

Reading Journal Outline: The outline below is another way of looking at the requirements we have for reading journals.

- 1. Topic Sentence:** Start with a statement to set the focus for your journal. This should be a statement about what you're going to discuss in the journal and what you want to say about what you've been thinking. This can come right from one of the journal topics that you have on the back of the sheet.

Example: "In his novel, Dead End in Norvelt, Jack Gantos created a literary character that may be one of my new favorites: Miss Volker." The expectation is that I'll spend the rest of the journal talking about Miss Volker and why she is one of my favorite characters.
- 2. Explanation & Evidence:** Once you've stated your idea in the introduction it's now time to explain what you mean! This is where you get to the details and specifics. Answer "Why?" "How do you know?" and "What made you think that?" In answering those questions you'll also use specific examples from what you're reading to help you explain and to support your ideas. In my example I'd have to give reasons why Miss Volker is one of my favorite characters and use examples from the text to talk about the things I really enjoyed about her role in the book.
- 3. Conclusion:** We know about conclusions! This is where I wrap up the entry and talk about how my perspective on the book, reading, myself, has changed because I've focused on this one idea. I've just explained why Miss Volker is a favorite character of mine; now I have to explain "so what?" How has exploring her character affected my understanding of the story?
- 4. Extensions:** Your extension can be part of your entry and even part of the conclusion. The idea is to go beyond the book to talk about what affect it has had on you. These are options to extend your thinking in your journals but they are only extensions if you've first met the requirements above. There are some examples in the rubric below, but they are not the only ways to extend. Use your imagination

What did the reaction described above teach you about whom you are as a reader or as a person? How could your idea affect you? Your choices in books, interactions with others, how you approach problems, think about the world etc.?

1	2	3	4
<p>My journal entry is off topic or does not have a clear purpose.</p> <p>I have not included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A summary of what I am reading • Detailed explanations of my thinking and ideas • Specific example(s) from what I am reading to support and illustrate my ideas 	<p>My journal is about what I'm reading, but does not focus on one main idea</p> <p>I have some but not all of the required pieces of a journal entry or they may not be well-developed, clear, and specific:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I have a summary of the book but it may be too general or may include details that don't relate to my thesis statement • I have started to explain my thinking and ideas. I may have relied on big statements or vague language to make my point • My examples need further explanation to show how they explain my ideas or provide evidence for my opinion • I have a conclusion but it may restate or summarize my entry rather than providing a synthesis of my thinking 	<p>My entry includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear, concise thesis statement • Effective details from the text to support my thesis statement and explain my thinking • Detailed explanations of my thinking and ideas • An effective conclusion that synthesizes my thinking <p>I have stayed on point and focused on only what is relevant to my main thesis statement</p>	<p>My journal entry shows that I have met the requirements of the assignment and that I am working to extend my thinking including (but not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using my journal to try out new ideas for writing • Explaining how what I am reading is changing me as a reader and as an individual • Discussing how my new knowledge could help to develop a deeper understanding of what I read • Discussing how to apply what I am learning to new situations • Discussing the impact what I have read may have on me as a reader or person • Using other methods to demonstrate my understanding of the story (artwork, poetry, etc.)

Reading Journals:

Below are some possible topics for you to explore in your reading journal ^{Response} each week.

Remember to include a summary of what you've read so far, an explanation with specific evidence from your book, and your own reaction to what you're discussing.

These are suggestions and each one would be the topic for a journal entry. You are always free to give us your own ideas and thoughts about what you're reading and learning as long as you include all the necessary pieces (summary, explanation, reaction).

Author's Craft:

What does the author do to keep you reading?

Why do you think the author chose to tell their story from this point of view?

How would you describe this author's style? What are the things that make them unique?

How does the author create suspense in the book?

Where were there moments of foreshadowing in your book?

Characters:

How would you describe the personality of the main character in your book?

How do you feel about the character(s)? Why do you feel that way?

How do the characters change during the course of the story?

Conflict:

What problems do the characters in your story face? What do you think they'll do about it?

Describe a decision the character is trying to make. What would you do?

Are the conflicts between characters, between the character and themselves, or the character and larger forces such as nature/society/fate?

Why do you think the author chose this conflict for their book?

Connections :

How did what you read remind you of other books?

What information or knowledge did you have before you read that has helped you understand what you're reading?

How have your own experiences helped you to understand what you're reading?

Genre:

What do books in this genre always seem to include?

What makes this style of writing unique?

How did this book meet your expectations of this genre?

How did this book challenge your expectations of this genre?

Plot:

How did events that happened earlier in the book lead up to what happened later?

What was the climax of the story? How did the author build up to that moment?

Themes:

What message(s) do you think the author was trying to get across to their readers?

What "big ideas" do you think the author was exploring in this book?

How has your thinking changed after reading this book?

Understanding:

What strategies are you using to help you to develop a deeper understanding of what you're reading?

What has reading this book taught you about your reading preferences?