

Reading Journal Guidelines LITR 286

During the semester, you need to write a journal entry for every assigned reading. Your entry should be a minimum of a full page (assuming average size writing and a full size notebook) but preferably longer.

We will use these journal entries during our classroom discussion time. I will keep a "rotation" list and call people from the list to read aloud. I will also review them at times to grade them for completeness. Although they are not graded for grammar and style, do use complete sentences and try to write clearly.

Also, it is important to note that **the journal entries are not summaries of the reading**. In writing about literature, you use summary to support a point---such as answering the questions below---and not for its own sake. You can assume your audience already knows the work.

Hopefully, the journals will also be a useful place to begin when thinking of paper topics this semester.

The journal entries should show that you have read and considered the text. The questions in our book that follow each reading are another good place to start.

Other questions that you might address:

1. What does this work of literature say about justice?
2. How does this work compare with other ones that we've read?
3. What connections do you see between this work and your everyday experience?
4. What connections do you see between this work and current events in the news?
5. If you find the work difficult or frustrating, why? What specifically makes the work difficult or frustrating?
6. What patterns do you notice in the work? Where do the patterns break down?
7. What is ambiguous about the work?
8. What issues seem unresolved in the work?
9. What sort of moral or legal system is implied or critiqued by the work?
10. What is the main conflict in the work? Why is it important?
11. If the work involves characters, what are their motivations? What do they want and why?
12. How do the characters change during the course of the work?
13. What is the theme of the work? What evidence supports your reading?
14. How does the setting relate to the theme?
15. For a poem, what is the tone? What is the speaker's attitude toward the subject? How do you know?