

The logo for WriteShop, featuring the brand name in a white, handwritten-style font inside a dark red oval with a white border.

WriteShop®

Grades K-10

The background of the cover is filled with numerous colorful, hand-drawn illustrations of books in various sizes and orientations. Some books are open, showing yellow pages, while others are closed. The colors used for the book covers include red, green, yellow, and blue. The entire background is framed by a thick red border.

# WRITING ABOUT BOOKS

Book Reports and Beyond

Respond to Literature with Creative Book Reports  
Plus 17 Printable Reading Logs, Writing Prompts, and More!

**by Kim Kautzer**

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#### **Writing About Books: Book Reports and Beyond (E-book)**

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# Writing about Books

The very thought of writing a book report can send the bravest of writers into a tailspin. Words like “boring” and “hard” threaten to suck the breath out of a child who is asked to write one. And if your child isn’t much of a reader to begin with, the anxiety can mount even further.

## “Do I have to write a book report?”

*We get this.* A traditional book report is hard work! It challenges kids to write about a book using not only recollection, but critical thinking skills. Responding to literature should be fun. There’s certainly a time and place for book reports, but there are plenty of other ways children can demonstrate comprehension.

This e-book is filled with ideas that get kids talking and writing about the books they’re reading, from the earliest picture books to high-school level novels. The various activities will invite them to do one or more of the following:

- Show how well they understand what they have read
- Describe parts of the book
- Summarize the story by giving an overview of the book’s theme, plot, and/or main characters
- Give an opinion



Many of these go beyond book reports by allowing children to incorporate crafts, drama, or games. Other activities stretch higher-level thinking skills as they to imagine a new setting, keep a journal, map out a character’s journey, or think about plot twists.

In addition, you’ll find discussion activities and printable reading logs for all ages, book-themed journal prompts, and other creative ideas to encourage children and teens to respond to literature. Sprinkle them into your weekly reading and writing lessons and watch students **make more meaningful connections** with the books they read.

# Keeping a Reading Log

Instilling a love of reading is one of the most precious treasures we can give children. Skilled readers often make good writers because they learn so much about writing simply from reading. Not only that, children who love to read will often grow to love writing.

- **Reading logs motivate readers and measure progress.** A reading log is a type of journal that lets kids keep track of every book they read. More than just a book-lover's journal, reading logs become your children's own records of books they've read. Making note of every book your kids read helps them—and you—notice when they start choosing harder books or begin reading more often. In addition, many children are motivated and encouraged as they watch their book list grow.
- **Reading logs reveal favorite genres .** When children keep a record of each book they read, its genre, and how they rate the book, it helps them identify the types of books they like or dislike. TIP: They should try 2-3 books in a genre before deciding. Sometimes it's not the genre they dislike, but the particular book.
- **Reading logs connect kids to literature.** Reading logs that help kids summarize a passage, chapter, or book offer a more personal and engaging literary experience as they write their responses—both positive and negative. Whether you buy a special notebook, keep track in an app or on the computer, or use the printables in this e-book, your kids may find that reading logs are right up their alley!

## Should You Use Reading Logs?

Some children won't want anything to do with a reading log. Others will be thrilled to make a list of the books they read, writing down what they enjoyed or disliked about each one. Still others love the structure of filling in a form every day, feeling a growing measure of success as they watch their list of book titles and page numbers grow.

Tracking the number of pages read isn't the goal. A reading log is merely a fun hobby kids might enjoy along their journey toward a lifelong love of books. If they aren't interested in maintaining a log, or you don't want to work it into your lesson plans, skip this activity and keep reading without recording the information.

## Choosing a Reading Log

If children want to track their reading progress, you'll find **nine printable reading logs** to choose from, each with a slightly different purpose. Print out the reading log that would most interest your child. At any time, if a student tires of a particular reading log or would like to try a different kind, simply print out a new one. Store the logs in a binder or file folder.

You can find the printable reading logs at the back of this e-book. Grade levels for each are approximate.

### Reading Logs for Grades 2-6

- **Reading Log Adventure:** Use this form if children are reading picture books or beginning-level books. On some days, they might want to write the titles of several short books they've read so they can track the cumulative number of pages.
- **My Reading Log:** If they are reading longer chapter books or novels over several days or weeks, students can track the days they sat down to read along with the number of pages they read from that title each day.
- **Reading Log Star:** Many children prefer to read an entire book and then write a description of their favorite parts. This log provides a place for them to give an overview of the whole book at once without recording a daily page count.

### Reading Logs for Grades 4-8

- **A+ Reading Log:** Children can record the pages they read each day in one longer chapter book or novel, also adding a short summary of what they read each day.
- **5-Star Reading Log:** With this log, students can track the pages they read in a longer chapter book or novel. It also gives a place to rate the book.
- **Reading Log Treasure:** If kids are reading a longer chapter book or novel over several days or weeks, they can track the number of pages using "Reading Log Treasure." They can also write about their favorite part of the book and suggest a way they would change something if they were the author.
- **Reading Log Chapter Check:** In addition to tracking the number of pages they have read in a chapter, students can write about their favorite part of the chapter and give an opinion about something they might like to change.

### Reading Logs for Grades 4-9

- **Nonfiction Reading Log:** This log invites students to jot down several new things they learned about a topic while reading a nonfiction book.
- **Reading Log Journal:** Whether they read several chapters or an entire book, students can record their favorite part of that day's reading.

# Teaching Little Ones to Talk about Books

It's no secret that young children love a good picture book! Whether it's a brand-new one or an old favorite, they're happy to read it over and over again. Your little ones may be too young for traditional book reports, but you can still talk about the books they're reading with you—or flipping through on their own!

Even if children can't write independently yet, did you know you can help prepare them to write by reading a picture book together? A good picture book exposes kids of all ages to quality literature, enhancing learning and teaching them a great deal about writing:

- How words hook the reader at the beginning of the story
- How words form sentences, paragraphs and, ultimately, an organized story with a beginning, middle, and end
- How precise word choices show actions, descriptions, and feelings



## Exploring the Story

While talking about books tells children you think reading is important, having more focused “book talks” helps develop their critical thinking skills.

### Directions

*For this activity, you (rather than your child) should do the reading. Save practicing reading skills for another time.*

1. Read a picture book aloud to your child. It can be a familiar book or a new discovery from the library.
2. When finished, talk about the book together. Ask age-appropriate questions to help your child think about what you just read. Here are some ideas.
  - Let's look at the very first page. What words or sentences grabbed you at the beginning and made you want to hear or read more?
  - What are some of your favorite words from the story? What do you like about these words? Why do you think the author chose that word?
  - What happens at the beginning of the book? The middle?
  - How does the story end?
  - How does the story make you feel?
  - Would you like to be friends with one of the animals or people in this story? Which one? Why?
  - Where does the story take place? Do you like it there? Would you want to visit or live in this place? Why or why not?



- The pictures help tell the story! Even if you can't read the words, I'll bet you can tell me the story just by looking at the pictures. Let's try!

## Choosing Picture Books

There are so many wonderful read-alouds with delightful story lines and engaging illustrations. Start with your own bookshelf.



In addition, scour used book stores, yard sales, online stores like Amazon, and the library in your search for the “perfect” book. For guidance, ask your local children’s librarian, read book reviews online, or seek out the recommendation of friends. Keep in mind that others’ recommendations may not always match your family’s criteria for acceptable reading. So the final decision, of course, is yours.

Though your child may love superheroes, Disney princesses, or other cartoon characters, avoid these mass market-type picture books for your book talk times. Instead, **look for high-quality, timeless books** that play with language and use unique artwork. You know which ones I mean—the books you don’t mind reading again and again because you love them too!

For starters, check out these lists of top picks:

- Five in a Row’s [Book Lists](#). (Ages 2-4 years and 4-8 years)
- Classical Christian Education’s [1000 Good Books \(K-3\)](#)
- New York Public Library [100 Picture Books Everyone Should Know](#)

## Using Picture Books with Older Students

If your children are age 9 or older, you might think they’re beyond picture books. In truth, a well-written picture book **can teach middle-grade kids a lot about writing!** You’ll be pleasantly surprised to learn that many picture books are actually geared toward older children. But even picture books with a younger target audience can captivate tweens and teach them a lot about character, setting, story arc, and more.

Begin your search here:

- [Picture books for older readers](#)
- [Favorite picture books for middle schoolers](#)
- [10 picture books to read in middle school](#)
- [Picture book activities for middle school students](#)
- [Using picture books in the middle school classroom](#)



# Learning to Respond to Literature

## Unlock the Mystery!

In a book report, it's helpful to tell what happens in the beginning, the middle, and the end of the story. Before you assign a book report or ask students to respond to literature, play some games to help them practice.

### Advance Prep

Gather five or more favorite books your children are already very familiar with. Since the purpose of this exercise is to practice a new concept, choose picture books or very short chapter books, even if you have older students. (See p. 6 to find picture book suggestions for 9- to 13-year-olds.)

From the "Printables" section, print out a set of "Unlock the Mystery!" bookmarks on sturdy paper or cardstock. Cut them apart. Laminate the bookmarks, if desired.

### Directions

Enjoy this fun activity together! There is no writing involved.

1. Choose a book and open it to the beginning pages. Point out an interesting part that shows how the story starts. Place the bookmark labeled **Beginning** in this page.
2. Turn to the middle pages. Point out an interesting part that shows something important that happened in the middle of the story. Place the bookmark labeled **Middle** in this page.
3. Turn to the last pages. Point out an interesting part that shows how the story ends. Place the bookmark labeled **End** in this page.
4. Now pick up the fourth bookmark labeled **Key**.
  - When writing a book report, it's also important to understand what the author is trying to say in the story. What lesson is the author trying to teach? What moral does the author want someone to learn?
  - What do you think the author was trying to say in the book? For instance, if you're discussing *There's an Alligator Under My Bed*, you could say, "I think the author is trying to say that when we face our fears, we can help them go away." Then look for a page in the book that supports this key concept. Place the *Key* bookmark in this page.
5. When finished, remove all four bookmarks. Pick up another book and repeat this activity. Invite your children to find the beginning, middle, and end of the book as well as share what they think the author is trying to say in the story.

## What's My Opinion?

As children grow as readers and writers, it's helpful to guide them away from just "telling" the summary of a book. Instead, encourage them to dig deeper!

Today's activity focuses on giving opinions. It will give students more practice sharing their views about what they think the author is trying to say. It will also help them relate to the events and characters by telling a personal story the book prompted them to remember.

This verbal activity encourages kids to **talk about books from the viewpoint of a writer**. It will help them gain confidence to write their opinion and personal experience later, during the actual writing lesson.

### Advance Prep

Gather five or more favorite books your kids know well. These books can be the same ones you used for "Unlock the Mystery!" or you may choose a different set for variety. If a child is likely to linger at the bookshelf for an hour, you may want to pick the books yourself. To facilitate better discussion, consider choosing books you're familiar with, too.

### Directions

The goal of this exercise is to have conversations about books. There is no right or wrong. Opinions are opinions and are always welcome as a sign of your children's growth.

1. Explain that giving an opinion about what the author is trying to say helps them look at the book from the writer's point of view. Sharing a personal story that relates to the book also helps them become stronger writers.
2. Ask a child to choose one of the books. Suggest that he thumb through it to help him remember what it was about. Have him to think of the lesson or moral the author is trying to teach in the story (the importance of friendship or loyalty, for example, or how to be brave in a difficult situation). Invite him to share what he thinks is the key point the author is trying to say.
3. Next, ask him to think about the beginning of the book and **share his opinion** of what he thinks the author is trying to say.
4. When finished, ask him to think about the middle of the book and **share his opinion** of what he thinks the author is trying to say.
5. Finally, ask him to think about the end of the book. Invite him to **share a personal experience** that relates to the story in the book.
6. If several children are participating, repeat this activity with another child, choosing a different favorite book. Otherwise, feel free to repeat the activity with the one child.

*Note:* "Unlock the Mystery!" and "What's My "Opinion?" are components of Lesson 9: Writing a Book Report (from [WriteShop Junior Book E](#)).

## 37 Ideas for Creative Book Reports

Do your kids roll their eyes at the thought of having to write another boring book report? If so, they'll jump for joy at the chance to try these ideas for creative book reports.

There's something for everyone, including:

- The crafty kid
- The list maker
- The letter-writer
- The imaginative child
- The map-maker
- The deep thinker
- The student who loves technology

Many of these ideas can be adapted for **different ages**, from the youngest pre-writer to the reluctant teenager. Though most of these ideas are meant to report on works of fiction, you'll also find that **many work with nonfiction books**.

Children usually love having choices. Instead of always assigning a specific activity, it's fun to give them options from time to time.

- **Idea Jar.** Print out all 37 ideas. Cut out and fold the strips and place them in a jar. Let students pull out three strips and choose their favorite. (When working with certain ages, you might not be able to use all 37 strips.)
- **Pick a Number.** Have each child choose three numbers between 1 and 37. On pages 9-17, point out the three ideas that match the numbers they chose. Ask them to pick one of those for their creative book report.
- **Best of Three:** Sometimes, you will have a goal in mind for a book response. If so, choose a few options to present to the students, but let them make the final decision.

### See the Big Picture

Some of the following activities will help children explore a book as a whole by looking at the big picture. Others will let them choose one facet or element to emphasize.

#### 1. Design a Game

Create a game based on a book you recently read. It can be a board game, card game, guessing game, or other idea. Write step-by-step directions or rules that are easy to follow. Gather any extra supplies or game pieces needed to play the game, and try it out with a friend or family member. For example: Come up with a vocabulary game like Memory® or Pictionary® that includes at least 10 words from your book.

## **2. Make a Movie**

If you love technology, you may like making a narrated Claymation movie with props molded from a modeling compound such as Play-Doh®.

## **3. Create a Comic Strip**

On paper or on the computer, create a comic strip or story board with 8 to 10 important events from the book.

## **4. Make a Packing List**

Pretend you're going to join the characters in your book for a week. Make a list of all the things you'll need to pack. Plan carefully, because you won't be able to go home for anything you forgot!

## **5. Prepare a Lesson**

Do you love history? Nature? Boating? Knitting? Basketball? Read a nonfiction book about a topic that interests you. Now, pretend that you get to be the teacher, and create a lesson that will teach something you learned from the book. Your lesson can explain a concept or idea, teach some facts, or explain how to do something. Write the information in a logical order. Finally, present your lesson to a sibling, friend, or parent.

## **6. Bag It! Box It! Contain It!**

*Primary-age Children:* Gather five objects in a large paper bag that remind you of a book you have read. You may also enjoy drawing, coloring, or painting a scene from the book and gluing it to the front of the bag.

*Older Students:* Choose a paper bag, large manila envelope, shoebox, or coffee or potato-chip can to hold your book report. Decorate the container to show key details, setting elements, or themes from the book. When finished, place the following inside the container:

- 5 items that tell something about the story
- 10 questions based on the book (both general questions and "extra thought" questions)
- 10 unfamiliar words from the book, along with definitions

*All Students:* Once you have gathered your objects, give a presentation to your class, homeschool group or family, taking out one object at a time and telling how it relates to the book.

## **7. Create a Mobile**

*This activity can be adapted to all ages.*

Make a mobile by cutting shapes from sturdy paper. On the front of each shape, color a picture of an important character or scene from the book. On the back, write a short, colorful description. When finished, string each shape with yarn and hang the papers from a wire hanger.

## **8. Write Sentence Summaries**

Write a one-sentence summary of each chapter in the book. The **A+ Reading Log** printable is a good place to record your summaries.

## 9. Get Dramatic!

Make or gather some simple props and act out your favorite part of a book. Alternatively, use puppets.

## 10. Design a Poster

Design a poster advertising a favorite book.

## 11. Delve into Description

Read aloud an outstanding example of descriptive writing from a book you're reading. Write a paragraph explaining why this passage makes such a powerful example of descriptive prose. Include a few adjectives the author used to tell about the character or describe the scene.

## 12. Write a Theme Report

Choose a setting, idea, or object from a book you just finished reading. For example, you might choose "making candy" after reading *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* or "Chincoteague Island" after finishing *Misty of Chincoteague*. Explore the subject using library resources or the Internet, and then write a short report about your chosen subject.

## 13. Write to the Author

Write a letter to the author of a book you recently read. In your letter:

1. Mention the book, plus any others you've read by this author.
2. Tell the author **three things about the book** you just read (something you did or didn't like; your opinions about the characters, setting, and plot; why you did or didn't like the way the story ended; an idea for a sequel; etc.)
3. **Ask the author 2-3 questions.** These can either be personal questions (favorite childhood memory, number of brothers or sisters, favorite book, favorite place to visit) or they can be about the process of writing this book.

As a bonus, mail your finished letter (many authors have websites that include contact information). Ask an adult for help.

## 14. Reflect on Nonfiction

This activity is especially effective after reading a nonfiction book that introduces ideas that are new to you. Write your responses, or type them on the computer.

- What were three main things I learned from this book?
- What was new or surprising to me?
- What have I changed my mind about as a result of this book?
- I am still unsure about...
- What issues interested me a lot? Which ones would I like to study in more detail?
- What I most liked about this book was...
- What I most disliked about this book was...

## 15. PowerPoint Presentation

Write ten facts you learned from reading a **nonfiction book**. Make a PowerPoint, Keynote, or Google Slides presentation with one slide about each fact. Each slide should include the following:

- 2-3 bullet points explaining more about this fact using details or examples. Keep phrases or sentences short.
- A photo that illustrates one of the bullet points.

Make a title slide that includes:

- **Presentation Title:** Ten *Adjective* Facts about *Subject* (for example: “Ten Unusual Facts about Bees” or “Ten Fascinating Facts about Benjamin Franklin”)
- **Book title**
- **Author** (or publisher, if the book has multiple authors)
- **Your name**

## Focus on the Characters

These ideas allow students to explore the characters in greater detail. Many of these activities rely on important higher-level thinking skills.

### 16. Tell the Story in Character

*This is a favorite of younger children, who especially enjoy dressing up!*

Create a costume and dress as one of the characters in the book. During a family night, or in front of the class, wear your costume and summarize the book by telling the story in first person, just as if you are that character.

### 17. Evaluate a Friendship

Choose three characters from the book. Would you want to become friends with each of these characters? Write one paragraph for each character that details why you would or would not want to be friends with that particular person.

### 18. List Character Qualities

*To have older students explore character traits in more depth, suggest activity #20 instead.*

What makes a book’s protagonist, or hero, likeable? What makes the antagonist, or “bad guy,” unlikeable? Write down the names of four or more characters from your book and **list each one’s traits**. Remember that likeable characters can sometimes be jealous, angry, dishonest, or selfish. Likewise, “bad guys” can sometimes exhibit positive character qualities.

### 19. Keep a Character Trait Chart

*Do this activity as you read the book.* Make a chart with 2-3 columns, writing the name of one of the book’s main characters at the top of each column. As you read, take notes about the characters’ traits (both good and bad) and briefly mention an incident that illustrates each trait.

## 20. Walk in a Character's Shoes

In a good novel, the main character must make some hard choices. Think about a book you read recently. Write 5-10 questions that will give this character a chance to talk about the choices he or she faced. Then, **answer the questions as if you were the character**. As you write your answers, talk about the events, thoughts, and feelings that surrounded your choices and discuss the impact of your decision(s).

## 21. Plan a Birthday Gift

Imagine you've been invited to a birthday party for one of the book's characters, and you want to bring **the perfect gift!** Consider the character's personality, likes, and dislikes before deciding on a gift he or she would really love and use. Create a greeting card to go along with the gift. The card's greeting should explain to the friend from the book why you chose this gift.

## 22. Write Diary or Journal Entries

Create a character's imaginary diary or journal by writing entries as if you are a favorite character from a book or novel. The character may be a human, an animal, a robot, or a superhero! Your project should contain 5 entries revealing details about the story. Your entries should also include the character's thoughts and feelings, which are important in a diary. Either design your own journal or use an inexpensive store-bought one.

## 23. Write a New Chapter

Write a short chapter in which the main character of the book you read has a new adventure, solves a new mystery, saves the day, or has another mishap. This new story should be consistent with how the character behaves in the book.

## 24. Write a Letter to a Book Character

- **Picture Book Mail** (*Pre-writers can dictate their letters to you. Later, you can respond to each letter as the character your child wrote to.*) Read a favorite picture book, and then write a letter to one of the characters. What could you say in the letter? When finished, place your letter in a decorated envelope, with a sticker for a stamp.
- **Wish You Were Here.** Send a postcard from one character to another. Cut a blank sheet of paper in half horizontally. On one side, draw a picture of a scene from the book where someone might like to visit. On the other side, write a message from the character telling about this place.
- **Give Advice to a Character.** Using correct letter format, write a letter to the main character. Give the character advice or make suggestions for a different way they could have handled a situation.
- **Write and Respond.** First, write a letter to the main character. Comment on a decision this character made or an action he or she took. Or, ask questions that the book didn't answer. Next, write the letter the character sends back to you in reply.



## 25. Explore the Conflict

In a story, the problem or conflict can take shape in several ways.

- **Main character against him or herself** is an internal conflict that arises when the character struggles against his or her conscience. Examples include wrestling with a decision, dealing with a bad habit, or fighting a temptation.
- **Main character against another** is an external conflict between two characters. This conflict can be physical, such as a showdown in the Old West, or it can be emotional, such as a false accusation by a trusted friend.
- **Main character against a force greater than himself** is an external conflict in which the character struggles with forces that are out of his or her control. Examples include roaring rapids, an earthquake, a cholera epidemic, or an encounter with a great white shark or fire-breathing dragon.

Write an essay describing the conflict or obstacle the main character faces in the book. Explain how the conflict was (or wasn't) resolved.

## Focus on the Setting

If a story's setting is especially memorable or unique, these activities will allow children to think or write about it in greater detail. Several of these ideas are especially inviting for artistic or kinesthetic learners.

## 26. Create a Brochure

Does your novel take place in a different city, state, country, or planet? Think about the sites in the story that would be educational, fun, or exciting to visit. Whether the story setting is real or imaginary, **design a travel brochure** to entice visitors. Include maps, drawings, photos, text, bulleted lists, and attention-grabbing section titles. For content ideas, try this list of [Things to Include in a Travel Brochure](#). It may also be helpful to look at some real travel brochures

## 27. Make a Diorama

A diorama is a miniature 3-dimensional scene that recreates a setting. It can feature models of buildings, plants, animals, or people set against a background. A diorama can use photos and paper, or it can include 3-dimensional materials such as Styrofoam, plastic figurines, or natural items such as twigs, shells, or pebbles.

Make a **diorama in a shoebox** to represent a scene or main event from your book. Then, either write a vivid description of the scene, or explain what happened at this location during one of the main events of the book.

## 28. Switch the Setting

What if the book's story was **set in a different place**? Is it a different country? A different geographic region? A different universe, such as Middle Earth, Narnia, or the Star Wars universe? Write a description of this new place, and tell how this change of setting would alter events and affect the characters.

### 29. Tamper with Time

In addition to physical location, the **time period** is another important aspect of a story's setting. How would the story play out if it took place 100 or 1,000 years ago? How about at some point in the near or distant future? Write about how setting the story in a different time period would influence both events and characters in the book.

### 30. Map It!

After reading a **biography or historical fiction novel**, make a timeline to show the main events of the story. Use drawings, clipart, or magazine cutouts to illustrate events along the timeline. Then draw a map showing the location(s) where the story took place.

Try this activity after reading a fantasy, sci-fi, or dystopian novel. It's fun to create maps of imaginary places you've read about!

### 31. Search the Web

Where does the story take place? During what time period? With adult supervision, search online to find five websites that tell interesting facts about the story's setting. Write a recommendation in which you describe these sites to friends and family members who might like to learn more about the location and historical time period before they read the book.

## Focus on the Plot

This group of creative book report activities allows students to think more deeply about the book's events and storyline.

### 32. Imagine New Endings

Make up a new ending for a book, or write a **new final chapter**.

### 33. Serve up a Pizza

Make a **book report "pizza."** Draw and color directly in a clean pizza box, or cut the pizza shapes from sturdy cardstock or construction paper. Either way, each "wedge" of the pizza should tell part of the story. On the underside of the box lid, add visual aids such as timelines, maps, illustrations, or photos. This works with both fiction and nonfiction books.

### 34. Make Headlines!

Acting as a journalist, write a **news article** about an incident or important event from the book. Include a headline, and answer the important journalistic questions: *Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?*

### 35. Choose Your Conflicts

Write about three conflicts that happen in the story you just read, and tell how each was solved (see #25 on p. 14 for examples). Is there one conflict you wish had been handled differently? If so, explain.

### 36. Front Page News

*This activity can also be a class or family project about a book you've read aloud together.*

Design the front page of a newspaper, basing it on the characters and events from your book. Include at least one article, editorial/op-ed piece, or human interest story. In the remaining space, fit in several less prominent features, such as weather report, comics, travel piece, obituary, advertisements, etc. Format the page like a real newspaper. Name your newspaper to reflect something about the book, such as *Emerald City Post*, *Neverland Daily Dispatch*, or *Tesseract Times*.

For added fun, try this [Newspaper Name Generator](#).

### 37. Tweak the Turning Point

If a story were a mountain, its climax would be the peak. This is the **turning point** of the story where the action is the most exciting or intense, and the characters face their greatest challenge. The climax comes nearly at the end of the story. For example, in *The Lord of the Rings*, the climax occurs when Frodo debates whether to destroy the ring at Mount Doom or keep it for himself.

Identify the climax in your book. Write an essay that explains how the end of the story would be affected if something *different* had happened at this turning point. For example, what if Frodo had decided to keep the ring? How might the story's outcome have changed?

# Writing Prompts about Books

From wordless books to favorite novels, your kids' reading can provide a springboard to book-themed writing activities. Let them take journaling inspiration from literature with these writing prompts about books.

## You Have to Read This Book!

Some books are like best pals: we never get tired of spending time with them! Think of such a book—one you love to read again and again. Then, **persuade a friend to read it** by making a list of 6-10 reasons why it's so appealing.



## No Words

Find a wordless book—one that has mostly pictures and no (or very few) words. If you have younger brothers or sisters, you probably have some wordless books lying around, such as *Chalk*, *Good Night*, *Gorilla*, or *The Red Book*. If not, visit the library and look for one of the shorter books on this list of [10 wordless books](#).

Write a story to go along with each page in the book. It will help to ask yourself what is happening in the picture, how each character might feel, and what might happen next. Feel free to make up names for the different characters!

## The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

In fiction, the **protagonist** is often called the “good guy,” while the **antagonist**—the character who opposes the protagonist—is known as the “bad guy.”

For instance, in *Matilda* by Roald Dahl, Matilda Wormwood is the protagonist and mean Ms. Trunchbull is the antagonist. In Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, the protagonists are the Baudelaire children, who constantly find themselves at odds with the villainous Count Olaf.

Choose a protagonist from a favorite book and explain how this character's behavior and positive character qualities inspire respect or admiration. Then, think of an antagonist (from the same book or a different one) and explain what makes this character unlikable.

# Writing Prompts about Fictional Book Characters



## What Would Frodo Do?

What fictional character **do you most admire**? Is it spunky Anne Shirley from the *Anne of Green Gables* series? Wise Aslan from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*? Optimistic Sara Crewe from *A Little Princess*? Frodo, the selfless hobbit from *The Lord of the Rings*? How about *Freckles*, that young man of such high integrity?

When we face challenges, it often helps to seek advice from someone we look up to. Think of a book character who has **earned your respect**, and write a letter to him or her asking for advice.

## You Were There

If you could be friends with a character in one of your favorite books, whose friend would you be? Choose an **experience from the book** and rewrite it in your own words as if the two of you had been there together.

## Let's Talk

**Imagine a conversation** between a fictional character and a member of your family, such as your mom or little brother. Write this conversation in dialog form.

## Inquiring Minds Want to Know

You are a journalist for a newspaper. For a future article, your editor has assigned you to **interview a fictional character** from one of your favorite novels. Which character will you choose to interview? What would you like to learn about him or her? Come up with three questions to ask, and then write down this character's answers.



# Teen Journal Prompts about Literature

Using these journal prompts about literature, middle and high school students can interact with novels and other works they're reading. They'll be asked to consider **important literary elements** of character, setting, and conflict as they relate to works of their choice.

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## Bad Boys of Literature

Whether it's President Snow from *The Hunger Games*, Long John Silver from *Treasure Island*, or Iago from Shakespeare's *Othello*, the **antagonist** in a literary work is **the bad guy we love to hate**. This is the character who tries to thwart or come against the **protagonist**, or hero. Think of an antagonist you absolutely despise. Write an essay describing dialogue or other techniques the author uses to make you feel this way.

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## The Power of One

*The Diary of Anne Frank* records the experiences of a young Jewish teen during the days of the Holocaust. People all over the world have come to know Anne's important story. Write an essay explaining why **an act as simple as keeping a diary** resulted in worldwide acclaim for Anne.

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## A Time and Place

*Setting* is a literary term used to identify and establish the **time, place, and mood** of a story's events. Choose a novel you have read, and explain how the setting complements the story.

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## Characters in Conflict

In literature, [conflict](#) is the struggle between two or more opposing forces. Conflict can present itself in one of three ways:

- **Character against himself:** When a character wrestles with his conscience or struggles to make a decision, an inner conflict results.
- **Character against character:** This is an external conflict. It can either be a physical or emotional struggle between characters.
- **Character against greater forces:** This is another form of external conflict. Here, the protagonist is pitted against society or elements of nature.

Choose a piece of literature you have read recently. It can be a short story, novel, or play. Write a paragraph or two giving some examples of conflict within the work.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Reading Log Adventure

1. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_



7. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



# MY READING LOG

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_



## READING IS FUN!



# Reading Log Star

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite thing about this book was: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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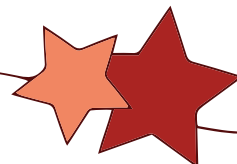
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# A+ Reading Log

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

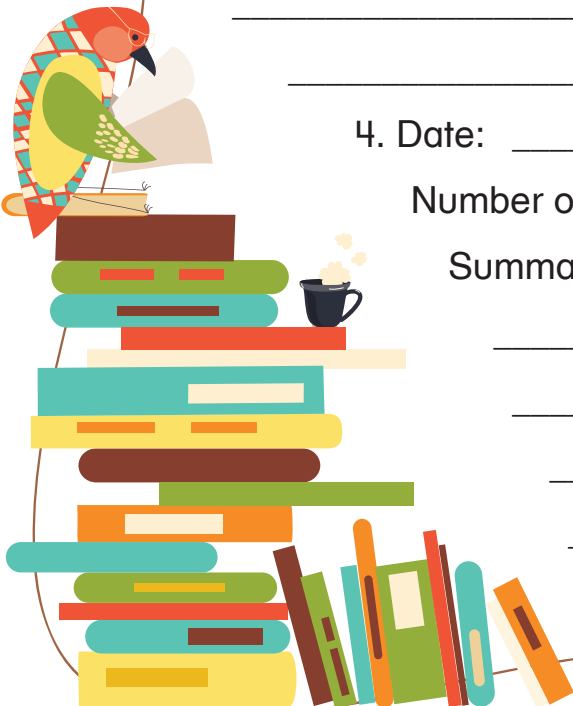
3. Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary: \_\_\_\_\_





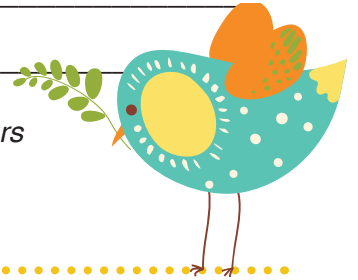
# 5-Star Reading Log

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

*Directions: At the top of the page, rate this book from 1-5 stars. The more stars you color in, the better you liked the book. Then answer the questions below. Circle which opinion you have.*



Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages in this book: \_\_\_\_\_

**I would / would not** tell a friend to read this book because \_\_\_\_\_

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**I liked / didn't like** the character, \_\_\_\_\_, because

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**I liked / didn't like** what happened when \_\_\_\_\_

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# Reading Log Treasure



My Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite thing about this book was \_\_\_\_\_

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If I were the author, one thing I would change about this book would be

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Reading Log Chapter Check

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages in this chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

☒ My favorite thing about this chapter was \_\_\_\_\_

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☒ If I were the author, here is one thing I would change about this chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Nonfiction Reading Quest

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of book: \_\_\_\_\_

Topic I read about today: \_\_\_\_\_

Three new things I learned about today's topic while reading this book:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

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2. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# READING LOG JOURNAL

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of pages I read: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Author's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

My favorite part of today's reading passage was \_\_\_\_\_

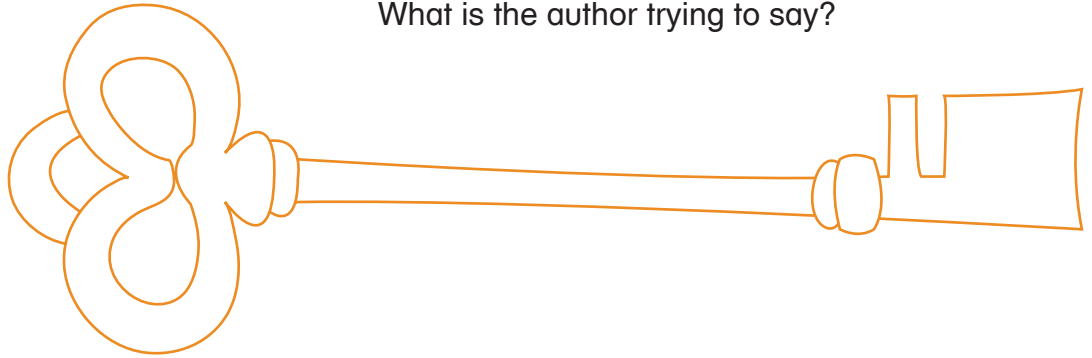
[illegible]

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Unlock the Mystery

**The Key !**

Unlock the  
Mystery of a Book

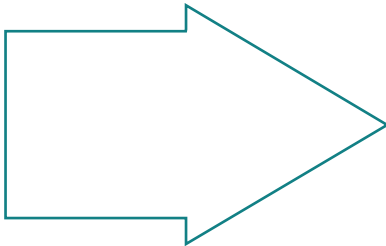
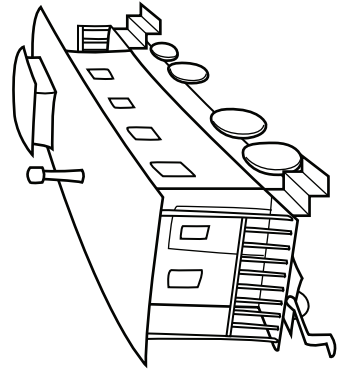


What is the author trying to say?



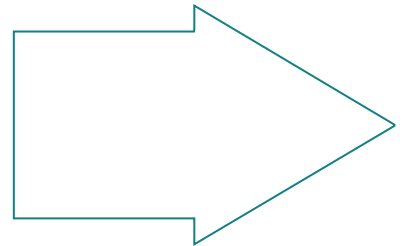
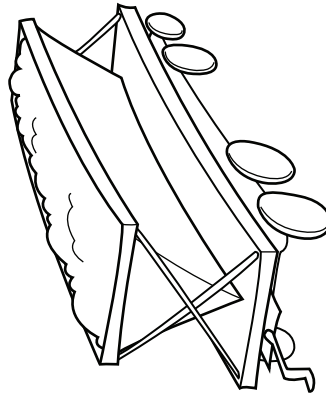
**End !**

How does the  
story end?



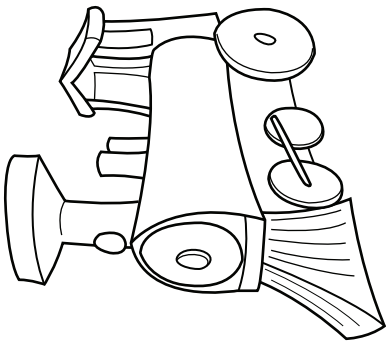
**Middle !**

What happens  
in the middle?



**Beginning !**

How does the  
story start?



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# My Favorites!

In each box, draw a picture of a favorite character, place, object, or event from the book. Describe it on the blank lines, or ask someone to write the words for you.

Title of Book: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Ingredients of a Fiction Story

Title of Book \_\_\_\_\_

Author \_\_\_\_\_

Who are the main characters?

**Tell about the story's setting.**

This book mostly takes place \_\_\_\_\_

**What is the main problem in the story?**

**How do the characters solve the problem?**

**What is the main lesson the story is trying to teach?**



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Favorite Book Quotes

Book Title: \_\_\_\_\_

*Author:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Page:* \_\_\_\_\_

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Book Title: \_\_\_\_\_

*Author:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Page:* \_\_\_\_\_

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Author: \_\_\_\_\_

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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