



THE BOOK AND BEYOND:

A student's guide for exploring children's and YA literature

Title:

Author(s):

Illustrator(s):

This section is for your thoughts, questions, notes about different aspects of the book you are exploring. Use the questions below as prompts for your own ideas around each heading.

The book

Physical object

- How does the book smell? What sounds are made when you turn the pages? How do the pages feel? What are the pages / cover made of?
- What size and shape is the book e.g. horizontal, rectangular vertical? Why?
- Are these sensory qualities important in a book? Why?

Design & cover

- What design features does the book have (e.g. dust cover, end papers, watermarked pages)? What is the effect of these?
- How does the cover grab attention?
- How does the cover reflect the plot, mood, theme, genre? Is it a good or fair representation of the story inside? How?
- What *information* is on the cover, cover pages, and end-pages (e.g. title, author, illustrator, publisher, copyright, dedication, plot summary, book history, author's notes)? Which information has to be there? Why?

Illustration

- Are there illustrations? If not, why not? If you were adding illustrations, what would you include? Why?
- Are the illustrations crucial to the telling of the story? How do they contribute to the plot, mood, theme, characters?
- What techniques have been used e.g. colour, drawing, style, size?

Characters

- Who is the main character? How can you tell? How would you describe them?
- Who is your favourite / least favourite character? What are their qualities and values? How do they develop through the course of the book?
- Which character is the most like you / someone you know? How?
- What advice would you give one of the characters?

Plot

- What is this book's story arc (sequence of events)?
- What's the main problem in the story? How do the characters try to solve this problem? How do they do this? What challenges do they face?
- Are there other ways the problem might have been solved?
- Are there any surprises? What differed from what you were expecting?

Setting

- When and where does the story take place?
- What do you already know about this place or time?
- How does the setting influence events?
- How do the characters' circumstances influence how they act / react in certain situations (historical, cultural, social, personal, and situational)?
- Are there any symbols (objects / places)? What do they stand for?

Theme & message

- What message or moral do you take away from the book (e.g. friendship, bravery, persistence)?
- What is the book's theme or big idea (e.g. diversity, sustainability)?
- Did the book refine your ideas / attitudes about the theme or message? How did it do this? Will you make any changes in your life as a result?

Language

- What are the main language features (e.g. rhyme, metaphor, alliteration)? How do these contribute to the book's plot, mood or theme?
- What is the vocabulary of the book like? Are there unusual or interesting words?
- Is the book wordless? If so what non-text 'languages' or symbol systems are used to tell the story?

Mood & feeling

- What is the overall mood or feeling of the book (e.g. joyous, bittersweet, angry)? Did you feel or just recognise it?
- How are mood and characters' emotions conveyed (e.g. by language, dialogue, illustration, body language, colour; text size)? What examples can you think of?

Genre & format

- What genre (s) is the book? How can you tell (e.g. plot, characters, language features, illustrations, author)?
- What other books are in this genre? What are some features of that genre?
- Do you have a favourite genre? Did this affect your enjoyment of this book?

Your question(s)

What questions do you have for exploring a particular book? These questions might be inspired by ideas in 'the book' section above and/or personal responses.

- Why do people read? Are the reasons the same for everyone? Why do you read? How does reading affect your life (positively or negatively)?
- What is a story? What are the elements of a story?
- How do readers construct meaning from a text? Does everyone do it the same way? How do you construct meaning from a text?
- Why do people make and tell stories? Why and how are stories important to society or culture? What might happen if there were no stories?



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Make connections

Use the book as inspiration to share, wonder, question, and explore ideas, possibilities, connections, feelings, experiences and other viewpoints. Here are some ideas for activities you can do on your own and/or with others.

Personal

Create

- A quiz
- A zine / comic
- A song / rap about event / character

Explore

- Connections to other books
- Ideas the writer introduces
- Find out about the writer

Draw /illustrate

- Map of the world/setting
- Travel brochure for a setting
- Design a different cover
- The characters

Write

- List interesting words/ quotes
- A diary post about event
- Write an alternate ending
- A letter to author or character

Make

- An object from the book
- Build models of a setting
- A costume

Judge / review

- A star review
- Mini book talk
- Recommend to someone you know

Read more

- Read the next in the series

- Read another book by the same author

- Read another book with the same idea/topic/ genre

- Listen to an audio version of the book

Social (Share your experience)

Talk

- Retell the story to a friend
- Discuss with friends
- With your teacher / family

Read aloud

- Some dialogue from a character
- Your favourite section
- A bit that made you laugh / cry

Co-create

- Book trailers
- A pitch to make a film/TV series of the book
- A BookTube video

Post on social media

- Thoughts/ photos /reviews
- Instagram, Twitter etc
- Goodreads
- School library website

Act

- Scenes from book
- A monologue
- Interview a character

Join

- Book club — online or in person
- Follow the writers social media/webpage
- Find and follow an organisation linked to the theme

What connections can you make to yourself, other texts, the world?

Text to self

- What does this text remind you of?
- Does anything in this text remind you of anything in your own life?

Text to text

- How is this text similar to others you have read, seen, listened to (other books, films, songs, websites)?
- How is this text different?

Text to world

- How are things in this book similar to the real world?
- How are things in this book different from the real world?