



## Summer 2008 Response Journal Assignment for Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> Graders

**Buy:** A new writer's journal (standard size spiral notebook works best) that will be used for this assignment and throughout the coming school year as well.

**Read:** Either *The House of the Scorpion* by Nancy Farmer or *I Am the Cheese* by Robert Cormier, plus two of the choice selections from the summer reading list (go to <[www.tapestryhs.org](http://www.tapestryhs.org)> for the complete list).

**Complete:**

- A minimum of 5 responses for EACH of the books that you read.
- Each response must be at least 5-8 sentences in length.
- Although it is acceptable to use the same prompt for more than one book, do NOT limit yourself to the same prompts for all books.
- In your writer's journal, write the title and author of the book at the top of each page, and the number of the prompt to which you are responding.

### Response Journal Prompts:

1. Do the setting or any of the characters remind you of people or characters in your own personal life? Are any of the situations or events similar to your own life? How are they alike and how are they different?
2. Does this story or its characters remind you of another story you have read? Does it remind you of a movie? How are they alike? And how are they different?
3. If you could trade places with a character in the book, who would you choose to be? Why?
4. If you could change the setting in this story to another setting, what

setting would you choose? Would you change just the time period? Or would you change the place, the season, the actual environment - one of poverty, riches, or middle class America? Why would you make those changes? How might those changes impact the story?

5. If you were to put this story into your own life, in the area where you live, around the people and friends that you know, how would the story have to change? How would the people change? Would the setting have to change? Why would these changes have to take place?
6. Sometimes we are pulled toward one or two characters in the story. We identify with them or feel sympathy for them. With which character(s) do you identify in the book, and why do you believe you identify with them?
7. Sometimes when we read, certain words or phrases or images stand out. Maybe they are words or phrases that make an impression because of their sound, or maybe the meaning or image they make strikes us. Sometimes we find words or expressions we just do not understand. Share those that you have come across and describe why you listed them.
8. Choose a character from the novel and explain how the qualities that character possesses (honest, loyal, cruel, dishonest, angry, vengeful) affect the way they handle the problems and conflicts he or she encounters.
9. If you could ask any character a question, what would you ask? If you could ask the author a question, what might that be? Explain why you chose these questions.
10. As you read today, what surprised you? Explain how this will affect the story or how it changed your thinking about the story.
11. Are you puzzled or confused about anything in the story? What is it that confuses you, and why do you find it confusing?
12. It is not unusual to wish that our lives were more like the lives of characters in stories. How would you change your own real life to be more like the world of your story?
13. Why do you think the author wrote this story? What message do you think the author is trying to share?
14. Describe a character that you would like to meet (which does not mean that you think you like the character, but that you think they would be interesting). Then, list four questions you would ask them.

15. If you are artistically inclined, draw a comic strip or graphic novel page for a favorite scene from the book.
16. Pretend that you are a famous reporter on TV. Write a story about what you've just read for the evening news.
17. Describe your favorite character and explain why. Describe your least favorite character and explain why.
18. Select a quote or passage from the book that impacted you in some way. Why did you pick it?
19. What lesson have you learned about life as a result of reading this book? Why is it valuable?
20. What you are reading is going to be made into a movie. Create the movie poster (include names of director, actors, rating, etc.)
21. What do you like/dislike about the way the author writes? Think about use of flashbacks, descriptive words that create visual images, choice of narrator (first person, third person), etc.
22. What do you think of this book? Would you recommend it to a friend? Why?
23. Using the book as a frame of reference, write a letter to a character or to the author.
24. Describe a major conflict in the story. Which side are you on? Why?
25. Describe what is either believable or unbelievable about the story or its characters. Defend your opinion.