

CHRISTCHURCH SCHOOL

Christchurch, Virginia
Department of English

REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES FOR THE READING JOURNAL

- A final copy of the formal journal of ONE book must be **word-processed, proofread, and printed in hard copy**, to be submitted on the first day of class.
- A working copy of the informal journal of the SECOND book is also due on the first day of class.
- Each journal (formal and informal) should consist of at least **three** separate entries of 200-250 words each, creating a total 600-750-word response for each book.
- Students should **date** each entry, according to the format in the accompanying sample.
- Students should include the following guide questions when responding to the text. (Not all questions will apply to each entry, but students should address each prompt *at least once*.)
- Older and more experienced students, especially rising English Honors students, should focus on questions 11-14 as means for commenting on author's style, technique, and thematic intentions.
- Remember: a journal is not the same as writing an essay or book report; it provides an opportunity for reflection on connecting with the author, emotionally and intellectually.
 1. Explain your feelings after reading the opening chapter(s). After reading half? After finishing?
 2. Describe your emotional response to the book. Laughter? Tears? Frustration? Celebration? Explain.
 3. What is the most important word / passage / event in the book? Explain.
 4. What came as a surprise? Why?
 5. What character(s) do you like and / or dislike? Why?
 6. Do you or others whom you know resemble any of the characters? Explain.
 7. Does the title suit the book? Why or why not?
 8. What is the author's view about life or living?
 9. Did the book help or change you in some way?
 10. Would you recommend this book? Why or why not?

English III Honors and IV Honors students (and non-honors students):

11. What are the most effective techniques used by the author? Give examples.
12. Are there surprising developments in the plot? When do they happen? How and why are those developments important?
13. What is the major theme (central idea) of the book? What idea(s) does the author want to impart to the reader?
14. What elements of language (words, images, sentence style) did you find particularly powerful?

SAMPLE JOURNAL ENTRY**Teacher's Name** Mr. Kempe**Date** June 30, 2010**Title of book and pages read** *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man: 178 - 187*

Today I read the passage in which young Stephen Daedalus makes up his mind to go to the University. The decision is significant because it means he will be going against the wishes of his family, who wanted him to stay in the seminary and become a priest. He uses a very significant Latin phrase, *non serviam* (I will not serve), to indicate the intensity of his emotion. Stephen has been moving towards this moment of decision throughout the novel. I realize now that the author had been preparing us for this moment. Joyce had been showing us all the ways in which Stephen thought he might find security and peace, but these ways were all ideas that other people had for him. They were not his own. Now, he knows who he must be: an artist. And he knows that he must be responsible for his decision.

The very moment that Stephen decides to move on, to know and accept himself, he experiences the world differently. His throat “throbs”; his heart “trembles”; he feels that his “soul is in flight.” The author uses this language to let us know that Stephen is radically transformed. He also notices details that he had never seen before: people swimming, the wet gleam of rocks by the ocean, the salt in matted hair. I felt Stephen’s joy and enthusiasm through the author’s use of descriptive language.

My reading today reminded me of my friend, Josh, who told me the other day how he had finally realized that only he could take responsibility for his actions. He also said that when this happened, he didn’t feel more confined; he actually felt more free. I think this must be what Mr. Walker meant when he talked about paradox: two feelings that don’t seem as though they ought to be related to one another, and yet they are.

Well, I guess I’ll have to tell Mr. Kempe I finally “got it” this summer. I can’t wait to find out tomorrow what Stephen’s life at the University will be like.

