

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Shane

by Jack Schaefer

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Chapter 1

1. As the novel opens, the young narrator, Bob, notices a horseman coming down the road, and he comments that “there seemed nothing remarkable about him.” In your life, you might remember an event that appeared to be unimportant, but turned out to be very important to you or your family. Recount that event by giving the first unremarkable impression; then relate the importance the event ended up having for you.
2. The expression “first impressions are lasting” is supported in the novel, especially when Bob describes details of the cowboy’s appearance. Choose someone who impressed you on a first meeting and describe the person’s appearance, personality, and actions. Explain how that impression did or did not last. You might begin with these words:

The first time I met _____, I could not believe my eyes. He (or she)...

3. A “sudden chill” passes through Bob when he sees Shane’s eyes “endlessly searching from side to side and forward, checking off every item in view.” You have probably experienced a time when you were in a situation where there was tension, and you felt a “sudden chill,” as Bob did. Perhaps this event occurred at a family gathering or at a sports event. Describe how you felt and what happened after you felt the chill or tension in the air.
4. Bob’s mother and father have moved into the territory to make a permanent home, meaning that they have no plans to leave. As a result, Bob’s home is unlike other homes in the territory. In the first column, list characteristics from the description in the novel that make Bob’s farm and home unique. In column two, list characteristics about your own home that sets it apart from your friends’ homes.

Column 1:
(Bob’s home)

Column 2:
(Your home)

Response Journal

5. After watching Shane's precise actions in cleaning up from the dusty trail, Bob comments, "I was fascinated...." Write a detailed journal entry describing someone famous who fascinates or amazes you. Be sure to tell why the person invokes this admiration in you. Begin your entry with the sentence below:

The person I find fascinating is _____, because...

6. Shane is pleased with Bob's alertness and interest in watching him. Shane says, "I like that. A man who watches what's going on around him will make his mark." Do you agree with that comment? Why or why not?
7. Bob relates, "Father and I would have painted the house three times over and in rainbow colors to please her [Bob's mother]." What person in your life would you do "anything" for? Explain the traits in that person that would evoke this type of devotion from you.
8. Father enthusiastically tells Shane his dreams for the ranch and the land that he owns. Dreams and hopes motivate people in their lives. Write five questions to ask about your best friend's dreams and hopes for the future. Take a few minutes to interview one or two friends and record their answers.

Chapter 2

9. Interesting expressions, such as "flannel-cake," "fiddle-footed," "plum full," and "pegged me" pinpoint a geographical area or time period of history in literature. What expressions pinpoint your area of the country? Where did these expressions originate? What words express the present Computer Age? Fill in the chart provided below:

Word/expression from your area:	Origin of the expression:	Computer Age words:
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10. Bob obviously enjoys his home and his parents. After breakfast, when father and mother were teasing each other, Bob explains "...that was how it was often in our house, kind of jolly and warm..." Write a diary entry describing a time when you had this feeling. Include the event or conversation that created this feeling for you.

Dear Diary,

Today at _____ I had the best time. Let me tell you about...

11. Mr. Starrett chooses Shane's word over Ledyard when he is considering buying the cultivator. Just as Bob's father did, there are times when you must decide between one person's word over another. How would you choose between two opposite viewpoints? A person's character should be an important factor. List three more ways you would make this judgment. The list is begun for you below:

I would think about how long I had known both people.

I would think about how truthful each had been in different situations.

12. A large stump stood in the yard, one that proved impossible for Bob's family to dig out. After two meals and a night's lodging, Shane decides to help the family by cutting out the stubborn stump. Write a journal entry about a time when you did something out of the ordinary for someone else-an effort that took extra energy, time, or money. What motivated you to perform that kind act for someone else?

Chapter 3

13. Cutting the huge stump out of the ground was long, difficult physical work. Shane and Mr. Starrett focused on the job through supper and worked until the stump was out. In your community, there are many workers who spend long hours working to help the people who live there. Which two do you admire the most for their efforts? Why?

Response Journal

14. Jack Schaefer, the author, portrays Marian, Bob's mother, as a "typical woman." From this chapter, list eight traits or actions that she has in common with an important woman in your life today.
15. Taking out the stump turns out to be a bonding time for the family and Shane. The entire family, even mother and Bob, were part of the experience with father and Shane. Why do you think this scene was necessary for the rest of the novel?

Chapter 4

16. Bob awoke the next morning thinking about the events of the previous day. He "could not straighten in [his] mind the way grown folks had behaved, the way things that did not really matter so much had become so important to them." What things are important to you? What things are important to your parents? In a sentence, explain why there are two very different lists. Use the format below:

Things important to me:

Things important to my parents:

The lists are different because...

17. Shane had an immediate positive effect on Bob's parents; they are "more alive...more vibrant." Write a thank you note to someone who influenced you to be more "alive" than you usually are. Think about playing sports, your exercise routine, dieting, or studying-these might be areas where someone motivated you to be more disciplined. The basic outline for a thank you note is given below:

(Date) _____

(Greeting) Dear _____,

(Body of Note)

(Closing) _____

(Signature) _____

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18. Idiosyncrasies are particular actions that make people unique from others. In the novel, Shane is careful not to sit by a window, and he always sits facing the road. His idiosyncrasies are his chosen actions to keep him safe. To get along with people, you accept their idiosyncrasies, and they accept yours. How are you and your best friend different and how are you very much alike?
19. Shane's gun is a beautiful possession that Bob can't resist examining; in fact, he rushes to tell his father about it. You, no doubt, have a prized possession. Perhaps it is an heirloom or gift you keep in a special place and pull out to look at occasionally. Create a short story giving the details of how you obtained it (who, when, where, why, how). Explain through the characters' dialogue why this item has such value to you.
20. Mr. Starrett warns Bob not to like Shane too much, because he feared Shane would eventually disappoint Bob by leaving. Write a dialogue between you and your parents about a warning that they have recently given you.

Chapter 5

21. Bob has ideas about his future. He wants to "ride the range, have his own string of ponies, and take part in an all-brand roundup." In a journal entry, write about your goals. What do you want to be doing fifteen years from now? Include in your entry how you plan to accomplish those aspirations. The following sentence should get you started:

Fifteen years from now, I plan to be...

22. Every craft has a science to it. In the novel, Shane's craft is obviously gun-fighting. He carefully instructs Bob how to wear his pistol and how to use it. Perhaps your close relative has explained an interesting craft to you in detail. Relate an enjoyable time that you learned something entirely new from someone older than you.