Reading and Questioning Connections

Judith MacKenzie’s “An Open Heart”

**Level One: Reading On the Line For Recall Questions**

As you read, you should be mentally asking questions that can be answered by explicit information you can physically point out in the passage. You “recall” or “remember” facts and details that answer questions such as *who*, *what*, *where*, and *when*.

Examples from “An Open Heart”

1. **Question:** What do the two women bring the family at Christmas time?

**Answer:** Groceries like “milk, butter, bread, cheese, and Christmas oranges” (17-18).

1. **Question:** Why did the narrator always feel hungry when she was eight?

**Answer:** Because her father had “no work” (2) and therefore no money to buy food.

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| **In the space below, write two additional Level One questions from “An Open Heart.”** |

1. **Question:**

**Answer:**

1. **Question:**

**Answer:**

Level Two: Reading Between the Lines for Interpretive Questions

Proficient readers make interpretations based upon details in the text. As you read, you should be asking questions that can be answered by making inferences and assumptions based upon evidence in the text, such as “What does a detail or image represent, suggest, or personify?”

Generate questions that can be answered by interpreting, classifying, comparing, contrasting, and finding patterns. These questions are “interpretive” questions.

Examples from “An Open Heart”

1. **Question:** Why are the gifts the two women bring significant later in the story?

**Answer:** Because the gifts that the two women bring are echoed when the narrator gives the man $10 and he goes to the grocery store to buy the same items (37-38).

1. **Question:** Why is the feeling of hunger significant to the narrator’s growth as an individual?

**Answer:** This feeling of hunger helps her empathize with what others must feel when they go without food. As an eight-year-old, she has a greater respect and understanding for those suffering in India and Africa (11) and as an adult, it is this empathy that motivates her to give the man with the sleeping bag money (20-37).

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| **In the space below, write two additional Level Two questions from “An Open Heart.”** |

1. **Question:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Answer:** \_\_\_\_\_\_

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1. **Question:** \_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Answer:**

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**LEVEL THREE: READING BEYOND THE LINES FOR UNIVERSAL MEANING QUESTIONS**

As you read, you should move beyond the text to connect to universal meaning. Ask mental questions like, “How does this text connect with my life, with life in a larger sense for all human beings, with my ideas about morality or values?” These questions are open-ended and go beyond the text. They are intended to provoke a discussion of abstract issues and thematic concerns.

Generate questions that can be answered by connecting literature to your own experiences or to universal meanings. These questions begin with ideas in the text but move from the “what?” of the text to the “so what?” of the text—the abstract issues and thematic concerns. Specific textual references are NOT included.

Examples from “An Open Heart”

1) **Question:** In what ways are we responsible for helping others?

2) **Question:** How does charity benefit both those who give and those who receive?

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| **In the space below, write two additional Level Three questions suggested by “An Open Heart.”** |

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