

**One of our strategies will connect our reading and discussion. Each student will word process a response to that day's reading. The length should be between 1 and 1/2 and 2 pages.**

### **Content**

**Author's Name; Title/Identification of Text; Your name and the date**

**In other words, there are 4 parts to this.**

- 1. Summarize important aspects of the text in your own words.**
- 2. Give your response to the readings that is more subjective; your questions for discussion. Possibilities include personal reaction, philosophical reflection and implications, connection to a wider context, critical thinking/analysis, disagreement with author. There are no "right" answers here; just serious thinking about the text.**
- 3. Section 3 will be two possible essay/discussion questions per day that come from your reading and thinking about our course.**
- 4. A second part of this will be something we will call your favorite place(s) or quotation(s) in the text. Copy the material of this place (or a summary if it is too long), and present your own reasons as to why this is your favorite place or quotation.**

**Sometimes we will use free-form discussion. On other days we will go around in a universal participation mode. On some days we will exchange documents and discuss in small groups (3, 4, or 5 per group). Each group will have a secretary who will record ideas both as an aid to the discussion and in order to be able to share results of the group discussion with the entire class.**

Here are the goals I believe this assignment achieves.

1. It is the best agent I have yet discovered for ensuring that every student reads the assigned readings and reads them in a way corresponds with the many pages we read as a class about what good college-level reading should entail.
2. It gets students in the habit of writing and taking notes on their reading. Writing is a habit. They write about a dozen of these in the course.
3. It requires students to read in analytical ways.
4. The students get feedback from me on every writing assignment which should introduce them to college level critique/grading from a professor and concomitantly improve their writing.
5. The kind of questions to be addressed in this assignment are valuable (in my opinion).
6. It is extraordinarily helpful in generating class discussion as the students have their ideas ready to go.
7. Since every student has produced one of these I can use this to ensure that every student is speaking in class. One of the goals I have for my course is to generate a class environment in which the students talk, share ideas, and gain the confidence that they have something valuable to say. My hope is that carries over into future courses for them.
8. I like the fact that the students are being asked write and share discussion/essay questions; I believe that it produces a kind of thinking that is different from simply digesting material.
9. I also like the fact that by choosing and elaborating upon their favorite place/quotation the students can take an idea that they relate to as individuals, that they then explain what the significance is for them. I think that it makes our work together more personal for each of them. It is also interesting when more than one student selects the same passage, but for different reasons, often as a result of interpreting the same passage differently. This can produce a valuable discussion.