

WRITTEN RESPONSES TO LITERATURE

1. Write the story in a book from a different point of view. Take an entire story (or part of it) and write a version as someone else would tell it. (For example the third pig in "The Three Little Pigs" might say, "I told my brothers that straw and sticks just wouldn't do. Those are no protection from a hungry wolf. Now me, I'm using bricks!")
2. Rewrite the story in a different time period. You may rewrite the story in a futuristic or past setting if it is set in the present. Stories set in the past may be written in the present or future. You may also choose to rewrite only a particular event in the story.
3. Rewrite the ending of the book, altered from the original version.
4. Write an extension of the story, explaining future occurrences in characters' lives.
5. Write a new story using your favorite character(s). The story may be a sequel to the original or it may use an entire book or one scene.
6. Write a parody of a book. This kind of a humorous imitation appeals to many children. Parody the entire book or one scene.
7. Adapt the book into a script. Upon completion of the book, write a script (dialogue, narration) that tells the same story as the book.
8. Put together a cast for the film version of a book. Imagine the director/producer wants a casting director to make recommendations. Decide who would be the actors and actresses. Include photos and descriptions of the stars and tell why each is "perfect" for the part. Write a report to convince the producer of the selections.
9. Write a promotional campaign for a movie about a book. This could include newspaper ad layouts, radio and television commercials, and any special events.
10. Write a letter to the author of a book. This shouldn't be a class assignment, and any letter should be entirely individual. While authors may not have time to respond to each letter they receive (they might not get their next book done if they did), they do enjoy letters from their readers -- especially those that discuss the book on children's own terms. Send letters in care of book publishers if you can't locate the author's address in WHO'S WHO, CURRENT BIOGRAPHY, or other reference sources.
11. Write letters that may have been sent between characters at the time of the story or at some specified time in the future.
12. Write a poem that the character would write. Knowing the character's personality, write a poem that expresses the way he/she feels about what's happening to him/her in the book.
13. Write newspaper/TV news stories about main events in the story. This activity may center on human interest stories or climactic events in the novel.
14. Rearrange a passage as "found" poem. Find a particularly effective description or bit of action that is really poetry written as prose. Rewrite it. Leave out words or skip a sentence or two, but arrange it to create a poem.
15. Write up an interview with the book's author to be published in a magazine (like THE PARIS REVIEW INTERVIEWS). Conduct research to find out all you can about the author; then, base your interview questions and answers on the information you found. Include questions about the author's background as well as about his/her writing. Example: a) Tell a little about yourself. b) Why did you write the story? c) Is the book based on personal experience or on a real person you have known?
16. Write up a magazine interview with a character or characters from the book. Let the interviewer ask some background questions (name, age, occupation) and inquire into specific incidents in the story. Examples: a) Tell a little about yourself. b) How did you feel when your dog died? c) Why did you run away instead of fighting back?
17. Write a character sketch of someone in a book. This might be the central character or minor supporting character in the story. Tell what he looked like but also include favorite color, horoscope sign, sports liked, and even a car bumper-sticker or T-shirt.
18. Compare/contrast a character from the book with a character from another book, the author, a contemporary figure (living), a historical figure, etc. (Make comparison with one of those figures.)
19. Compare/contrast two characters from the book.

20. Write in the diary a main character might have written. Imagine you are the person in your book. Write a diary for a few days or weeks as he or she would have done.
21. Make a gift list for each of the major characters in the story. Explain your reasons for giving particular gifts to particular characters. Gifts may be abstract or tangible.
22. Write an explanation of why the story was or was not enjoyable. Be sure to give adequate reasons and examples from the story.
23. Research a topic from the story and write a report. For example, report on the farming methods used by Pa from LITTLE HOUSE ON THE PRAIRIE.
24. Write a rationale for one of the character's actions.
25. Write a test on the book.
26. Write the information for a book jacket--summary comments, quotations from reviewers, etc.
27. Write an obituary for the main character(s) in the book.
28. Review the books as if you were the book reviewer for a local newspaper.
29. Put the book on trial for potential censorship. Write why the book should and should not be censored.
30. Write a script for a promotional video for the book.
31. Mimicking the author's style, rewrite a portion of the book or add on to the book.

DRAMATIC RESPONSES TO LITERATURE

1. Convert a book to a radio drama. Give a live or taped version of the story--or scene from it--as a radio play. Include an announcer and sound effects.
2. Make a talking display of a book. Tape a dialogue or description about an event, scene, or character.
3. Do a dramatic reading (Reader's Theater) of a scene. Select the scene and ask friends to help read it dramatically.
4. Read a scene with special effects. Choose a particularly interesting passage and read it with a musical background or sound effects.
5. Convert a book into a puppet show. Make simple puppets (stick puppets, finger puppets, paper bag puppets, and so on), and present the story or an exciting scene from it. Also applicable to shadow puppetry.
6. Do a "You Are There" news program reporting on a particular scene, character, or event in a book.
7. News show format. Have the students construct a scene from the book which would cause a news reporter to come to the town. The reporter will question various characters about the events. In works where there is only one character, students should imagine others who might have had contact with that character. Reporter will comment or editorialize on the events.
8. Prepare an editorial comment, as might be given on radio or TV, on actions of the characters and implications of that action for society. A variation of this would be to have simulated "call-in" radio show with a newscaster accepting editorial comments from the listening audience.
9. Write a stage and television series episode. Think of a popular television series that a book or part of it would fit. Then convert it to that series and give a segment before the class.
10. Do a takeoff on the old television program "This Is Your Life." Role play a character. The announcer describes important people in the life of the person honored. (This is especially suitable for biography or historical fiction, but could be adapted for any book.)
11. Prepare a television commercial about a book. Imagine a book is the basis for a mini-series on television. Prepare and give the television commercials that would make people watch for it.
12. Use body masks and present a scene from your book. Make full-sized cardboard figures with cutouts for the face and hands. Use these to dramatize a scene.

13. Students will select a scene from the book and pantomime it. Costumes and make-up could be used also. A variation is to have two characters with conflicting ideas convey their relationship without words.
14. Assign student positions in a courtroom--conduct a trial of one of the major characters concerning his/her guilt or innocence in the book. Use minor characters as witnesses with teacher as judge.
15. Dramatize a scene from a book with other children taking parts. If desired, use props and costumes. If children know the story, improvise the scripts.
16. Role play a scene. A variation on this is to stop the reading at a particular point, a prediction point. Several groups each improvise a scene that they think may happen next in the story. After each group has presented their scene, continue reading the text.
17. Role play two different characters, possibly from two different books. Have one character invite the other over for coffee, party, golf game, etc. Select two characters with different personalities. Make them talk to each other about a common topic from their respective viewpoints. No violence.
18. Debate an issue. Have a panel of characters from a book debate an issue from their differing viewpoints, or have two sets of characters from two different books debate an issue or topic (can be political) as their respective character would. All questions/viewpoints should be written out ahead of time. A variation is to create a panel of characters from several books and have them discuss an issue such as women's rights, monogamy, or politics.
19. Play a version of charades in which the lines to be guessed are quotations or key events in the book(s). Teams receive one point for identifying the quotation or event, another point for identifying the character who said the quoted line or who is most closely associated with the event.
20. Dress and make up as a character in the book. Prepare and present an original soliloquy that the character might give, or memorize and present a soliloquy that the character actually gives in the book. A variation is to assume the role of a minor character, describe and react to a major character in the book; include responses (feelings, biases, etc.) that are appropriate to the minor character.
21. Impersonate a character and tell an episode in a book. Dress up as a character and retell the story.
22. Portray a book character. Ask another reader of the same book to role play a different character. The two characters can meet, talk about themselves and what has happened to them. This is especially appropriate if they have something in common: similar adventures, similar jobs, and so on.
23. Taking the parts of characters, improvise scenes that are not in the book. Choose situations that reveal character traits and responses that you have discovered as you read.
24. Stage an interview of a character by playing that role while other students pose questions that were previously prepared.
25. One student will assume role of telephone operator and through questioning by the teacher and other students, discuss phone conversations between characters in book. Variations--mailman, garbage man, milk man, etc.
26. Set up talk show with an interviewer a la David Letterman and have him interview a major character of a book. Inquire into life style, interests, etc. Interviewer should have detailed lists of questions written out before-hand. Interviewer can interview several characters in the course of the show.

ART/CRAFT RESPONSES TO LITERATURE

1. Make a new book jacket. It should include an attractive picture or cover design, a summary of the book, information on the author and illustrator, and information about other books by the author.
2. Draw or make posters or paintings about characters, settings, or some other aspects of your book.
3. Draw a series of several cartoon characters presenting situations and ideas from the book.
4. Complete scale drawings of rooms in a book. Use graph paper with a set scale and design places portrayed in book.
5. Draw a scale model of an item in a story.

6. Make a scale model of a scene or the setting of a book. Pay close attention to details given in the book in order to create a realistic model.
7. Draw a map which illustrates the setting, physical movement of a character(s), or the emotional growth of a character(s). Label important places or stages of character development. A variation is to build the map using flour paste with food color.
8. Create a mobile which illustrates the tone, mood, setting, characters, theme, or symbols in a book.
9. Plan and construct a bulletin board for a book you have read. Include a scene from the book or the theme.
10. Make a collage to illustrate theme or mood. Use pictures, drawings, etc.
11. make a mosaic using paper or broken glass placed on paper or set in plaster. This can illustrate some element of a work of literature.
12. Make a class or individual mural using cloth as a mold, theme, or setting interpretation. For a class mural, each student cuts his design (front and back) from cloth and then stitches it together, leaving an opening for stuffing. The item can be stuffed with cloth or newspaper. All pieces of the larger design of the class mural are then appliquéd to a large piece of cloth.
13. Paint a wall or panes of the windows in the classroom with scenes from the world of literature. Tempera paints can be washed off the windows, and acrylic paint can be peeled off.
14. Design a wire sculpture that would be symbolic of the theme, tone, or mood of the story.
15. Cut or carve a figure from a bar of soap or paraffin. Be sure to choose something which is representative of the book.
16. Make a ceramic figure which illustrates a character or symbol from the book.
17. Mold plaster relief designs. Pour plaster into a form over various objects and then antique or shellac them to make interesting displays about subjects in a book.
18. Design (and make) masks representative of a character from your book.
19. Make life-sized paper-stuffed animals, people, or objects found in a book. Cut out two large sheets of wrapping paper in the shape desired. Staple the edges almost all the way around. Stuff with crumpled newspaper, finish stapling, paint.
20. Make finger puppets (or sock puppets or any other kind) representing characters.
21. Dress a mannequin, a doll, or yourself like one of the characters in the book.
22. Make or decorate hats that represent various characters or aspects of the book and explain them to the class.
23. make a weaving or tapestry that portrays some design in the book. These may be used as wall hangings.
24. Design and stitch squares for a quilt. Depict favorite characters or scenes. Then stitch the quilt together. The individual squares may be drawn with marking pens or done in stitchery. The quilt also may be used as a wall hanging or a curtain for a private reading area in the room.
25. Create batik designs with wax and old sheets of tie-dye material. When dry and ironed, use them for wall hangings, curtains, and costumes.
26. Design and make your own T-shirt of an illustration about a book. Create a design, using color-fast marking pens.
27. Make vegetable prints to make designs interpreting some element of a work of literature. Potato halves can be carved, dipped into ink or tempera, and printed on paper.
28. Make a diorama or shadow box depicting the setting, characters, or the theme from your book. Shoe boxes are ideal for this project.
29. Make a "roll-movie" of the scenes or events of a book. Put a series of pictures in sequence of pictures with each one showing a bit more movement than the preceding one. When this rolled quickly, it gives the appearance of motion.
30. Make an animation of a scene on an adding machine tape. To get the animation draw a sequence of pictures with each one showing a bit more movement than the preceding one. When this is rolled quickly, it gives the appearance of motion.
31. Make a movie that includes characters or ideas from the book you've read. Change the ending or situations.

32. Prepare original slides to illustrate the mood or action of a reading.
33. Create a filmstrip of a story. Commercially produced material is available with special color pens to make filmstrips.
34. Make a puzzle from original art work illustrating setting or characters. Also, some photo centers will make jigsaw puzzles from photographs.
35. Create a game complete with playing board and directions using situations and or characters from a book.
36. Convert the events of a story into a ballad or song. Write the lyrics and music or adapt words to a melody by someone else.
37. Cook some dish related to the work. This could be done in conjunctions with a party (such as Shakespearean) having food and decorations from ideas found in the story.
38. Bake a cake in the shape of an object, person, or scene from the book.