

English 1301: Composition 1 (CRN 20226)

Reading Response Journal

Of the many writing projects involved within a composition writing course, one of the most important is the maintenance of a *Reading Response Journal*. This type of notebook offers an organized space for you to creatively think out problems and word-puzzles provided to you by your instructor, all within a set-time limit. Such writing journals also allow the instructor to see the process of how you think, see how you personally respond to given situations, and see how well you understand the weekly lectures. Utilizing this structure, serves your main goal of obtaining a high score at the finish of the school term. However, there are other diverse end results for this assignment — some more obvious than others.

Aside from bettering your grades, the main function of a Reading Response Journal is for you to gain a greater sense of your Writer Self, that inner narrator that dictates your everyday life. Overall, writing is a difficult process. A perfect idea is never fully drafted within a few, quick moments of time. Another point to stress, creative writers do not have a special gene for developing their poems and stories. Skilled writers have practiced their craft over long periods of time, drafting numerous pages, and redrafting even more pages just to reach at a concluding product. Journals help beginning writers to connect easily to their thoughts, and at the same time, provide a stockpile of material for possible later use.

Secondly, reading journals help students discover what their opinions actually are. Some issues and situations do not allow an immediate, formal judgment to be made in a hasty fashion. Especially in higher academic levels, writing prompts require you to narrow down broad concepts into smaller, specific, narrower trains of thought. A writing notebook shows how a complex idea formulates into a well-crafted scholastic paper.

The reading journal is an-going project. The class will be building these individual notebooks in a collective fashion. Various steps will be implemented along the way throughout the weeks ahead. **Note:** overall, eight (8) scheduled opportunities exist for Reading Response entries.

Grading

The Reading Journal is a graded category which counts for 10 percent of your full grade. The grading process of the Journal is a format based off five components— actual attendance, assignment participation, accurate academic response, quantity of words, *and as well, class discussion:*

1. Each student earns **7 points** for attending class and engaging themselves in the weekly prompt.

The instructor will monitor the room during these writing sessions allowing for students to ask any questions and for him to confirm the students' progress.

2. Each student is also **expected to volunteer three times** to discuss or to recite material from their individual book. Class discussions will usually occur during the last few minutes of class.

One point is gained for each day of discussion.

3. During week 6, 12, and week 13 of the course, a Writing Workshop period is established for the instructor to go over student work *and* the composition books with the student in a more intensive, individual basis. This provides feedback of the overall reading response project and encourages any necessary changes in writing practice.

4. The full possible score for each Reading Journal assignment is a total of **10 points**.

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Main Goal

All responses should aim for an academic level of discussion. Although the grading process for the journals is not inclusive of spelling or correct grammar structures, students should aim for full, complex sentence-based paragraphs which analyze the supplied reading in a thorough manner. On occasion, sample responses will be supplied. For the most part, the responses are based on individual opinions about *how* an author achieves his/her successful essay. In some cases there are multiple responses to a given prompt.

Actual page count is important in this assignment as well. Students want to show a strong quality of work with extreme quantities of words. An average response is roughly one page of your composition notebook. Each entry should defend your observations by discussing why your findings are important for understanding the full text.