

LESSON 2: INQUIRY

Use this activity to teach the concept of reader's response to literature and to begin encouraging students to explore their own reader's response to a book that has had special meaning to them.

MATERIALS

All Levels: Worksheet D—Correspond, Don't Compliment!
Worksheet E—Synthesize, Don't Summarize!

PROCEDURE

- Warm up by writing on the chalkboard or overhead projector this phrase: *reader's response*. Ask students what the phrase might mean in regards to reading books. Next, write this sentence on the chalkboard or overhead projector: *Not all books are right for all readers*. Ask students to explain what they think this statement means and whether or not they agree with the statement.
- Ask students to select two or three books that have had special meaning for them. They need not share these titles with anyone else in the class. They should write the book titles on a sheet of paper, drawing three columns, one for each title.
- Next, conduct a scaffolding activity by sharing with students the titles of three books that were especially meaningful to you. Draw your columns on a chalkboard or overhead projector. Under each column indicate what your reader's response was then. You might even compare your reader's response then with your response now. By listening to you discuss how you reacted the books, you provide a model for the students to begin verbalizing their own reader's response.
- Distribute the reading-writing worksheets D and E. Read the excerpts and discuss. Answers will vary but recommended answers are below.
- **TEACHERS, please note:** For younger readers, often the first step toward a reader's response is finding a common denominator between the reader and a character. For example, a child may write: the character has a dog and I have a dog, or perhaps write something along these lines: the character has red hair and I have red hair; the character has a baby brother who annoys me and I have a baby brother who annoys me! **While this is an important recognition, explain that details like these are not really examples of reader's response.** Instead, these

details are like a door that invites the reader into the novel to get to know the character better. Younger readers may need help in opening that door and stepping inside to explore what they may have in common with the character beyond these initial details.

- Conclude the activity by asking students to select just one book from their list of three to be the subject of their personal letters.

ANSWER KEY

Correspond, Don't Compliment!

1. Compliment. No personal details.
2. Compliment. Emphasize that while the reader-writer is commenting on the book, he or she will must include something personal.
3. Compliment.
4. Correspondence. The reader-writer is sharing something personal about himself/herself that relates to the subject matter of the book. The information provided here is something the author would not otherwise know.

Synthesize, Don't Summarize!

1. Synthesizing. The reader-writer weaves a detail from the book into her own life, stating how something Scout valued is something the reader also valued.
2. Summarizing. Emphasize, too, that the reader-writer is not keeping the audience of the letter (the author) in mind. Note how the reader-writer talks *about* the author rather than *to* the author.
3. Synthesizing. The reader-writer eloquently reveals information about self by citing events from the book.
4. Summarizing.

LESSON 3: APPLICATION

Use this lesson and its handouts to guide students through the writing process, specifically in crafting the opening and closing paragraphs, of their letter.

MATERIALS

All Levels: Worksheet F—The Lead Paragraph;
Worksheet G—Bookends

PROCEDURE

- Warm up by reading the opening lines and/or paragraphs of three different books—either fiction or nonfiction. You can also read the opening paragraph