

4 * 3 * 2 * 1

Journal Prompts and Essential Questions

Title: _____

Author: _____

Section (chapters, act, etc.): _____

4 sentences of summary: Summarize the important aspects of the assigned reading in four sentences.

3 sentences in response to one of the essential questions: Write out the question and a thoughtful response as it relates to this reading.

2 favorite quotes or important/powerful sentences: Write them out with the page numbers. (If it's a huge quote, please use ellipses to shorten it to the parts you find important.) Add two sentences explaining why you picked them and why they matter.

1. Page: _____ Quote:

Explanation:

2. Page: _____ Quote:

Explanation:

1 personal connection: What parts of the reading make you think of something in your life? What caught your eye that you found interesting for some reason? Respond in 3 – 4 thoughtful sentences about how this incident/character/ statement/book relates to you.

(Example: *Character Y is ALWAYS asking questions. This is incredibly annoying and reminds me of my grandmother who feels like she can't have silence. So she asks about mundane things like my favorite losing a tooth story. OR: This story seems to be a lot about discrimination. While I haven't experienced this particular kind of discrimination, I have experienced some discrimination because of who my parents are. This means I can relate to how the three main characters are feeling.*)

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR LITERATURE

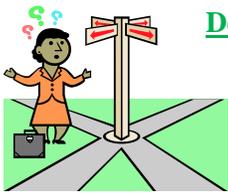


The American Dream

What is the American Dream, and to what extent is it achievable for the characters?

In what ways does the American Dream mean different things for different characters?

What is the perspective of the nature, culture, or region of this work in regard to the American Dream, and what factors create those perceptions?



Decisions, Actions, & Consequences

What is the relationship between decisions and consequences for one or more of the characters?

How do the decisions and actions of characters reveal their personalities?

How do decisions, actions, and consequences vary depending on the different perspectives of the people involved?



Conflict & Change

How does conflict lead to change for the characters?

What problem-solving strategies do the characters use to manage conflict and change?

How does a character's point of view affect the way s/he deals with conflict?

What personal qualities help a character to deal with conflict and change?

Constructing Identities



How do one or more characters form and shape their identities? How do they define who they are?

How does what others think about a character affect how s/he thinks about him/herself?

In a culture where we are bombarded with other people trying to define us, how do we make decisions for ourselves?



The Human Condition

In the face of adversity, what causes some people to prevail while others fail?

Culture: Values, Beliefs & Rituals



How does family play a role in shaping one or more characters' values and beliefs?

To what extent do belief systems shape and/or reflect culture and society?

When a person's individual choices are in direct conflict with his/her family or society, what are the consequences?

What role or purpose does religion / spirituality serve in the culture of this work?

How do values and beliefs shape who characters are as individuals and influence their behavior?



Social Justice

How does power or the lack of power affect individuals in this work?

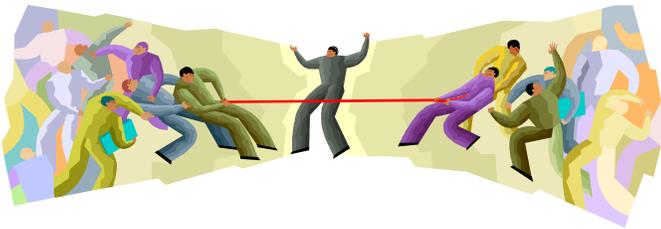
How are prejudice and bias created? How do characters overcome them?

What does power have to do with fairness and justice?

Is it ever necessary to question the status quo?

How do labeling and stereotyping influence how characters look at and understand the world?

What are the causes and consequences of prejudice and injustice, and how does an individual's response to them reveal his/her true character and his/her morals, ethics, and values?



Chaos & Order

What is the importance of civilization and what factors support or destroy its fabric?

What are the politics and consequences of war, and how do these vary based on an individual or cultural perspective?

Utopia & Dystopia



What are the ideals (e.g., freedom, responsibility, justice, community, etc.) that should be honored in a utopian (perfect) society?

Freedom & Responsibility



What is the relationship between freedom and responsibility in this work?

When does government have the right to restrict the freedoms of people?

What sacrifices do the characters make for freedom?

Good & Evil in the World



Is humankind inherently good or evil?

What is the function of human will in relationship between good and evil?

How do different cultures shape the definitions of good and evil?

Heroes & Sheroes



How do the attributes of a hero change and/or remain the same over time?

When does a character's positive personality trait become a tragic flaw?

What is the role of a hero or "sheroe" (coined by Maya Angelou) in a culture?

How do various cultures reward / recognize their heroes and sheroes?

Language & Literature



How is a character's understanding of culture and society constructed through and by language?

How is language used to manipulate people in this work?

How does language influence the way characters think, act, and perceive the world?

How does the author use the resources of language to impact an audience?

What universal themes emerge in this work that are of interest or concern to all cultures and societies?

Love & Sacrifice



What are the boundaries of love and sacrifice, and where does one draw the line between them?

What are the factors that move individuals, communities, or nations to great sacrifice, and what are the consequences?

Nature in the Balance



What are the responsibilities of the individual and/or society in regard to the health of the environment?

How do different world views lead to different views toward nature?

How does nature inspire a character in this work, or even the author?

Our View of Ourselves & the World



How do we know what we know?

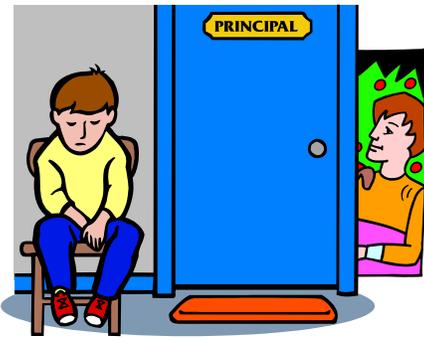
How does what we know about the world shape the way we view ourselves?

How do personal experiences shape one or more characters' view of others?

What does it mean to be an insider or an outsider?

What does it mean to "grow up"? What turning points determine our individual pathways to adulthood in this work?

Are things fated no matter what, or does a character believe his/her actions can change the course of his/her life?



The Pursuit of Happiness



What is happiness, and what is the degree of importance in one's life?

Why does happiness seem to be so elusive for one or more characters in this work?

How much does a culture or society shape a character's understanding or concept of happiness?

Relationships & Community

What are the elements that build a strong friendship in this work?

What do the characters learn from different generations?

How is conflict an inevitable part of relationships in this work?

How do we know if a relationship is healthy or hurtful?

What personal qualities help or hinder the formation of relationships for one or more characters?

How are characters transformed through their relationships with others?

What are the individual's responsibilities to the community as well as the community's responsibilities to the individual?

