

Ideas for Post-It Responses Based on Six Traits

Ideas and Content

The *Ideas* are the heart of the message, the content of the piece, the main theme, together with all the details that enrich and develop that theme. The ideas are strong when the message is clear, not garbled. The writer chooses details that are interesting, important, and informative—often the kinds of details the reader would not normally anticipate or predict. Successful writers do not tell readers things they already know; e.g., "It was a sunny day, and the sky was blue..." They notice what others overlook, seek out the extraordinary, the unusual, the bits and pieces of life that others might not see.

- Compare the ideas and/or content in this book to another text, something in your life, or to the world.
- Discuss author's message/theme and its relationship to you and the world.
- Evaluate the author's development of characters.
- Identify and explain the author's use of satire, irony, or humor.
- Examine conflict development regarding:
 - characters' responses to the conflict(s);
 - its purpose in developing a theme;
 - authenticity or originality;
 - its impact on your thinking/ideas/values . Do any BIG questions arise for you?
- Ask "Wondering Questions" about theme, character motivation, bias, or accuracy of information.

Organization

Organization is the internal structure of a piece of writing, the thread of central meaning, the pattern, so long as it fits the central idea. Organizational structure can be based on comparison-contrast, deductive logic, point-by-point analysis, development of a central theme, chronological history of an event, or any of a dozen other identifiable patterns. When the organization is strong, the piece begins meaningfully and creates in the reader a sense of anticipation that is, ultimately, systematically fulfilled. Events proceed logically; information is given to the reader in the right doses at the right times so that the reader never loses interest. Connections are strong, which is another way of saying that bridges from one idea to the next hold up. The piece closes with a sense of resolution, tying up loose ends, bringing things to closure, answering important questions while still leaving the reader something to think about.

- Ask "Wondering Questions" about the author's choice of organizational structure (e.g. flashback, chronological order, point of view).
- Evaluate the text structure (e.g. "compare-contrast" or "cause and effect" in nonfiction).
- Evaluate point(s) of view.
- Examine how a book is organized around a conflict:
 - Is it introduced, developed, and resolved effectively?
- Does the organization appropriately pace the plot?

Sentence Fluency

Sentence Fluency is the rhythm and flow of the language, the sound of word patterns, the way in which the writing plays to the ear, not just to the eye. How does it sound when read aloud? That's the test. Fluent writing has cadence, power, rhythm, and movement. It is free of awkward word patterns that slow the reader's progress. Sentences vary in length and style, and are so well crafted that the writer moves through the piece with ease.

- Evaluate the:
 - author's use of dialogue or dialect.
 - sentence fluency in relation to genre (formal vs. informal language; ease of reading).
 - use of figurative language, such as metaphor, simile, and personification.
 - variety (or lack thereof) of sentence structure.
- Ask "Wondering Questions" about the rhythm and flow of the text, especially when read aloud.

Word Choice

Word Choice is the use of rich, colorful, precise language that communicates not just in a functional way, but in a way that moves and enlightens the reader. In good descriptive writing, strong word choice clarifies and expands ideas. In persuasive writing, careful word choice moves the reader to a new vision of things. Strong word choice is characterized not so much by an exceptional vocabulary that impresses the reader, but more by the skill to use everyday words well.

• Evaluate the:

- **quality of description.**
- **author's style, including:**
 - **variety and sophistication of language**
 - **figurative language, such as metaphors, and similes**
 - **use of symbolism, foreshadowing**
- **author's use of dialogue or dialect.**

• Ask “Wondering Questions” about the author's style and choices.

Voice

The *Voice* is the writer coming through the words, the sense that a real person is speaking to us and cares about the message. It is the heart and soul of the writing, the magic, the wit, the feeling, the life and breath. When the writer is engaged personally with the topic, he/she imparts a personal tone and flavor to the piece that is unmistakably his/hers alone. And it is that individual something—different from the mark of all other writers—that we call voice.

• Evaluate:

- **ways culture (i.e. attitudes, beliefs) is reflected in voice.**
- **the development of multiple voices through character development and narration.**
- **the author's use of literary techniques, such as satire, irony, or humor.**
- **the voice for originality, uniqueness, and/or consistency.**

○ Ask “Wondering Questions” about the author's choice/use of voice.

Conventions

Conventions are the mechanical correctness of the piece—spelling, grammar and usage, paragraphing (indenting at the appropriate spots), use of capitals, and punctuation. Writing that is strong in conventions has been proofread and edited with care. Handwriting and neatness are not part of this trait. Since this trait has so many pieces to it, it's almost a holistic trait within an analytic system. As you assess a piece for convention, ask yourself: "How much work would a copy editor need to do to prepare the piece for publication?" This will keep all of the elements in conventions equally in play.

• Evaluate the use of:

- **conventions (or breaking of conventions) to convey meaning.**
- **conventions to specify the exact way a word or phrase should be read.**

• Ask “Wondering Questions” about the author's use or intentional misuse of conventions.