READING STRATEGIES

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| **HOW DO YOU SEE OTHERS? – Hero’s Journey** |

SOME TIPS FOR READING COMPREHENSION, ATTENTION AND ENDURANCE

* Be realistic about how much time it will take you to read, and read well. Be proactive and read a bit each day, rather than cramming on the day before the check. Reading for more than 45 minutes in a sitting is probably not the best plan.
* Do yourself a favor and minimize distractions – no phone, TV, or music. How can you ever give yourself a chance to do well and to get involved in the book if you don’t try a different approach?
* Monitor your attention to catch times when you flip the page without having really read. Pay attention to what works so that you get better at it (this is called metacognition, or thinking about your thinking)
* Visualize the text – playing the action like a movie in your head will make reading more enjoyable and memorable.
* Think as you read – connect the action to your life, interests, opinions, experiences. Synthesize the ideas you’re reading now with ideas you have read in the past. It will activate your brain and help you remember more. Evaluate and question. Consider what is important and why it is important. Infer what deeper meanings come from the action
* Annotate! Write down your thoughts, observations and connections; your questions and your conjectures; write a short recap at the end of each chapter. Note your thoughts about characters, situations and messages. If you don’t want to write in your book, keep a journal entry with page numbers in your notebook.
* Talk about the book – reading with a friend is one of the best ways to stay interested. Compare your response to the ideas with others and you will see how much differently we all see the same thing (that is the key to empathy)

SOME GOOD QUESTIONS TO ENGAGE YOUR BRAIN IN THE READING – Recent studies have looked at increased levels of empathy and morality after reading literature. A complex books helps us to question how we see other people, how we see ourselves and what we consider to be moral and immoral. If you turn on your empathetic focus (reading for what you can learn about the world and the world’s people), you might find more to like in reading. Read to see your horizons expanded.

* What do you think of the character’s moral qualities and the morality of the world around him or her? Do you align with his or her morals or diverge?
* Do you think characters have agency (or a sense of control/power over their lives), do they have power to make their worlds better? If they do, do they use it? If they don’t, why not and who has power?
* What are the social roles, norms, and goals of the people in the world? What are the social hierarchies? How do characters interrelate with one another? How do the relationships make you think of your own relationships?
* Are the main characters happy? fulfilled? lonely? angry? sympathetic? villainous? weird? Keep an eye on their emotions and compare their emotions to your own in similar or different circumstances.
* What is the source of the problems or conflicts? Have you experienced any of the same problems? Do most people?

SOME GOOD QUESTIONS TO REVIEW THE PLOT AND CHARACTERS

SETTING

* Where/when did the story take place? Could it have taken place somewhere, anywhere else?
* Does the setting play a major role in the story?
* How do the characters use the environment and do they have control of their movements in the environment?
* Is the story plausible? Could it happen to you? Explain.
* Is there a unity of time and place, or does the story change from time to time or place to place?

CHARACTERS

* Who are the main characters? Are the main characters believable? Are the main characters simple or complex?
* What passages reveal something about the character’s personality, values, morals, priorities, struggles, etc?
* What are the character’s limitations? Who is responsible for these limitations?
* Do any of the characters change? Pick one and discuss how an event, person, and decision change that character.
* What does the main character learn about himself or herself, his/her family, or friends.
* Describe a conflict between two characters. How was it resolved? What did you learn about these characters?
* What relationships are important to the character? How does the character form and maintain relationships?
* Is it in the character’s power to solve problems or conflicts? In what ways?
* Do the characters have power to change their circumstances? In what ways are they powerless?

PLOT

* What would you change about the beginning of the story?
* How well are the events in the story tied together? Is the story believable?
* What events in the story are most important? What do they reveal?
* What are the important conflicts? Which ones seem to advance the plot? How do important conflicts resolve?
* How would you describe the ending of the story? Did it end in a satisfying way? Did the author leave anything hanging or unknown? If so, why do you think the author want to leave the reader in the dark?

THEME, MORAL, BIG IDEAS

* What is the purpose of the story? What are you going to remember about this book?
* Does the story teach a moral? What is it?
* Does the title state or reflect the theme? How?
* Do you agree with the author’s ideas? What does the reader have to know to understand the book’s meaning?
* What device (plot, settings, symbols, motifs, metaphors) does the author use to deliver the message?
* Discuss some ideas that the author is making about feelings, nature, life experiences, society, power, change, love, hope, or an historical period. Use details from the story that back up a point you’re making.
* Discuss what the author might have been saying about family or relationships and offer support from the story to back your position.