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# read & write beside them

increase confidence & independence with daily reading, writing, & revising

Penny Kittle @pennykittle [www.pennykittle.net](http://www.pennykittle.net)  
[www.booklovefoundation.org](http://www.booklovefoundation.org)



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*It has become clear that teaching consists of moment by moment interactive behavior, behavior that can only spring from inner conviction. ~ James Britton*

Never hesitate to imitate another writer. Imitation is part of the creative process for anyone learning an art or a craft. Bach and Picasso didn't spring full-blown as Bach or Picasso; they needed models. This is especially true of writing. ~ *William Zinsser*

Exercise the writing muscle every day, even if it is only a letter, notes, a title list, a character sketch, a journal entry. Writers are like dancers, like athletes. Without that exercise, the muscles seize up. ~ *Jane Yolen*

If you tell your students what to say and how to say it, you may never hear them, only the pale echoes of what they imagine you want them to be. ~ *Donald Murray*

# Supporting Independent Reading

## to increase Stamina, Fluency, & Joy

### **Time**

Students need time to read in class in order to create a habit of reading and set the stage for homework reading, and teachers need reading time to confer individually with students about their choices, stamina, engagement, and goals. Students need time to discuss choices with classmates, time to analyze their progress, and time to practice fluency & comprehension strategies under the direction of the teacher.

### **Choice**

Students need to make choices in reading that reflect their interests because interest drives engagement. Teachers should encourage wide reading in all genres as well as students who pursue an author or genre study. Allow students to reread favorite books and to abandon a book that no longer interests them.

### **Response**

Teacher conferences are the primary tool for assessing progress, encouraging goal-setting and reflection, and analyzing student needs. Students will reflect on reading in writing (themed notebooks & writing notebooks), facilitate discussions in small groups, join blogs or reading sites for discussions outside of class, and respond regularly to other readers in the room.

### **Vision**

*Daily* book talks present a wide range of voices, styles of text, categories of interest, etc. and are essential for helping students develop their own 'to read next' lists. We must commit to helping students define themselves as readers who like...

### **Expectations**

All readers will develop the stamina to read longer and with greater fluency with daily practice. A reading rate is calculated regularly and students are expected to meet a weekly goal based on the challenge of the current selected text. All readers will update book lists, set goals, and read regularly each week at home.

### **Challenge**

Monitor reading lists & teach all students to analyze choices and increase challenge; set goals based on progress towards college expectations: 200-600 pages/week; create reading ladders that help students find books of increasing difficulty within a genre; book talk a wide variety of choices including classics and world literature.

### **Modeling**

Use short mentor texts to increase complexity & demands on readers; model storyboarding to help students understand the craft construction in short stories & novels; model your choices as a reader: post your reading list, share books you love; show thinking & annotations in a mentor text and model "fix-it" comprehension strategies.

# Find Your Reading Rate



Find out how many pages you can read in 10 minutes by timing yourself.

$$\frac{x \text{ pages}}{10 \text{ min}}$$

×

$$\frac{120 \text{ min}}{1 \text{ week}}$$

$$= \frac{\# \text{ pages}}{\text{week}}$$



Have some extra time this week? Stretch yourself and read an additional 30 or 60 minutes per week.

Remember that your reading rate is personalized to you and the book you're reading. Calculate a new reading rate each time you start a book.

## Finished your book?

**Record** your book online,

**Write** a reflection for this week (if you haven't already), and . . .

**Start** reading another book!

Use this number to estimate how long it should take you to finish your book. For ex, if your reading rate is 150 pgs/wk and your book is 400 pages long, then it should take you between 2-3 weeks to finish your book.



Don't forget to think about how you will grow and challenge yourself as a reader. Pick a reading challenge to tackle.

## Possible Conference Questions

### Questions that Monitor a Reading Life:

What are you reading? How did you choose it?  
How do you find good books?  
What's on your Next list?  
Which authors are your favorites?  
How much did you read last year?  
Do you consider yourself a reader?  
Where do you read at home?

### Questions that drive a Teaching Reading Strategies conference:

How is the reading going for you?  
Is this an easy or a hard read for you? How do you know?  
Tell me about a time when this book has confused you and what you've done to get yourself back on track in your understanding.  
Tell me about these characters—who they are, what do you think of them?  
What questions are at the heart of this book? What questions might the author be trying to answer through the struggles of these characters?  
I see you're almost finished with the book. When you think back over the way a character has changed in this story, can you point to specific moments when something was revealed about this character? Could you make a claim about this character and support it with evidence from the text?  
How is this book different from the last book you read?

### Questions that drive a conference to Increase Complexity and Challenge:

What else have you read by this author?  
What other books have you read that are as difficult as this one?  
Which books on your next list are challenging?  
Have you considered how to push yourself as a reader?  
Which genres have you read this year?  
Tell me about a genre you don't usually read and let's think about books that might ease the transition from what you love to what will challenge you to think differently.  
Tell me about a book you've dropped this year. Why did you drop it?  
How are the books you've been reading this year similar?

## Analyzing Writing Craft in Independent Reading

This is called 'rhetorical reading' and it means to break the text down into the sum of its parts... to determine what the writer was trying to achieve and which writing strategies he/she used to try to achieve it. A rhetorical analysis is always looking at the why and the how of the writing.

1. Read one whole chapter of your book today. When finished, go back and skim read to map out what happens in this chapter in your notebook. Write about how the author put the chapter together. Consider what we've studied that writers do to move the action: flashback, zoom in, zoom past, narrator aside, etc.
  - a. **Day 2:** consider the development of the chapter above and explain why you think the author wrote this chapter at this point in the story in this way.
2. Find several interesting sentences and copy them into your notebook. Annotate them to show what makes them interesting to you. This is an author's craft question, so I am looking for observations you can make about a writer's choices in this section that you find interesting.
3. Focus on one of the lenses for reading that we have focused on so far in second and third readings of poetry: word choice, voice, sensory details, tone, or pace. Now apply that to a section from your independent reading book. Write about what you noticed when you reread the section with this lens.
4. Make observations about punctuation today. Does your author favor short or long sentences? What moves in writing craft would you say are common for this particular writer?
5. Take one section of dialogue from your reading today. Analyze what is said (what you learn about plot or character) and then what is NOT said. What are these characters withholding?
6. Style is tricky... sometimes we love the way a writer writes and sometimes we get irritated by too many narrators or moments when we lose our way... how was the reading of this book for you? Explain what you loved/grew frustrated with/etc. What would you say to the author (if you could) about how this was written?

## Analyzing Text Structures in Independent Reading

1. How important are time and place (setting) in your book? Would anything be lost if your novel were set in a different period of time or in a very different location?
  - a. If you are currently reading non-fiction, consider the date of publication of the book. If the book is more than two years old, search online for how the field studied in this book has changed in the last two years.

- b. If you are currently reading non-fiction that is place-specific (memoir, war stories, etc.) consider how the setting impacts your understanding of the book. Did you come to the book with strong background knowledge in the area? If not, how did you overcome your ignorance?
- 2. Consider the narrator of your story. What do you know about him/her? Do you trust him/her? Explain what makes the narrator reliable or not. What do you question about what the narrator says at this point in the narrative? How does the narrator affect your sympathies for other characters?
  - a. If the narrator is the author (often true in non-fiction), do you trust this author? Why or why not? What do you think this author does not see clearly or should research more thoroughly?
- 3. Consider the title of your book. Explain why you think it was chosen. How does the title give meaning to the work?
- 4. How does the writer arrange ideas in this text? Is there any pattern to this arrangement?
- 5. Consider the arrangement of ideas in this text. Is it chronological? Alternating between a forward chronology and flashbacks? (If so, why so?)

### Analyzing Literary Elements in Writing

1. Skim reread sections of your book. Look for repeating images, motifs, or repetitions and consider their implications on the larger body of work here. What can you find? What might you continue to pay attention to as you read?
2. Literature often uses a specific story to explain something larger about humankind. Can you see connections between the story you are reading and the characters' conflicts, revelations, or insights that might also be true for all people?
3. Conflicts in literature can be internal, external, or both. Which do you see in your book at this point? Explain how they contribute to your overall engagement with the text.
  - a. Writers are skillful with weaving in sub-conflicts and multiple story lines. If you see this in your story, explain how this has impacted your understanding and engagement with the story. (*Game of Thrones* readers—I don't mean ALL of them!)
  - b. Writers create conflicts on three levels in literature: conflicts within the character, conflicts between characters, and conflicts with something outside the character: the world or God, perhaps. What do you see happening in your book?
  - c. Have you ever noticed how authors put obstacles in the way of characters resolving conflicts? Find them in your book.
4. Language is central to writing and it is chosen with care. How does this writer use language? Is it formal? Informal? Technical? Slang? Does the language change throughout this piece?

5. Some writers use humor to identify one character or to present ideas in a text. Do you see evidence of humor? Puns? Irony? Sarcasm? Why might the author have used them in this book?
6. There are several comparison devices available to writers: similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, etc. Can you find examples of any of these in your text? If not, why not?

## **Vocabulary**

You know I believe that the single best way to increase your vocabulary is through wide reading. Now I want you to show me how...

1. Find a word that you didn't know before you read, but feel you understand after reading it in this book. Write the passage where the word occurred and then explain how the words around the word you didn't know helped you understand it.
2. Collect at least four words a week from your writing. Keep them in your vocabulary section of your notebook. Look up the definitions and then determine how it was used in the book you're reading. Here's the big challenge: start using them! See if you can slip them into conversation. (I suggest you pay attention to pronunciation keys in the dictionary or ask me for help. Many words sound differently than they look.)

## 9th Grade Book Clubs

**Read all of the pages assigned each week before your Book Club meets.**

**Goals:** to encourage thinking about the ideas in these books and to broaden understanding of themes and the development of characters by discussing these books with others; to participate in an online community book club, learning from the perspectives of others, something both of your teachers have found valuable in our reading lives.

Bring 1 question and 1 comment to each book club meeting. If you are absent on the day the group meets, we expect you to join the discussion online.

Thought Log writing for 1st meeting:

1. Who's here, how are they connected, and what are they like?
2. What kind of place is this?
3. What's the trouble?

Thought Log writing for 2nd meeting:

1. What's the trouble?
2. What are the obstacles?
3. How do the characters deal with them?
4. How do the characters interact?
5. What's the impact of setting on character, plot, and conflict?

Thought Log writing for 3rd meeting:

1. What is changing?
2. What is propelling the change?
3. Who wins the conflict?
4. How is the conflict resolved?

Thought Log writing for 4th meeting:

1. What loose ends are tying up?
2. How are the characters affected by the change?
3. How will life go on (or not)?

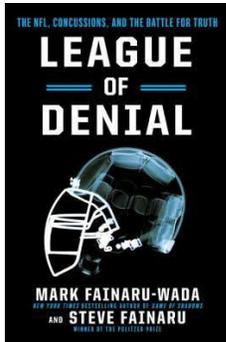
~thought log questions adapted from Donna Santman, NCTE presentation 2015

## Book Clubs, grade 9

You will choose one to read over three weeks with other students in our class and in Mr. Gallagher's class in Anaheim, California.

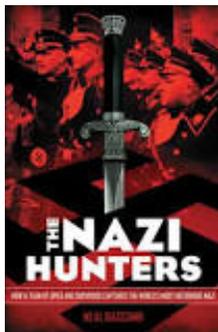
### Non Fiction

*League of Denial* by Mark Fainaru-Wada



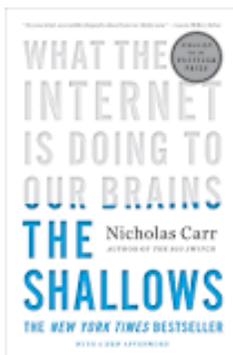
*League of Denial* reveals how the NFL, over a period of nearly two decades, sought to cover up and deny mounting evidence of the connection between football and brain damage. “It is meticulously researched, artfully structured, engaging and well written... this is an informative, intriguing and sobering book about power and control. I recommend it strongly.” – Nate Jackson, *The Washington Post*

*The Nazi Hunters* by Neal Bascomb



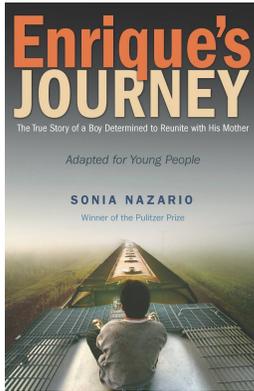
“In 1945, at the end of World War II, Adolf Eichmann, the head of operations for the Nazis’ Final Solution, walked into the mountains of Germany and vanished from view. Sixteen years later, an elite team of spies captured him at a bus stop in Argentina and smuggled him to Israel, resulting in one of the century’s most important trials—one that cemented the Holocaust in the public imagination. *The Nazi Hunters* is the thrilling and fascinating story of what happened between these two events.” – Thea, *The Book Smuggler*

*The Shallows* by Nicholas Carr



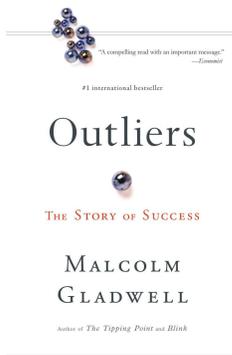
Nicholas Carr looks to neurological science to gauge the impact of computers, citing fascinating experiments that contrast the neural pathways built by reading books versus those forged by surfing the hypnotic Internet, where portals lead us from one text, image, or video to another while being bombarded by messages, alerts, and feeds. This interruption and distraction impedes the sort of comprehension and retention that ‘deep reading’ creates. We are reconfiguring our brains. What is gained and lost? ~Donna Seaman, *Booklist*

## Enrique's Journey by Sonia Nazario



*Enrique's Journey* recounts the unforgettable quest of a Honduran boy looking for his mother, eleven years after she is forced to leave her starving family to find work in the United States. Braving unimaginable peril, often clinging to the sides and tops of freight trains, Enrique travels through hostile worlds full of thugs, bandits, and corrupt cops. But he pushes forward, relying on his wit, courage, hope, and the kindness of strangers. This book is based on the Los Angeles Times newspaper series that won two Pulitzer Prizes.

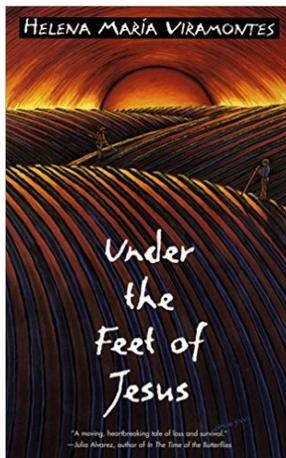
## Outliers by Malcolm Gladwell



Malcolm Gladwell takes us on an intellectual journey through the world of “outliers”—the best and the brightest, the most famous and the most successful. He asks the question: what makes high achievers different? Gladwell explains the secrets of software billionaires, what it takes to be a great soccer player, why Asians are good at math, and what made the Beatles the greatest rock band. —*Amazon.com*

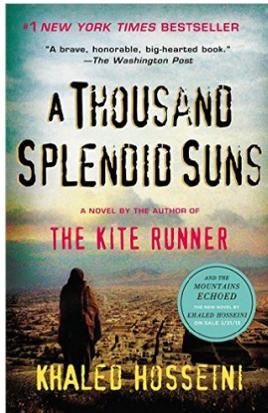
## Fiction

### *Under the Feet of Jesus* by Helena Maria Viramontes



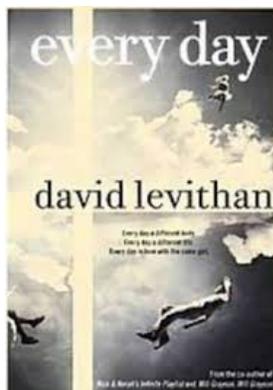
*This is a story of the lives of men, women, and children who labor under dangerous conditions in California's fields. "The family of 13-year-old Estrella, and the others with whom they travel and work, burn under 109-degree heat until the backs of their necks sting...the novel picks up after a small plane releases a white shower of deadly pesticide, which washes over the face of Alejo, a teenager who is perched in a pear tree. Alejo is drenched with poison, much to the horror of Estrella, who has fallen in love with him." ~Publisher's Weekly*

## *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini



*A Thousand Splendid Suns* is at once an incredible chronicle of thirty years of Afghan history and a deeply moving story of family, friendship, faith, and the salvation to be found in love. Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the escalating dangers around them—in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul, Afghanistan—they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other. ~Amazon.com

## *Every Day* by David Levithan



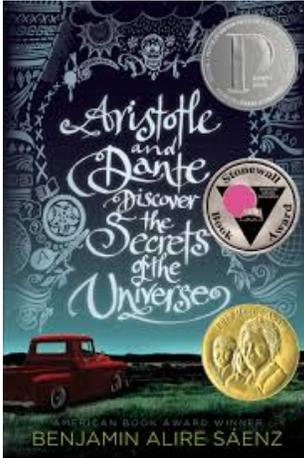
Every day a different body. Every day a different life. Every day in love with the same girl. In this *New York Times* bestselling novel, David Levithan introduces readers to what *Entertainment Weekly* calls a “wise, wildly unique” love story about A, a teen who wakes up every morning in a different body, living a different life. There’s never any warning about where it will be or who it will be. This book will fascinate readers. ~Amazon.com

## *Side Effects May Vary* by Julie Murphy



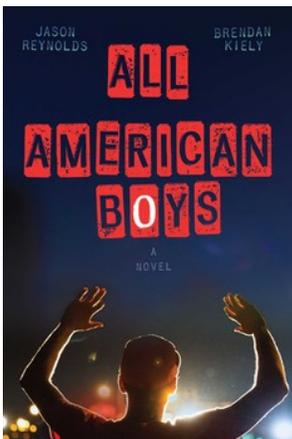
“When sixteen-year-old Alice is diagnosed with leukemia, she vows to spend her final months righting wrongs. She convinces her best friend, Harvey, to help her with a crazy bucket list that’s as much about revenge as it is about hope. But just when Alice’s scores are settled, she goes into remission, and now she must face the consequences of all she’s said and done. Readers who love romantic stories featuring strong heroines will find much to savor in this standout debut novel.” ~Amazon.com

*Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin A Saenz



Saenz’s young-adult novel was a big winner at this year’s American Library Association awards for children’s literature. Despite their grand names, Aristotle—who calls himself Ari—and Dante are teen loners who are trying to find their place in the world. The story follows Ari’s journey to the realization that he is in love with his friend. Like Saenz, Aristotle and Dante are both Mexican-American. He points out that he started to write the book at the height of what he felt was “anti-Mexican rhetoric” happening across the country. It was important to him to challenge the idea that Mexican-Americans are recent immigrants. “We have a long history in this country,” Saenz said. ~National Public Radio, NPR.org

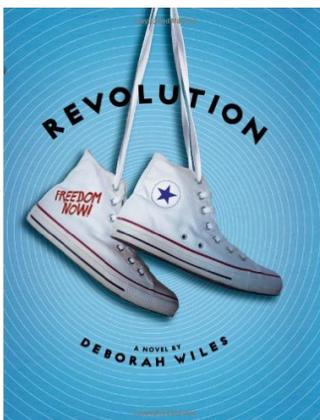
*All American Boys* by Jason Reynolds



In an unforgettable new novel from award-winning authors Jason Reynolds and Brendan Keily, two teens—one black, one white—grapple with the repercussions of a single violent act that leaves their school, their community, and ultimately, the country bitterly divided by racial tension. This book shares the alternating perspectives of Rashad and Quinn as the complications from one violent moment in a grocery store unfold and reverberate through the basketball team they share, the school, and the town. Simmering tensions threaten to explode. ~ Simon and Schuster

**Both: a Non-Fiction/Fiction blend**

*Revolution* by Deborah Wiles



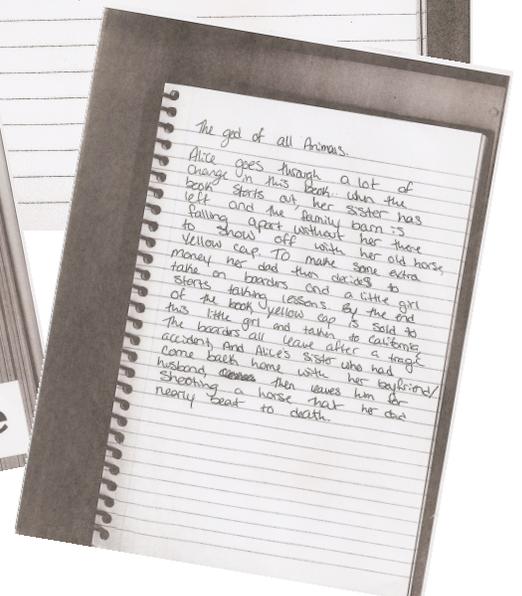
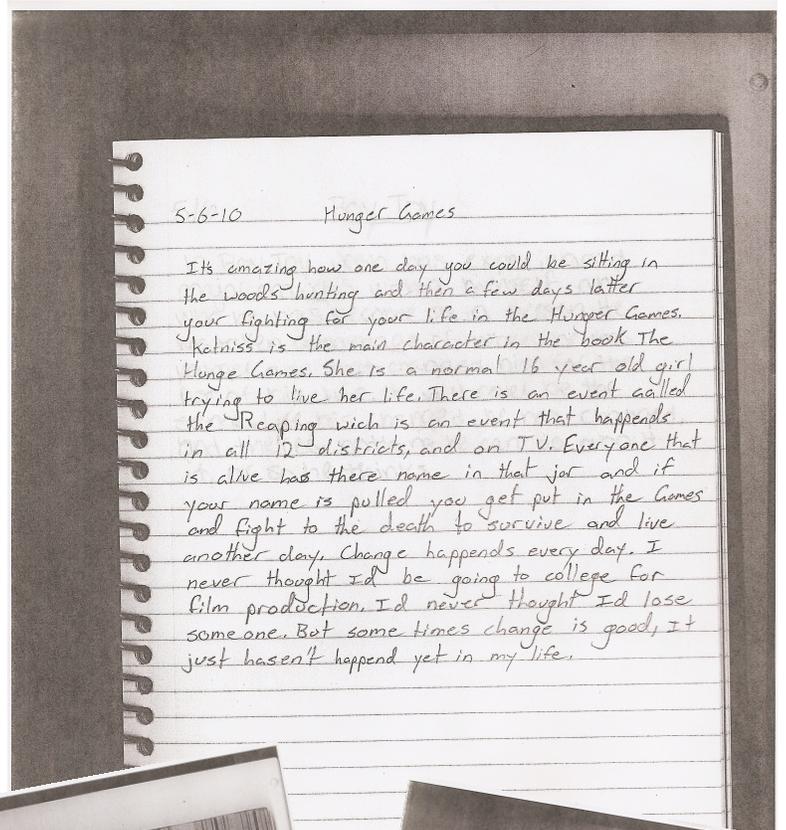
A 2014 National Book Award Finalist and part of the Sixties trilogy, Deborah Wiles uses stories and images to create a documentary novel of Greenwood, Mississippi during Freedom Summer. Wiles tells a riveting story of kids caught in the conflict of 1964 when people from ‘up north’ come to help people register to vote.

“The larger story... told her in an expert coupling of text and design, is how life endures, even triumphs, no matter how perilous the times.” ~*Horn Book*, starred review

## Possible Topics for Reading Responses [6] 'XYU' Notebooks

*These come from commonly taught themes in literature*

Belief  
Forgiveness  
Oppression  
Discipline  
Decisions  
Death & Dying  
Love  
Acceptance  
Courage  
Change  
Empathy  
Life Lessons (like Crime Doesn't Pay)  
Overcoming Adversity  
Man Struggles Against Nature  
Man Struggles Against Societal Pressure  
Man Struggles to Understand God  
Friendship  
Sacrifice  
The Bonds of Family  
Yin & Yang  
Suffering  
Conflict  
Abandonment  
Alienation  
Ambition  
Coming of Age  
Freedom  
Gender  
Justice  
Isolation  
Cruelty  
Fate  
Hope  
Guilt



# Big Idea Books

These notebooks are for us to share. I write in them; you write in them. A Big Idea Book is a multi-year conversation because I keep these and recycle them each year. You're talking across time to students who are stumbling along through elementary or middle school right now, but will one day sit where you are.

The meat of a Big Idea Book is **your thinking**. I want you digging for what is beneath the story you're reading. You chose this book (this theme) for a reason. You can see how it connects to what is happening or what is explored in the book you're reading. You might connect the ideas or situations in the book to something in yourself or another book you've read. You might take the ideas in the book and go farther with them... thinking as you write.

You are doing a mini-book talk for someone who comes upon your words later. Try not to give away anything important that the reader would rather discover on his own: you know how you hate that! You can skim a Big Idea Book and find a dozen book talks from students like you. Add the titles to your NEXT list and you'll have a supply of answers when you've finished one book and can't decide what to read next.

## **RULES FOR CIVIL DISCOURSE IN COMMUNITY WRITING:**

- 1. BE RESPECTFUL. DO NOT USE PROFANITY. DO NOT USE SOMEONE ELSE'S NAME WITHOUT PERMISSION.**
- 2. YOU ONLY NEED TO SIGN YOUR ENTRY IF YOU WANT TO. SOMETIMES WE SEND WORDS OUT INTO THE WORLD AS A GIFT WITHOUT ATTRIBUTION.**

**TRUST THE WRITER INSIDE OF YOU. JUST WRITE.**