Middle School SEM-R Writing Prompts

1. Compare and contrast what you think the author wanted you to take away from reading this book, and what *you* found most relevant and important.

2. Describe at least one connection between this book and your own life. How did these connections help you to focus on and understand the events in the book?

3. Think of two questions you have about the protagonist that will help clarify what is happening in the book. How might finding the answers to these questions help you with understanding or enjoying what you are reading?

4. Explain how a character in your book reminds you of a friend or someone in your family. How might this connection shape your predictions about the choices the character makes throughout the book?

5. Create a new problem for the protagonist that is similar to a problem you once faced. How do you think the character would respond, and why?

6. If you were to choose a friend from the characters in the book, which one would you select? Why?

7. List characteristics that make a person likeable. Describe a character from the book that displayed (or did NOT display) these characteristics.

8. If you had been one of the characters in this book, would you have done anything differently? Why or why not?

9. What did you learn from the main character that might influence your own life?

10. To whom might you recommend this book? Is there a particular person or group that you think would enjoy this book? Why?

11. Compose a letter to the author of this book. What might you ask or tell him or her?

12. Which of the events in the book remind you of things that are happening right now in your life?

13. Think of a point in the book at which you felt your mind wandering from the text. Why do you think you became distracted? What were you able to do to regain focus?

14. Provide a rich, detailed description of what you visualize in your mind when you think of the main character.

15. Do you think the plot was believable? Why or why not?

16. Why do you think the book ended the way it did?

17. Would the main character be someone you would "hang out" with? Why or why not?

18. How does the personality of a character in the book contribute to his or her success or failure?

19. In what ways did the main character change from the beginning to the end of the book? What clues helped you come to that decision?

20. If you could change the behavior of any character, which character and what behavior would you change? Why?

21. What character in the story has the biggest problem? How did you arrive at your answer?

22. How would the plot of this book change if the story took place in another setting?

23. How does the setting of the book affect the main character and the choices he or she makes?

24. Did the story take place in a real location or a fictional one? If it was a real place, what aspects of the setting may have been invented as part of the story? If it was a fictional place, what aspects of the setting may have been "borrowed" from a real place?

25. Often, authors try to leave the reader with an increased understanding of some aspect of life through their writing. What message do you think the author is trying to tell you through this book?

26. What was the overarching theme in the book? What evidence from the text helped you to identify this theme?

27. What lesson does one or more of the characters learn that will help contribute to growth or change?

28. How is this book similar to or different from another book that you have read? Consider making comparisons based on some aspect of writing style or theme, not just elements of character or plot.

29. Describe a scene from the book that you would include in a commercial to entice others to read it. What would people see and hear as they watched your commercial for the book?

Nonfiction

30. What do you think is this book's contribution to the world? For example, does it offer an idea that might improve the world, or describe an important idea or change in the world in the past?

31. What new information did you learn that made you curious about this topic?

32. How effectively did the author present different perspectives on an issue in this book?

33. What would you suggest to improve this book? Why?

34. What perspective or point of view do you think the author conveyed on the topic? Do you think this point of view created *bias*? If so, what advice would you give the author to reduce the bias? If not, how did the author avoid conveying a bias?

35. What is the most important idea the author conveys about the topic? How does this compare with what *you* found to be most relevant and interesting?

36. Did this book spark your curiosity on the topic? If so, how? If not, what do you think was lacking in the book?

37. What information does the book provide on the background of the author or authors? What evidence of the author's expertise on the topic did you find in this information? What evidence did you find in the text itself? If more than one author wrote the book, why do you think their collaboration might have been important?

38. Describe how the information in this book added to your existing knowledge on the topic. How might what you have learned be linked to what you are or have been studying in other classes?

39. How were you able to find and focus on the information in the text that was new to you?

40. What is one big question you still have after reading the book? What steps might you take to find answers to your question?

41. How do you read a nonfiction book differently from a fiction book? Describe any strategies that you have found particularly helpful for comprehending nonfiction.

42. What sections of the book did you want to read first? Why?

43. Describe how the text formatting contributed to or hindered your understanding of the book.