

QUESTIONS TO USE WITH FICTION

Questions That Foster Personal Connections

How are your feelings and the feelings of a character in your book alike? How are they different?

What feelings did you have as you read the story? Find some places that make you feel that way. Share and discuss these.

What words does the author use that you might want to use in your own writing? Jot these down in your notebook.

Have you had experiences similar to the character of the story? Discuss these.

Select and read to the group a passage that you found meaningful. Explain why.

How did the story change your thinking? Or can you show how it validated or affirmed your thinking?

Have you had experiences similar to the character to the story? Discuss these.

Select and read to the group a passage that you found meaningful. Explain why.

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Questions About Setting

Where does the story take place? Discuss the important settings and explain why you believe each is important to the story.

When does the story take place? Was it long ago, in the future, or the present? What did you learn about this time period?

How much time passes in the story? Skim through your book and find places that show how the author makes time pass and share these.

Questions About Characters

Who is the main character? Why is this character important to the story?

Are there words a character spoke and/or actions a character took that helped you learn what kind of person he or she was? Find and discuss two important sections.

Did any of the characters change? Pick one and discuss how an event, person, and decision change that character.

Discuss what you think the main character learned about himself, his family, or his friends. X Describe a conflict between two characters. How was it resolved? What did you learn about these characters?

Name one or two minor characters. How was it resolved? What did you learn about these characters?

Name one to two minor characters. Show how each affected the main characters?

Were there problems characters couldn't solve? Identify one or two and explain why you think they weren't resolved.

Questions About Structure

What is the genre of your book? Give examples that support your decision.

What literacy techniques did you find? Flashback? Foreshadowing? Figurative language? Find examples of two of these techniques, and share.

Did the author create different moods? Find passages in the text that reveal two different moods, and share. Point out the words, phrases, and actions that helped create the mood.

Questions About Theme

How does the title relate to the story?

Discuss some points that the author is making about family, friends, feelings, nature, life experiences, 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 relationships and offer support from the story to back your position.

QUESTIONS FOR BIOGRAPHY

HISTORICAL FICTION and NON FICTION

Biography, Autobiography, Memoir

Why is this person famous?

Discuss three to four personality traits that helped make this person achieve his or her goal.

What are two to three problems this person had to overcome?

What about this person do you feel enabled him or her to realize personal hopes and dreams?

How did this person affect the lives of other people during his or her time? During our time?

Historical Fiction

What clues did you use to determine the time and place of this book?

What does the book teach you about family life and relationships between family members?

What does this book teach you about the role of men and women during these times?

What kinds of struggles and problems did the main character face? List three and explain how the main character dealt with and solved each one. If there was no solution, explain why you think the problem couldn't be solved.

Would you enjoy living during the time of this book? Explain why or why not.

What problems, conflicts does the main character face that you deal with in your life?

How do people cope with economic problems such as scarcity of food? Money? Jobs?

QUESTIONS FOR SCIENCE AND REALISTIC FICTION

Science Fiction

What scientific advances do you see in the society? How do these advances in technology affect the characters' decisions and actions?

Are problems characters face in the story similar to or different from those people face today? Explain with examples.

Does the author deal with present-day issues such as population, food supplies, ecology, technological advances? Compare the author's views to your own.

Would you like to live in this society? Are there advantages and disadvantages? Offer reasons from the text for your decisions.

Realistic Fiction

What problems does the main character face? Do you feel these problems are realistic? Why? Why not?

Describe three or four settings and show how each influences the events and characters' actions and decisions. Would similar settings have influenced you in the same way? Explain.

What about the main character is realistic in terms of your experiences?

What about two to three minor characters is realistic in terms of your experiences?

What problems and conflicts in this book are realistic? X What problems do you and the main character or a minor character have in common? Compare the way you deal with those problems to the way the character dealt with them.

What are the realistic themes and issues in the book? Do they have to do with growing up, peer pressure, friendships, family relationships, survival, stereotyping? Discuss the themes the book explored.

In real life, events and people can change a character. How did an important event or person change the character at the end of the book?

QUESTIONS FOR FANTASY AND MYSTERY

Fantasy

What are the settings? Explain the elements of fantasy that you see in the setting.

How does the author enable you, the reader, to enter the fantasy world? Are there realistic elements? Discuss some of these and how they affect the story.

How do trips to other times and worlds help the characters cope with the present time?

Is there a struggle between forces of light and dark? Who wins? Offer support for the victory.

What special powers does the hero possess? For what purposes does he or she use these powers?

What does the hero learn about himself/herself? About life?

What personality traits do you have in common with the hero? Discuss two of these.

How do ideas and themes in this book connect to other fantasy books you've read?

How has this book changed your thinking?

Mystery

How does the author build suspense and excitement? Find two or three passages and discuss how the author accomplished this. Was it through description or characters' thoughts and actions?

What is the mystery that must be solved? How does setting affect the mystery?

What are some clues that the author includes to lead you away from solving the mystery?

What traits does the main character possess that enables him or her to solve the mystery?

Why did the main character become involved in the mystery?

How does danger affect the decisions and actions of the main character/detective?

At what point in the book were you able to solve the mystery? Why could you do this?

What part did you consider most suspenseful? Share it and explain why.