READING RESPONSE WRITING
GUIDELINES

Your response writing will help you read with a “writer’s eye” – that is you will practice how to apply criteria to any writing to understand the writer’s craft and how you can improve your own writing.

Later in the term, your journal entries will prepare you for summarizing, paraphrasing, and documenting outside sources in your essays.

You will be reading a few essays for each essay project. You have the opportunity to choose one essay to write a Reading Response.

Consider your Reading Response as a 3-part writing:

- SUMMARY (one paragraph) of the main ideas in this essay. Practice putting the main ideas into your own words and try to describe both the “story” (what happened) and the writer’s thesis (which may be stated or implied). You can find the thesis usually by asking: What is the main idea that the writer is trying to get across? (Review pages 18-19)

- CRITICAL ANALYSIS (one paragraph) of the reading. Focus on one element of the essay for analysis. For example, with E.B. White’s essay, you might analyze his use of figurative language (similes and metaphors). Eventually, your critical response should include your favorite quotation from the reading, using a “lead-in” and an in-text citation.

- PERSONAL CONNECTION (one paragraph) that describes your personal connection to this reading (what the reading made you think or feel, what you’d like to tell the writer, how you think this reading relates to people today).

These Reading Responses will help you to read critically, practice your summarizing skills, prepare for class discussion, and develop your own reactions to often complex ideas.

At the top of each Reading Response, please put:
✓ Your name
✓ Date
✓ Reading Response #1: White’s “Once More to the Lake”