

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Tangerine
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Pre-Reading

1. Pictures are a type of visual imagery that aims to capture a moment in time. Many times the cover of a book is a picture that captures a moment of action from the story or depicts a character. Other times, the cover can be abstract or very minimal (only featuring the title and author). There is a proverb that states “A picture is worth a thousand words.” It means that an image can visually represent a written idea or story, but how true is this statement?

Write a list of words or phrases in response to the front cover of your book. These words should reflect what you believe the picture, or lack thereof, reveals about possible important themes, concepts, or events from the story.

2. Many people consider it an honor for an author to dedicate a book to them. Authors often dedicate their books to loved ones, people who’ve been supportive, or the people they most admire. If you wrote a novel, to whom would you dedicate it? Consider the people in your life who have been positive influences and have offered you support in your times of need.

Make a list of the top three most supportive people in your life. Next, think of the type of novel that you would write. Then, write an email to the person you would dedicate the novel to, explaining the novel’s subject matter, the dedication, and why you specifically chose him or her.

3. The Bulletin praises *Tangerine* as “A richly imagined read about an underdog coming into his own.” What is it that makes one an underdog? Underdogs are individuals with less-than-favorable odds stacked against them. They are not expected to come out on top of tough situations. Some common examples of underdogs include sports teams with poor records, lesser-known employees trying to advance in the workplace, or even the most average person trying to overcome socioeconomic pressures.

In one to two paragraphs, describe a time when you were an underdog. What odds were against you? What did you do to overcome the obstacles set before you? Reveal the outcome of the situation in a separate paragraph.

Tangerine

Out of Focus

4. Most good authors attempt to draw readers into their book by writing a dynamic first paragraph or chapter. In this particular case, *Tangerine* begins with a brief section titled “Out of Focus.” Appropriately named, this section throws the reader into the midst of the text, introducing characters and a mystery surrounding the happenings during one particular summer that lead to one boy’s having to wear very thick glasses.

In your opinion, does “Out of Focus” have enough impact to lure readers? Does it make you want to read more? Aiming for at least a paragraph, freewrite in response to reading this section. Your freewrite should simply be based on your reactions as a reader. Once you have finished, write a brief paragraph explaining whether or not your response towards “Out of Focus” has increased your interest in the book.

Unlabeled Preface

5. A preface is a brief introductory section of text designed to either hook the reader or offer the reader pertinent information about the text. A lot of what is revealed in the preface relates to the main ideas of the book. In the preface of this text, we are introduced to Paul and his mother as they are moments away from departing what used to be their home.

Consider important events and information that the preface reveals. Make a list of two columns. In one column, list the important events and information. In the other, list possible themes or ideas connected to the events that may be relevant to the remainder of the novel.

6. Moving to a new place can leave a person with mixed emotions. The idea of a fresh start, meeting new people and seeing new things can be very exciting. On the other hand, the idea of leaving behind all you’ve come to know and love can be scary since you are leaving most of the things you find familiar and comforting.

Tangerine

We meet Paul and his mother as they are in the midst of a major transition—moving from Texas to Florida. As they are doing some last minute cleaning before taking their final leave of the place they once called home, their thoughts keep them worlds apart. While his mother is concerned about making a positive impression on the people who buy the house, Paul is trapped in his memories.

Compare the emotions Paul is feeling as he prepares to leave his home for the last time to the emotions displayed by his mother. Try to have a total of at least eight points of comparison.

Friday, August 18

7. There appears to be a bit of sibling rivalry between Erik and Paul. This may partially be due to what so far seems like favoritism from their parents. From Paul's perspective, the Erik Fisher Football Dream leaves no room for him. Think about the kind of feelings Paul seems to have toward his family.

Paul is the youngest member of his immediate family. For this reason, he has little to no say in important decision-making. He has been forced to move to a new home, in a new town, and to a new school. Paul is attempting to find his place in the world as a son, younger brother, student, new kid, and athlete.

Think about the different roles you occupy and your specific place in the world. In the very least, you are like Paul in the sense that you, too, are a student. Sometimes it helps to know that you are not alone and that someone can relate to your experience. Write a letter to Paul telling him that you understand how he feels, and offer him a few words of encouragement.

Tangerine

Saturday, August 19

8. Paul's mom hastily dials 911, fully convinced that their house is on fire. The presence of smoke is all it takes for her to become completely irrational. She neither checks to see if any surfaces are hot nor actually sees any flames to indicate fire.

Recall a time when you acted irrationally. First, write a detailed description of this time. After you have completed your description, write a paragraph or two explaining things you could have done to make the situation better or at least acted more rationally.

9. It takes twenty minutes after Mrs. Fisher calls the fire department for a fire engine to arrive. Wayne's nonchalant disposition quickly irritates Mrs. Fisher. However, it is quite clear that he (along with the rest of the fire department) is accustomed to dealing with irate new homeowners.

Imagine that you are Wayne. You are back at the firehouse, and ten of the twenty minutes it takes you to get to the Fisher residence is spent in conversation with other firefighters. Write a dialogue that could have occurred during this time that reveals their feelings toward these routine phone calls from new residents.

Saturday, August 19, later

10. Mr. Fisher has kept newspaper clippings of Erik's football highlights. He is obviously proud of Erik's accomplishments and is keeping track of his older son's greatest moments. Though they haven't lived in Tangerine long, Paul can already imagine what attention his brother will receive in the press. Attention is something that Eric seems more accustomed to than Paul.

Think of someone you know who has done (or is currently doing) something noteworthy but has not received a great deal of attention for it. Next, write a brief newspaper article highlighting that person's deeds.

Tangerine

Monday, August 21

11. Paul considers the many ways his family members will make a difference in their new community. For example, his mother has plans to become a very active member of the Homeowner's Association, and Paul has no doubts that the group will change dramatically due to her influence. His father's work will make an impact for Tangerine's Civil Engineering Department. Erik, as everyone expects, will not only be a great player on the football team, but also its celebrity. However, he is less certain of his own success in doing so.

Think of a community that you belong to. Perhaps you belong to a sports team, an academic team, a service organization, or another functioning group with a common goal. Write suggestions that could be used in an introductory pamphlet for your organization that aim to stress the importance of both minor and major roles for its success. Be sure to include how these roles can be successfully filled.

12. After taking a tour of Lake Windsor Middle School, Mrs. Fisher asks Paul his opinion of it. Truthfully, neither is impressed. What was your first impression of your school's facilities? If there is something that you could change, what would it be?

Write a letter to your school's principal expressing your interest in improving your school in some way. You may first want to start by listing all of the positive things before going into what you would improve upon so your letter doesn't seem like one strictly of complaints. If there is an issue of particular importance to you, ask what things you and your classmates could do to help make the change.

Wednesday, August 23

13. Mr. Fisher's interest in Erik's success as a football player seems to be the underlying reason for his love of sports. However, many people feel that children's involvement in extracurricular activities, such as sports, is beneficial for their development. Participating in sports can be a fun way for children to learn the importance of teamwork and personal contribution.
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