

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Reading Response (RR) Entries

**Directions:** As you read, annotate or put a post-it next to any line, sentence or section that jumps out at you. Write a brief note to yourself so you can remember what you were thinking. (If nothing “jumps out” at you by the time you have finished reading, go back and **FIND** something to respond to.)

When you are finished reading, write out the RR entry fully on paper. **YOU MUST:**

1. Have an **original thought**.
2. Make your entry at **least five complete sentences**.
3. Give a quote and the **page number** or **line number** of the part you are responding to.
4. Label which **category** of RR entry you are using (see below).

### Categories of RR Entries:

1. **Give an Opinion:** Tell what you think / feel about a certain part, and why. You could react to an aspect of character, plot, theme, language, tone, style—anything in the text. But you must be specific.
2. **Ask a Question:** Write a specific question. This can be a basic question about something you don’t understand in the text, or a larger question (about life, literature or anything) that the text made you consider. Remember, you must still write five sentences—you can do this by explaining what you understand so far before asking the question, or by trying to answer your question after you ask it.
3. **Make a Connection:** A certain point in the text reminds you of another story, poem, movie, song, or something in “real life.” How are the two alike?
4. **Significant Passage:** You realize a certain part in the text is important. Why do you think it’s important? What does it mean? What does it tell you about the entire book, story or poem?
5. **Language Recognition:** You notice some engaging sensory details, a simile or metaphor, some onomatopoeia or alliteration, some parallelism, an interesting epithet, or something else. Maybe you notice a single word and wonder about why the author chose it. Whatever you notice, quote it, and explain how it adds to the text. Does it contribute to the mood or characterization? Does it relate to a theme? Could it have a deeper meaning and what might that be?
6. **Find Foreshadowing:** You read something that seems like a hint to what will come later. Explain why you think this and why it is important, and make a prediction.
7. **Theme Recognition:** You find a sentence or two that might be the theme (the message or “So what?”) of the piece. Explain it in your own words.

8. **Spot the Setting:** You notice a part that refers to the place or time of the story or poem. Why is it important? How does it relate to the plot, mood, characters, or theme?
9. **Character Description:** You notice a detail about a character (what he/she looks like, thinks, says or does). Why is it important? What does it reveal about that character?
10. **Mark the Motivation:** You realize a character's motive(s) (what a character wants). Explain what this/these are and how it affects the story or other characters.
11. **Mind the Mood:** You feel the mood of the piece. What is it, and what is creating it (something in the setting? dialogue? plot? sensory details?) Remember that mood is the feeling in the text, not the author's attitude. Your quote should show evidence of the mood. Then: Why is the author doing this?
12. **Cite the Claim:** You find the sentence that is the author's main argument (the thesis or claim). Explain why you think it is the focus of the piece.
13. **Interesting Intro:** You think the author's introduction is interesting, clever, or engaging. Tell what technique the author used and why you think it is effective.
14. **Clever Conclusion:** You think the author's conclusion or clincher is really effective. Tell what technique the author used and why it works.
15. **Clarify a Cultural Value:** You notice that a certain event, detail, message, or character trait reveals a specific value of that culture. What is it? How do you know it's a value? Explain, and make sure your quote supports your idea.

### New Categories--Level Up!

16. **Crossover:** Tie together two aspects of a text. For example, explain how the setting affects the mood, how the conflict relates to the theme, or even how a certain simile reflects the work's overall theme. You can explain how a certain character trait led to a conflict, how a symbol reveals a theme, how the setting is important for the plot. Basically, identify and link together any two literary elements. Label your two elements at the top of your RR. You still must tie it two a line/paragraph.
17. **Archetype Alert:** Identify an archetype in the text and tell what it means, why it's an archetype, and what other stories it is in. Then: why would the author choose to use it here?
18. **Connect Form and Content:** What about the form or structure (paragraphs, verse, short lines, etc.) influences the content (the actual meaning of the words)?
19. **Sensing a Symbol:** You notice an object or detail (in nature or human-made) that seems to mean something deeper. What is it and what is it doing in the story? Have you seen it before in the story? What could it mean? What theme or character could it point to? Why do you think this?
20. **Tell the Tone:** You sense the author's attitude as you read. What is it? Why do you think this? What is causing it—the word choice, the meaning of the words, the genre itself? Explain.

- 21. The Joy of Genre:** How is the **genre** of this text (epic, poem, aphorism, short story, letter, essay, play, etc.) a good fit for the content? Why would the content not work as well in another genre? (Be very specific when you describe the genre—don't just say fiction/nonfiction.) Even though this is a larger idea, find a quote that applies to your point.
- 22. Seeing the Sentences:** You notice a sentence or group of sentences and they strike you as a deliberate choice of the author. Maybe the sentence is longer or shorter, choppy or flowing; maybe it uses parallelism, or is purposefully a fragment. Maybe something else. What is it, and why is the author doing this? How does it contribute to the overall meaning of the piece?
- 23. Test the Translation:** You wonder about a certain word or phrase, and how it was translated. See what you can do to find out other meanings of the original word, or other translations. Why did the author choose that word, do you think? How does it affect the meaning of the sentence, and the meaning of the work in a larger sense? (Does it change the tone or mood, or a character, or even the plot?)
- 24. W W ? S:** (What Would \_\_\_\_\_ Say) Fill in with the name of an author, historical figure, scientist, scholar, or teacher. (No modern-day celebrities.) How would that person respond to a certain spot in the text? Why? Be sure to explain the person's philosophy / focus and how it relates to the text.
- 25. Crazy RR Challenge:** Go to the website <http://literary-devices.com/>. Look at the "Quick List" of literary devices on the left. The good news: You know many of these! The better news: There are more to learn! **Pick one you don't know**, read the definition and example, and see if you can find it in the reading. You might have to click on a few before you find something applicable. Some great terms to start with: anastrophe, chiasmus, and synecdoche.

### Final Group of Categories—THE BIG LEAGUES!

- 26. Marxist Criticism:** Marxists look at questions surrounding social class. Look at a spot in the text, and write about any of these questions:
- What social classes do the characters represent?
  - Which class does the work claim to represent?
  - How do characters from different classes interact or conflict?
  - What values does it reinforce? What values does it subvert?
  - Whom does it benefit if the work or effort is accepted/successful/believed, etc.?
  - What is the social class of the author?
- 27. Feminist Criticism:** Feminists focus on the portrayal of women in a text. Think about:
- How is the relationship between men and women portrayed?
  - What are the power relationships between men and women?
  - How are male and female roles defined?
  - What does the work reveal about the operations (economically, politically, socially, or psychologically) of patriarchy?
  - What does the work imply about the possibilities of sisterhood as a mode of resisting patriarchy?
  - What does the history of the work's reception by the public and by the critics tell us about the operation of patriarchy?

- 28. New Historicism Criticism:** The New Historicists believe a text is inextricably intertwined with the time and culture of its author. Ask yourself:
- How does the text demonstrate the culture of the author?
  - What language/characters/events reflect the current events of the author's day?
  - Does this text support or criticize the leading political figures or movements of the day? How?
  - How does the work consider traditionally marginalized populations?
- 29. Psychoanalytic Criticism:** Most psychoanalysis stems from Sigmund Freud. Think about:
- Is any character repressing a painful event from the past?
  - Is any character repressing secret drives or desires?
  - Is the Oedipus complex at work here? (son loves mother, hates father)
  - Or Electra complex? (daughter loves father)
  - Any other family dynamics apparent?
  - Any other complexes: Cinderella, Icarus, Superiority or Inferiority?
  - Any other psychological factors at work (fear or fascination with death, for example)?
- 30. Gender and Queer Theory Criticism:** This lens is rooted in Feminist Theory, but seeks to go even further. Questions include:
- What elements of the text can be perceived as being masculine (active, powerful) and feminine (passive, marginalized) and how do the characters support these traditional roles?
  - What sort of support (if any) is given to elements or characters who question the masculine/feminine binary? What happens to those elements/characters?
  - What elements in the text exist in the middle, between the perceived masculine/feminine binary? In other words, what elements exhibit traits of both (bisexual)?
  - What does the work contribute to our knowledge of queer, gay, or lesbian experience and history, including literary history?
  - How does the literary text illustrate the problematics of sexuality and sexual "identity," that is the ways in which human sexuality does not fall neatly into the separate categories defined by the words homosexual and heterosexual?
- 31. Critical Race Theory:** This theory looks at the appearance of race and racism in texts. It seeks to understand how minority groups are represented in texts and how cultural views of race affect them. CRT scholars believe racism is a part of everyday life and want to confront it. Ask yourself:
- How is race portrayed in the text? Is this an accurate portrayal?
  - How do characters of different races interact with each other? What does this reveal about the races?
  - Is there evidence of systemic racism, white privilege, or microaggressions in the text? How so?

<b>Rubric:</b>	Original Thought	1 point
	Length	1 point
	Quote / page #	1 point
	Naming the Category	1 point
	Best work	1 point

**Each RR**

**5 points**

## The Dinner Party

by Mona Gardner

The country is India. A colonial official and his wife are giving a large dinner party. They are seated with their guests—army officers and government attachés and their wives, and a visiting American naturalist—in their spacious dining room, which has a bare marble floor, open rafters and wide glass doors opening onto a veranda.\*

A spirited discussion springs up between a young girl who insists that women have outgrown the jumping-on-a-chair-at-the-sight-of-a-mouse era and a colonel who says that they haven't.

“A woman's unfailing reaction in any crisis,” the colonel says, “is to scream. And while a man may feel like it, he has that ounce more of nerve control than a woman has. And that last ounce is what counts.”

The American does not join in the argument but watches the other guests. As he looks, he sees a strange expression come over the face of the hostess. She is staring straight ahead, her muscles contracting slightly. With a slight gesture she summons the native boy standing behind her chair and whispers to him. The boy's eyes widen: he quickly leaves the room.

Of the guests, none except the American notices this or sees the boy place a bowl of milk on the veranda just outside the open doors.

The American comes to with a start. In India, milk in a bowl means only one thing—bait for a snake. He realizes there must be a cobra in the room. He looks up at the rafters—the likeliest place—but they are bare. Three corners of the room are empty, and in the fourth the servants are waiting to serve the next course. There is only one place left—under the table.

His first impulse is to jump back and warn the others, but he knows the commotion would frighten the cobra into striking. He speaks quickly, the tone of his voice so arresting that it sobers everyone.

“I want to know just what control everyone at this table has. I will count to three hundred—that’s five minutes—and not one of you is to move a muscle. Those who move will forfeit fifty rupees. Ready!”

The twenty people sit like stone images while he counts. He is saying “. . . two hundred and eighty. . .” when, out of the corner of his eye, he sees the cobra emerge and make for the bowl of milk. Screams ring out as he jumps to slam the veranda doors safely shut.

“You were right, Colonel!” the host exclaims. “A man has just shown us an example of perfect control.”

“Just a minute,” the American says, turning to his hostess. “Mrs. Wynnes, how did you know that cobra was in the room?”

A faint smile lights up the woman’s face as she replies: “Because it was crawling across my foot.”

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\* During the time this story takes place, India was a British colony. The colonial official works for the British government in India. The government attachés work for another country’s embassy in India. Finally, a naturalist is someone who studies animals and plants.

“The Dinner Party” by Mona Gardner from *The Saturday Review of Literature*, vol. 25, no. 5, January 31, 1941. Copyright © 1941 by General Media Communications, Inc.

## RR Categories for Paintings and Other Visual Texts

1. **Find the Focus:** What is the focal point of this work? How do you know? What is the artist trying to communicate by making this point the focus? How does it relate to the rest of the piece?
2. **Consider the Colors:** What do the colors in this piece communicate? You can examine a specific color choice or the whole palette. What mood does the color / colors create? How do the colors relate to the theme / message of the piece?
3. **Point out the Perspective:** What is the perspective of this piece, and how is it important? How does the artist create the perspective? How does it relate to the mood of the piece? How does it create or relate to the theme?
4. **Joined in Juxtaposition:** Are any elements juxtaposed in this piece? What are they, and what is the effect? How does it relate to the mood of the piece? How does this juxtaposition relate to the theme?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

### Assignment: Reading Response (RR) Analysis Paper

You will write a paper analyzing yourself as a reader, using all of the Reading Responses (RRs) you've written so far this year. The first part will be your analysis of yourself and your responses, and the second part of the paper will include your **top 5 RRs** from the semester (copy and paste or type), and **WHY** you feel these are your best.

**Part 1: Self-Analysis (2 pages minimum):** Look again at the original RR guidelines you received in the beginning of the year. Consider these questions when analyzing yourself as a reader and responder. Have **at least five paragraphs** (use more if one is getting too long) to separate your ideas, and get to **two full pages** in this section.

#### **Paragraph 1:**

- How do I write RRs? Do I read all the way through first, and then find something to write? Do I write as soon as an RR pops into my head? Do I begin reading with a category in mind? Is it a mix of these? Explain.
- Am I mostly summarizing, or is there evidence of my own original thoughts in the RRs? Is this difficult for me? Did this change over the semester? How?

#### **Paragraph 2:**

- Which kinds of RRs do I gravitate to? Which kinds of RRs do I like most? Why? Which do I like least? Why?
- Do I always write the same kind of RR? Do I have a variety?
- Is there a certain kind of RR that I've never tried? Why might this be so?

#### **Paragraph 3:**

- If I often write one kind of RR, what does that reveal about me as a reader and thinker? Even if I don't write one kind of RR, what do my other choices reveal about me as a reader and thinker? **For example:**
  - What stands out for me when I read?
  - What is difficult for me to see?
  - What am I most interested in when I read?
  - Do I take risks in thinking when I respond to readings? How?
  - Do I play it safe with my thinking? How?
  - Am I afraid to be wrong? Why or why not?
  - Do I enjoy challenging myself as a reader? Do I think I am a strong reader?
  - Do I feel confident in my abilities to respond in some way to a reading, even if I don't understand it 100%?



**Paragraph 4:**

- Have you ever been surprised (or surprised yourself) when writing an RR? How so?
- Has my RR writing changed over the course of the semester? How so?
- Have my reading habits changed as a result of writing RRs? How so?

**Paragraph 5:**

- Am I trying my best when I write RRs? How could I be putting more thought and effort into them?
- As I move in to the next semester, what new things could I be thinking about or looking for as I read?

**Part 2: Your 5 best RRs:** Look through your notebook and choose 5 of your best RRs. Give the date, story/poem title, and type the RR (including the type of RR it was). Then explain **WHY you think that particular RR is strong**. Be specific and thoughtful! Number the RR summaries and format the page so I can clearly see each summary and your commentary.

Don't forget: Avoid banned words  
 Avoid "you" (though you can use 1<sup>st</sup> person throughout)  
 Match singulars/plurals  
 Check for parallelism

**Rubric:**      **Self Analysis (effort, reflection, grammar)**      **20 points**

**5 RRs & why (specific) x 3 points each**      **15 points**

**Points:**      **35**      **Due Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS:

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