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Response Essay



A “**Reading Response**” paper is an informal paper that gives you the chance to **reflect on and react to a reading using your own ideas**. Sometimes, if it is labeled “**Summary Response**”, it will also include a specific section that **describes the main points of the text, written in your own words, but without incorporating your opinions**.

Steps to writing a reading response paper:

1. Keep track of what you are thinking as you read the text. After reading a paragraph, pause and take short notes with each paragraph. This strategy will help you decide what to focus on in your paper.

When evaluating your reaction to the reading, consider these questions:

- What are your thoughts about what you read?
- How did it make you feel?
- Can you agree with it?
- Do you disagree – and if so, why?

If your reading is a work of fiction, here are some questions you can ask yourself:

- Why do story elements unfold the way they do, beyond what is stated?
- How does what you're reading compare and contrast with other, similar stories?
- How do the in-text elements of what you've just consumed relate to the real world outside the text?
- What are some of the themes in the story?
- Which characters stood out to you and why?

Without understanding how you feel, you can't exactly put pen to paper about it! **Your reaction will function as your thesis.**

2. Before writing your paper, draft an outline that includes an introduction* to the reading, a thesis statement that makes your point about the text, and your reaction to what you have read, supported by examples from the reading.

***Please Note:** In a Summary Response paper, the summary of the reading is usually a well-developed separate paragraph. And in some Reading Response assignments, you will be asked to include a short summary in the introduction. BUT, some professors will not want a summary at all in their Response papers, so it is **very important to look at the assignment instructions or check in with your professor!**

3. Edit and proof read your paper. This may be an informal assignment, but your reaction to the reading still needs to be focused and clear.