**STRUCTURE for Reading Response Paragraphs**

**In your notes you take about your reading,** you are writing your thoughts, questions, and reactions. You are noticing and identifying the elements of fiction. How do you feel about what you are reading? What do you agree or disagree with? What surprises you? Why? Can you identify with the situation?

You are making connections between quotes and events, making generalizations and marking down insights you gain as you read.

Use the stickie notes and symbols and put them in your book as you read.

* Underline key terms if you have your story copy electronically.
* Identify, highlight, or mark important passages that demonstrate character motivations and the elements of fiction.

In your reading response paragraphs you are pulling together the ideas from your notes together. Use the ideas from your notes to help you write your response paragraphs. Show your mind alive and involved with your reading. Push yourself to think deeply and see connections.

**Here is a general structure to follow:**

**1. Interest catcher**. A quote, a description, a dilemma or a problem, an anecdote, a connection to your own personal life, questions the reading raised for you, a reference to something in history, art or popular culture that is similar to the idea you’re going to discuss.

**2. Author & title.** You might also include genre.

**3. Brief, concise summary** of the events to orient the reader. This generally includes the story’s conflict.

**4. Claim**: an opinion statement about something of significance in the story,that connects to the story as a whole as you understand it.

This is where you **agree, disagree, identify,** or **evaluate something in the story.**

**Examples of Claims:**

* The author’s use of descriptive word choice builds the tension in the story, “Most Dangerous Game.”
* The Emperor in the story pessimistically thinks that the best way to solve a problem is through violence.
* The setting in “All Summer in a Day” highly influences the plot direction.
* In “The Necklace,” de Maupassant shows us that what we make of our lives is not totally up to fate; how we respond to to situations that happen to us also significantly affects the outcome of our lives.
* People don’t truly know their own values until they are tested, and we see this with the character of Dr. Remenzel in the story “The Lie,” because until something he thought he always had, was taken from him, he acted as if he were very open and liberal.
* The phrases “Look at the birds. Look at the birds,” in the story “The Flying Machine,” demonstrates how something in people longs for freedom, even when it is not given.
* The story “The Saddest Day the Summer Had” demonstrates how sometimes people can’t change until they are forced to, and the dire consequences that result when people can’t see beyond their own narrow limitations of having to be “right”, rather than being in right relationship.
* You could also explain your reaction to the reading and analyze how the writer’s style, tone, word choice and examples made you feel that way.
* You could talk about what the author means by using a particular word, phrase or question and how it connects to a larger idea in the story.
* You could talk about why the author puts something in an unusual way and what’s the meaning in connection.
* What the motive for an action is in a passage and how it connects to a larger idea in the book.

You could talk about what the author’s purpose in a particular passage is and how it connects to a larger idea in the book or story.

You could talk about the meaning of connections between passages in a work.

You could talk about the sequence of events and how they are important to some larger idea in the book or story.

You could talk about the overall problem or meaning in a work by making a specific guess.

You could show how the text relates to other things you've read.

5.  **Examples (points, quotes, &/or events**) that demonstrate the idea in the story.

* Show the interlinking of ideas and events in the story related to your claim, and your thinking about them.
* Give context as you lead into your event, example or quote.
* For quotes, put the page number after the quote like this: (p.7)

6. **Explain and discuss how each example,** quote or event connect to your main idea.

* Show
* Think of this structure pattern: discussion-- example --quotation --discussion -- example -- quotation -- discussion-- example -- quotation -- discussion -- example --quotation -- discussion

**7. Come back to your claim.** Author and  you, author in contrast to you. The conclusion generally mirrors the way you opened. If you asked a question, answer it. If you opened with a startling statement, show how the reading helped to answer or make sense of that idea. If you opened with a description, show how the reading helps us to understand that description. If you opened with a quote, come back to how the quote explains your thesis. If the reading fulfilled your expectations, tell how. If it didn’t tell why.

**Reading Response Example #1**

         The book, *The Book Thief,* by Markus Zusak is about a girl called Liesel who was sent to live with foster parents in a different part of Germany. She lives in a small town with her kind foster father and somewhat abusive, but loving foster mother. This book is about Liesel's struggles to adapt to her new life after the death of her brother, and how she develops a love for reading  that her family does not have the money to help her persue. Liesel, however, finds her own ways to keep reading...

         I think that one of the main ideas of this book is how fear changes people. The time period is during World War II, when there is a lot of fear and tension in the air. Even the Germans fear Hitler, their cruel and controlling leader. The time period has a big effect on the main idea and characters of the story.

         One example of how fear changes people is Hans Hubermann. When Liesel said, on the street, that she hated Hitler, Hans, her kind and gentle "father" slapped her. He had always been on her side, always kind and loving, but he slapped her that day. Afterwards, he felt extremely bad, but he told Liesel why she should never say anything against Hitler. Definitely not on the streets. As the text says, "She could take a Watschen from nuns and Rosas, but it hurt so much more from Papa." this is because her father has never hurt her before. But his fear that so,some would hear and come after them caused him to react differently.

         Another example of this is with Rudy's father. When Rudy painted himself with charcoal and ran a hundred meter sprint outside, Rudy's father grabbed him by the ear and shook him, hurting him. At first, I thought that his father was just cruel, but then he showed that he did love Rudy, and was kind to him afterwards. When Rudy asked him why he shouldn't have done that, his father said, "“Because they'll take you away.” This shows how real the fear is for Rudy's father and how much he believes that Rudy is in danger. It also shows how he cares for his son.

**Reading Response Example #2**

    In the book *When You Reach Me,* by Rebecca Stead, one of the lessons the protagonist, Miranda, learns is not to judge a book by its cover, or a person by their appearance. There were several stereotypes in this book, such as the stereotypes about racial differences, which was stronger at that time period. Miranda also had strong ways of thinking, and strong images of people, that were changed in the book. For example, her mutual enemy, Julia, was a fancy, clothes-obsessed girl. Miranda never thought of the person underneath Julia's fancy dresses and green suede boots. It turned out, however, that Julia and Miranda had many common interests, and that Julia was really a nice person beneath her spoiled attitude. Miranda just went with what she saw for so many years, when they really could have been friends instead of enemies.

*'I stared at her. "I thought you liked all that stuff," I said.*

*"Yeah, actually, I do. But I like other stuff, too."*

    Another example is the Laughing Man, Marcus. She thought he was a crazy old man, and he scared her. But if she took the time to talk to him, as she did that day when she gave him the sandwich, she would have found out that he was just a regular man, maybe a little eccentric, but not deserving of her fear.

**Reading Response Example #3**

In this book called Rebecca by Daphne Du Maurier, the protagonist, who is a young woman (name not mentioned) married a man named Maxim.

Maxim was a wealthy man that lived in a big house called Manderley, and his famous and well known wife named Rebecca had past away a year ago.

I loved the way the whole plot revolved around the mystery of Rebecca, who I thought was an important character in the book. At first, the woman felt jealous of Rebecca because she felt that Rebecca had been a better person than her. Many people had told the woman that they used to "simply adore" Rebecca and that she was witty, extremely beautiful, and very friendly and kind. Maxim's sister had said to her, "You are so very different from Rebecca." This made the woman feel jealous and not worthy enough to marry somebody like Maxim, and she would not have wanted to marry anybody else since she was so fond of Maxim. As a result, she wasn't enjoying her life after marriage like she thought she would, and spent much of  her time alone.

At this point of the story, I had been feeling bored of what was happening in the book. I had wanted the woman to part with Maxim so the wonderful memories of Rebecca would be preserved.  Other people in the book also believed this. For example, Mrs. Danvers, the housekeeper of Manderley said that she "absolutely resented" the woman and acted quite strangely when the woman was around.

However, after a party at Manderley and mysterious events at the sea, the whole plot twists and the woman realizes a dark secret about Rebecca. The woman began to have different viewpoints of Rebecca and other characters, like Mrs. Danvers, after she learns the *real* truth, which is an important aspect of the story.

This is why I thought Rebecca was an important character of the book, and that the whole plot really did revolve around the mystery of Rebbeca, which made the story more enjoyable and exciting to read. Overall, I thought Rebecca was a suspenseful and unique book to read.