



## reflect & review

### reflecting on reading

*Have your students use these guidelines to reflect on their reading.*

#### **Write a Review Guidelines**

Book Reviews help us to reflect on what we read and consider whether we would recommend the book to others. It is like creating an advertisement for the book. The best book reviews contain information about :

#### **Bibliography**

- Title
- Author and Illustrator
- Publisher, date of publication and place of publication
- ISBN number
- Series and genre

#### **Appeal to the intended audience**

- Does the choice of topic suit the intended audience?
- Is it likely to be something they are interested in?

#### **Format**

- Is the typography (i.e. format, typeface, print size, spacing, novelty features etc.) integral or intrusive?
- Does the layout draw the reader in or is it distracting?
- How appropriate are the size and shape of the book?
- What use is made of covers, end-papers and title page?
- Are there any special features such as cutouts or pop-ups?

#### **Plot**

- Are you hooked from the very beginning?
- Can you feel the atmosphere the author is trying to create?
- Is the plot plausible and easy to follow?
- Does the story build to a climax?
- Are you waiting for the climax?
- Is there a satisfying ending?
- Are you 'in' the story as an observer of everything?
- If it is one of a series, is it necessary to have read the earlier stories to understand what is going on?
- If it is a particular genre, does it fit with what you expect of that genre?
- Is it hard to put the book down?
- Is it worth getting into trouble for reading it under the covers with a torch?

#### **Characters**

- Are the characters credible?
- Can you envisage them?
- Do they have a real personality?
- Can you form a bond with them so that you care about what happens to them??
- Are the relationships between them realistic?
- Are the things they do in keeping with their personalities?
- Is the dialogue realistic, natural and appropriate to the character?
- Can you hear them talking?
- Do you feel like an eavesdropper on their conversations?
- If it is part of a series, are the characters' personalities and actions consistent throughout all the stories?
- Can you imagine yourself as being a character in the story?

- Is there one particular character you really relate to? Why?

### **Setting**

- Can you see, hear and smell the background setting?
- Can you imagine yourself in that place?
- If the story is set in a real place that you know, are the details accurate?
- Does the setting suit the sorts of things that happen in the story?
- Is it an integral part of the story?

### **Purpose**

- Is the purpose of the story only to entertain you?
- Is there a message the author is trying to convey?
- Is this subtle or does it intrude on the entertainment?
- How does the author's bias influence his/ her writing?
- Did you discover the message for yourself or did another person highlight it for you?
- What are the main issues raised?
- Are they appropriate for the intended audience and the format of the book?
- Why has the author 'disguised' the issues within the context of the story?
- Does the story leave you with things you want to discuss and questions you want answered?
- If you could talk to the author, what opinions would you offer about the issues raised? What questions would you have?

### **Illustrations**

- Do the illustrations appeal to you?
- Do they help you understand the story better?
- Can you predict the story by looking at the illustrations?
- Do they help build up a sense of atmosphere and anticipation?
- Do they help you work out unfamiliar words?
- Do they suit the story?
- Are the illustrations more important than the story?
- Is the medium appropriate?
- Is the artist's personal style creative and distinctive?
- Does the style work with the subject?
- Are there any special media or techniques the illustrator has used?
- How does this support the storyline?
- How has the illustrator used colours and/or textures to enhance the mood he/she was trying to create?
- Is there a consistent quality of illustration throughout the book?
- Would the cover catch your eye if you were browsing in a bookstore?
- Does the illustrator have a particular style that is easy to recognise?
- Are you beginning to develop a preference for a particular type of illustration or medium?
- Was this illustrator a good choice to illustrate this book?

### **Readability**

- Is the language appropriate for the audience?
- Is the language rich, original and interesting?
- Are the words used well to build up the atmosphere and create images in your mind?
- Is the sentence structure suitable for the audience?
- Do the language and sentence structure contribute to the atmosphere?
- Is the style and size of print easy to read?
- Does the layout assist the reader?
- Do you find yourself enjoying the story but wanting to rewrite the sentences?
- Are there sub-plots that have nothing to do with the main plot?
- Is everything explained well by the end?
- Has the author included too much extra information that has nothing to do with the story?
- Is there too little information so you are left confused?
- If it is part of a series
- Is this a read-aloud, read-along or read-alone book?

### Personal Opinion

- Is this a book you would like to receive or give as a gift?
- Is it a book you would spend your pocket money on?
- Would it be one that you would keep for your children to read?
- If it is in a series, would you look for others in that series?
- Will you now look for other stories by that author or in that genre?
- Would you recommend it to other students of your age?
- Have you been changed by this book?
- Are you glad that you read it?
- On a scale of 1 -5, what would you give this book?

### Write a Review

1. Select a book whose cover appeals to you.
2. Read the blurb on the back to see if the story will interest you.
3. Read the book.
4. Record the title, the author and the publisher.

Title	Topic	Characters	Storyline	Readability	Appeal

5. Make a table like this so it easier to select the book you like best..

- Write the title of the book.
- Think about these things
  - Is the topic of the book suitable for your age group?
  - Did the characters seem like real people?
  - Did the story hold your interest to the end?
  - Is it easy for you to read?
  - Did you enjoy reading the book?

6. Give the books one of these characters in each column.



7. Each  scores 3 points; each  scores 2 points and each  scores 0 points

8. Add up the scores. The book which has the most points is the one you should review.