

Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

Through the Looking Glass

by Lewis Carrol

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Through the Looking Glass

Chapter One – Looking-Glass House

1. Alice lists all of Kitty's faults. In a similar playful paragraph, write a list of your pet's faults. If you don't have a pet, you may write about a friend or sibling.

2. Alice uses personification to describe the snow:

I wonder if the snow *loves* the trees and fields, that it kisses them so gently?
And then it covers them up snug, you know, with a white quilt; and perhaps
it says 'Go to sleep, darlings, till the summer comes again.'

In one or two paragraphs, write a description of a different season of the year. Try to imitate Alice's imaginative description of winter, and make sure to use personification at least one time.

3. Alice describes the way her room looks in the "Looking-glass House." Find a large mirror in your home and, in one or two paragraphs, describe what the room looks like through the mirror. Remember that Alice could not see all of the room in her mirror. What parts of the room are hidden from your view when you look in yours?
4. When Alice goes through the looking glass, she remarks on how nice it will be to be able to go near the fire without anyone scolding her away, saying, "Oh, what fun it'll be, when they see me through the glass in here, and ca'n't get at me!"
Write about the three things you would most like to do if you knew your parents could see you but wouldn't be able to punish you for doing them.
5. In the Looking-glass House, the chess pieces come alive and are able to talk and move around the room. Think about your favorite board game. Suppose some of the pieces were able to talk and move. Write a conversation you might have with one of these game pieces.

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6. After reading *The Jabberwocky*, write a rhyming nonsense poem of at least eight lines. Make up the nonsense words you use yourself; if you like, borrow Carroll's technique of combining two words (for example, slimy and lithe) to make a third (slithy).

Chapter Two – The Garden of Live Flowers

7. No matter what path Alice tries, it twists and turns and takes her back to the house. Write about a time when you got similarly lost and couldn't seem to get where you wanted to go. Were you frustrated or did you enjoy the challenge?
8. Alice is surprised to find that the flowers can talk. If you could talk to any inanimate object, what object would you choose? Write a short interview that you might conduct with the object, asking the object at least four questions and having the object answer as you think it might. Carroll's flowers are somewhat snobby and condescending. In your interview, try to convey what sort of attitude and personality you think your object would have.
9. Not knowing what a crown is, the Rose says that the Red Queen wears "nine spikes" on her head. Imagine that the Rose doesn't know the proper words for any of the following, but has her own phrases for them. Invent the "names" the Rose might have for these: cleats, hooded sweatshirts, earmuffs, pantyhose, sunglasses, high-heeled shoes, and neckties.

Chapter Three – Looking-Glass Insects

10. Alice encounters a great deal of nonsense when she tries to get aboard the train without a ticket. For every word she or anyone else utters, a chorus of voices repeats the words and adds the phrase “is worth a thousand pounds...”

Some readers have argued that the chorus of voices represents the adults in Alice’s life who are constantly repeating the same stories and warnings to her, particularly about the value of certain things. Jot down at least three phrases that the adults in your life have said to you repeatedly. Why do you think they feel the need to repeat them? Is it annoying, effective, or both when they do so? Explain your answer.

11. The chorus of voices seems to be able to read Alice’s thoughts. At one point, Alice only thinks her responses and does not actually say them. Write a descriptive paragraph about someone who knows you so well that she or he seems able to read your thoughts. If you prefer, write about someone whose thoughts you feel *you* are able to read.
12. Whenever Alice describes an insect from her world, the Gnat adds to the insect’s name and describes an insect from the Looking-Glass world. In this manner, a horsefly inspires a rocking-horsefly, a butterfly a bread-and-butterfly, and a dragonfly a snapdragonfly. Make up the names of three more insects for the Looking-Glass world by adding, as the Gnat does, to names of insects from Earth. Then write brief descriptions of the new insects.

Chapter Four – Tweedledum and Tweedledee

13. Write an additional stanza to add to the poem about the Carpenter and the Walrus. You may place the stanza at the end or anywhere else in the poem you wish. For example, the following new stanza could be placed after the line “And whether pigs have wings” :

We are Oysters fresh from the sea,
And we are no fools;
The things you describe are wrong—
They break all the rules.
Yes, we are young and new
But even we went to school.

The second, fourth, and last lines of the 6-line stanza should rhyme. Be sure to indicate where in the original poem you would place your stanza.

14. Tweedledee says that Alice only exists as a part of the Red King’s dream. Over the centuries, a number of philosophers have suggested that humans have no way of knowing beyond a doubt that we ourselves are not simply pieces of a larger creature’s dream. Imagine that you are merely something in somebody’s dream. Describe the person or creature that might be “dreaming you.” Are you part of a good dream or a nightmare?

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15. The characters Tweedledum and Tweedledee are taken directly from the nursery rhyme at the beginning of this chapter. Because she knows the rhyme, Alice knows that the two will be frightened by a large crow and forget their quarrel.

Write a short one or two-page nonsense story (if you wish, Alice can be the main character) based on a nursery rhyme you learned as a child. For example, for the nursery rhyme

Hey diddle diddle
The cat and the fiddle
The cow jumped over the moon—
The little dog laughed
To see such sport
And the dish ran away with the spoon,

Your story might begin like this:

Alice emerged from the woods to see a strange sight. A black cat as large as a horse was sitting at a table having lunch with a 6-foot tall bass fiddle. The fiddle was having difficulty maneuvering his soup spoon between the thick strings covering his perfectly round mouth...