

Journals

Journal Questions and Quotes for Reaction

1. Tell a story about yourself from the perspective of your roommate or a friend.
2. Write a rough draft of a letter to a person: ^{you} know but probably wouldn't send a letter to.
3. Write out a new ending to a movie you have seen or book you have read.
4. What is your favorite word? Why?
5. "I don't see writing as communication of something already discovered, as 'truths' already known. Rather, I see writing as a job of experiment. It's like any discovery job; you don't know what's going to happen until you try it." —William Stafford
6. Describe your best experience with education.
7. Describe your worst experience with education.
8. Have extra-curricular activities interfered with your education? Describe how.
9. "My task...is, by the power of the written word, to make you hear, to make you hear, to make you feel — it is, before all, to make you see." —Joseph Conrad
10. Close your eyes and relax. Then turn your head slightly up, down, or to the right or left. Open your eyes and write for 5 minutes nonstop on the first thing you see describing with as much detail as possible.
11. What is your least favorite word? Why?
12. Look up the word "obnoxious" in the dictionary. Describe the most obnoxious person you know by giving at least two detailed examples of his or her obnoxious behavior.
13. "Seeing is of course very much a matter of verbalization.. Unless I call my attention to what passes before my eyes, I simply won't see it." —Annie Dillard
14. Take some pictures of many different kinds of places (indoors, outdoors, people, animals, buildings, action, still-life, etc.). For some of the pictures, record the number of the picture and describe what you are taking a picture of. Tape some developed pictures into your journal and write about them. For the shot where you described the scene in your journal, place the picture next to your entry and describe what the camera saw and you didn't notice, or what you noticed but the camera didn't pick up.
15. Glue another photo in your journal and write a one-page caption under the picture.
16. Take another picture and write why this is a perfect example of a certain feeling, stage in your life, or idea.
17. Do you know a lot about a specific activity, subject, idea, place, people, or event? Write an entry about a topic you are an authority on.
18. Write out the conversation that would take place between yourself and President Clinton as if you met with him sometime.
19. Find a place where people are talking (a party, lunch room, lounge). Be inconspicuous and record the conversation word-for-word for 10 minutes . If people ask you what you are doing, tell them you're working on a Freshman Composition assignment. Record all the expressions, slang, and "um" and "er" sounds you hear.
20. Draw a line down the middle of a page. On one side write all the facts, observed data, and details of an event or an idea; and on the other side write down all your impressions, reactions, ideas, and questions about this thing.
21. "Man's maturity: to have regained the seriousness that he had as a child at play." —Friedrich Nietzsche

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22. Write non-stop about your earliest memories. How old were you? What was the place? Who were the people around you? What happened?
23. Ask your family what their perspective was on your earliest memory. How do the two versions differ?
24. Select one moment in your past that changed your life or showed you how your life had already changed. What was the event? Compare what you were like before and after this event.
25. Describe the place you go to when you want to be alone. What is it like? When do you go there? How have you changed since the first time you went there?
26. Read an essay from the Writer's Presence that was not assigned. Write about the same topic from your perspective. How do you see it?
27. "For me the initial delight is in the surprise of remembering something I didn't know I knew."
--Robert Frost
28. Write freely for 20 minutes about something or someone you knew.
29. Discuss three things that you would change about the United States.
30. Find an editorial in a newspaper or magazine and write a journal entry opposing the writer's opinion.
31. Write about a surprising happening. Save the surprise until the end.
32. Try writing a poem without using any adjectives.
33. Go to a past journal entry and write how things have changed now
34. "Never say you feel a thing unless you feel it distinctly; and if you do not feel it distinctly, say at once that you do not as yet quite know your own mind."
--Samuel Butler
35. Decide on a subject to freewrite about. As you write, see if you can move to the opposite of that subject. (for example, freedom-discipline or hot-cold or peacefulness-war)
36. Describe your best experience with writing.
37. Describe your worst experience with writing.
38. "The writing process is not linear, moving smoothly in one direction from start to finish. It is messy, recursive, convoluted, and uneven. Writers write, plan, revise, anticipate, and review throughout the writing process..."
--Maxine Hairston
39. Make your own quote about a something that is true to you. Write out the quote and describe why it means something to you.
40. Compare two things. Show how they are different
41. Give a before and after experience. Emphasize the difference.
42. Write about a journey. I (he, or it) started here and went through these experiences and came out there. It doesn't have to be a physical journey.
43. "To remain silent is to give the impression that one has no opinions, that one wants nothing... Despair, like the absurd, has opinions and desires about everything in general and nothing in particular. Silence expresses this attitude very well. But from the moment the rebel finds his voice -- even though he says nothing but "no" -- he begins to desire and to judge."
--Albert Camus
44. Write about a David and Goliath experience. David had only a slingshot and courage against a gigantic warrior. Describe any little, deprived, or disadvantaged person against great forces. Who will win?
45. Give a "will it work?" proposal. Describe an idea, plan, or invention that is new and untried; or an old one which is now standing against the established order. Will it win through?