understands the seriousness of this offer.

Using Paul's reaction to Victor's words as your inspiration, write a short poem of at least ten lines describing the type of brotherhood that Victor speaks of. The poem may rhyme, but does not have to.