**Reader Response theory: How to Be An Active Reader**

**Readers Must Contemplate Their Responses**

* The reader needs to reflect on his/her reaction to a text throughout the process of reading it. Why did I think that? What in my past made me interpret that scene the way I did? How has other pieces I’ve read influenced the way I react to this text?
* The reader needs to determine how believable the author is. Is there reliability in the narrator? Is the author attempting to manipulate my thinking?
* The reader needs to reinterpret each section of text as he/she continues to read. Now that I have read this chapter, do I need to rethink what I thought about the previous chapter?
* Readers must be able to defend their responses –
  + Reader-Response does not allow for “anything goes” response. The response must be based on close and careful reading of the text.

**Readers Reflect on Response, Not Interpretation**

* What is my emotional response to the text? Why do I have this response?
* What does the text mean to me?
* What has happened to me in my life that helps me understand this text?
* Does this work change the way I see the world? My life? My goals?
* What impact does the text have on me?
* Does this text make me re-evaluate perceptions of what has happened to me in the past?
* How can I personalize my connection to this text?
* Readers must be able to defend their responses –
  + Reader-Response does not allow for “anything goes” response. The response must be based on close and careful reading of the text.

**Evolving Responses**

* Reader-Response Theory allows for a reader to respond differently to a text each and every time he/she reads the text.
* As personal experiences and exposures to literature grow, a person’s response to a text changes.
* Readers focus on the aesthetic – the emotional response rather than the efferent – the informational component – of reading.
* Aesthetic reading also calls for empathy – the reader puts himself/herself in the place of characters to determine if the way a character reacts is realistic or morally similar to the reader’s response.

**You May Choose to Answer These Questions in Your Reader Response Paper**

* What does the text have to do with you, personally?
* How much does the text agree or disagree with your view of the world and what you think is right and wrong? Cite specific lines from the text to prove your point.
* How well does the text address things that you personally care about and consider important in the world? Cite specific lines from the text.
* What other texts does the this text remind you of? Cite lines from the text and explain the connection.
* What is your overall reaction to the text?