

Keeping a Reading Reaction Journal

Keeping track of all the reading required in an advanced English course can be quite a challenge. Keeping a reading reaction journal is a useful tool that students can use. Then, when it is time for a class discussion, or time to prepare for an exam, or to write a critical essay, you will have valuable notes to review.

A valuable reaction or observation would be to notice literary techniques used (alliteration, simile, etc.); the tone of the passage (joyful, anger, etc.), characterization (foil, antagonist, etc.), or any other techniques that you recognize.

The following are examples of useful journal entries and those that are poor and of no value as a study tool.

From *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

Useful:	
Quotation from the Text	Reaction/Observation
“. . .clang of horseshoes on iron stakes. . . (p. 39)	This is an example of imagery. You can almost hear the banging of horseshoes on an iron rod.
“You’re as yella as a frog belly,” (p.62)	This is an example of a simile. A frog is green all over except for the tender flesh of its yellow belly. This is a frog’s weak spot. Calling a person yellow is insulting them by saying they are weak.

From *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

Not useful:	
Quotation from the Text	Reaction/Observation
“. . .clang of horseshoes on iron stakes. . . (p. 39)	The men were playing horseshoes to pass the time because they were probably bored.
“You’re as yella as a frog belly.” (p.62)	This sounds like a threat to me. This guy’s a bully.