Journal Ideas

A close reader will track his/her thinking while reading a novel. There are many different things that a close reader should keep track of. In order to show that you are keeping track of your thinking, select one of the following topics to write about in your journal entry.

Possible things to track over time:

How is the main character developed?
- How does he/she change?
- What insights does the character gain?

What big conflicts are being developed?
- What conflict arises?
- What do these conflicts tell the reader?
- What claims does the author make? What passages support these claims?

What motifs occur?
- Is there an idea that keeps popping up?
- What might the author be trying to point out to you by restating the idea?

How is the plot developed?
- What is a turning point in the plot?
- Why is this event a turning point?

How does the author use diction to create an effect in the story?
- What are some examples of diction that create an effect in the story?
- What effects does the diction create?
Does the setting impact the story?
- What is the setting?
- How does it impact the plot and the characters?

What techniques does the author use to structure his/her work?
- How does the author organize the book? The chapter?
- Why might the author organize his/her work in this way?

How does the author add creativity to the novel?
- What literary devices are used and what meanings can be inferred from their use? (e.g. allusions, similes, metaphors)
- Where does the author use punctuation and sentence structure effectively?
- Notice beautiful sentences/passages. Comment on them.

Don’t forget to use my model and to follow the guidelines for writing your journal entry.