

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Rumble Fish

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Rumble Fish

Chapter One

1. Steve sees Rusty-James at the beach for the first time in five years. It has been so long since they have seen each other that Rusty-James does not recognize Steve at first. Steve looks older, and he has a mustache. Write a paragraph about a time when you ran into someone that you did not recognize at first. Who was the person, and why didn't you recognize him? What did you say to each other? How did the situation make you feel? Why?
2. Steve has been out of high school for five years. He is in college, and he plans to become a high school teacher when he graduates. Think about what you want to do after you graduate from high school. Create a timeline of what you intend to do for the first five years after you graduate. Include any plans for college, such as where you want to go and what your major will be; trade school, what vocation you want to pursue; or, the military, what branch and specialty you are interested in. Add where you would like to live and what kind of work you want to eventually do.
3. Rusty-James is not surprised that Steve wants to be a teacher. Rusty-James thinks that since Steve has always liked reading and studying, he is well suited to work in the field of education. Create your own diary entry about a friend or someone you know, and discuss the career field that you think this person is best suited for. In your entry, give five specific reasons why you think this person would be good at the job, including any examples from her real life that support your opinion.

Response Journal

4. Steve insists that he and Rusty-James meet for dinner to talk about the “good old days.” He also wants to tell Rusty-James about everything that has happened in his life since they last saw each other. Choose one of the following activities to complete:
- A. Compose a letter to someone you haven’t seen for a long time. In the letter, discuss at least five events that have occurred in your life since the last time you met.
 - B. Compose a letter to a current friend describing a past experience you had with that person using the five senses. Explain why that event is memorable to you, and how it changed you.

Chapter Two

5. Benny’s is the hangout for the junior high kids. It used to be the hangout for the high school students, but they left when the junior high students started going there. Students like Benny’s place because they can eat good, cheap food, visit their friends; and play pool. Write a paragraph about a hangout place for students in either your school or on a television program. Why do students like to go there? What do they do there? What’s the best and worst feature about it?
6. Rusty-James cannot think about two things at once because he has a short attention span. While he is in Benny’s, he has to stop playing pool in order to think about his problem with Biff. Recall a time when you had a lot of things to get done quickly, such as finishing school work and chores before meeting your friends. Write a letter to a friend in which you talk about what you had to accomplish, and how you handled the situation. Did you complete your tasks? Could you complete more than one at a time? Why or why not?

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7. The characters in *Rumble Fish* have nicknames that reflect either their characteristics or the opposite of their characteristics. Midget, for example, is called so because he is taller than everyone else his age. Smokey gets his nickname from his “funny, colorless eyes.” Write a paragraph in which you describe a nickname given to you, someone you know, or a character in a book, television show, or movie. Why was the nickname given? Can you think of a better nickname? Who created the nickname?
8. Biff is angry with Rusty-James over something he said to Anita. Rusty-James doesn’t understand why Biff is so mad, saying, “Now why does he have to go and get shook over somethin’ like that?” Sometimes people seem to overreact to something someone else says or does. Write a conversation between you and a friend about a time someone you know overreacted. Explain why you think the person got upset so easily, why you think he should not have overreacted. Use the following example to write your dialogue.

Friend: I don’t understand why people can get so worked up sometimes over nothing. You know what I mean?

You: Yeah, well one time. . .

9. Rusty-James thinks that Steve acts mature for his age. He says, “Steve was fourteen, like me. He looked twelve. He acted forty.” Make a chart showing how you rate yourself in regards to maturity, physically, emotionally, psychologically, and intellectually. Then pick one aspect of your maturity and explain why you picked that level on the scale of mature versus immature behavior. Give five reasons to support your claim. The chart could look like this:

	<u>Immature</u>	<u>Mature</u>
Physically		
Emotionally		
Psychologically		
Intellectually		

Response Journal

10. Gang fights used to be a common occurrence in Rusty-James' neighborhood, but now it has been many years since any gangs have battled. Rusty-James and his friends begin to reminisce about the various gangs from the past, and how the fights had begun. Make a list of as many countries as you know which have been involved in war, whether past or present. Write a brief five-sentence summary discussing what this list tells you about human nature.

11. Rusty-James stops on the bridge to look at the river. Before leaving, he throws his cigarette butt in to the water, saying, "It was so full of trash that a little more wasn't going to hurt it any." Pollution is a major problem that is affecting our planet. Think about an environmental issue that you would like to focus on in your community. Write a persuasive speech to give in front of your city council about this issue. Be sure to explain how this problem is damaging the environment and the community. Give details of your plan to solve the problem.

12. When he was a young child, Rusty-James went to the zoo with his father. His experience at the zoo was so fulfilling that he tried to return by himself, but got lost. Now that he is a young adult, Rusty-James still thinks about the animals he saw, and relates them to the people he knows. Choose one of the following activities to complete:
 - A. Create a diary entry discussing what animal you are most like and why. What are at least three similar traits that you see between you and this animal? Explain your answers with specific examples of behavior.
 - B. Create a diary entry about the best experience you have ever had with an animal. Why is this encounter memorable? How did it make you feel?

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Chapter Three

13. Rusty-James' girlfriend, Patty, is upset with him for staying away for a long time. Instead of saying why she is mad, Patty fights with Rusty-James about other things. Sometimes people have problems expressing themselves, and they either keep their feelings inside or release them through other means. Think about a time that you or someone you know became upset about something but would not say anything about it. Describe what was upsetting, why it was troublesome, what, if anything, was done to deal with the situation, and whether that person kept feelings inside or released them in other ways.
14. Fighting is a common occurrence for Rusty-James. He gets in a fight every time he feels threatened, angry, or insulted. Rusty-James feels that he must fight in order to appear tough and cool and to gain respect from his friends. Compose a letter to Rusty-James expressing your feelings about fighting. In the letter, explain when, if ever, you feel fighting is appropriate. Include three alternative ways other than fighting to resolve a conflict.
15. One reason Rusty-James likes to fight is because of the adrenaline rush he gets before a fight. He says, "I love how I feel before a fight, kind of high, like I can do anything." Write about an activity you like to do that gives you the same feeling. Describe how you feel using as many of the five senses as possible.
16. Teenagers in this book tend to hang out in groups and gangs just as they do in real life. Write an article for your school paper about the groups or cliques found in your school. Give your opinion of why these particular groups are formed. What do the members have in common? How does an individual change when he or she is in one of these groups? Why?