

# Writing A Response

**S**tudents are often asked to share their responses to reading. Personal response writing calls on you to share your own analysis of a piece of writing and to explain why and how you have formed your response. A written response might also be called a reaction paper or a critique.

**To begin the process, you can do the following:**

Read the article more than once

Begin with a brief summary

Consider the relevance of the issues. Is there a controversy involved? What is important?

What background information do you need to know?

Think about your overall response to the piece. What are its strengths and weaknesses? To what extent does it affect you, interest you, challenge you? Refer to specific passages to support your thinking.

***To write a response, you can do the following:***

- ☞ evaluate the quality of the piece
- ☞ discuss how it makes you feel
- ☞ tell about similar experiences you have had
- ☞ tell why you would recommend the piece to others
- ☞ discuss your level of agreement or disagreement
- ☞ explore possible meanings
- ☞ extend the meaning further
- ☞ take issue with the author
- ☞ **ask lots of questions:**

Is there a debatable thesis?

Why does the author believe in his thesis?

Does the writer support ideas with convincing details?

Are the facts, reasons, examples accurate? Relevant?

Does the author reach conclusions or inferences?

Are they logical?

Has the author represented the situation fairly?

Does the author make assumptions? Which ones?

Does the author define and explain key concepts or terms?

Is there an emotional appeal?

The ideas for your response can come from your personal experience, your observations, classwork, other readings, television viewing, entries you make in journals, discussions with others, and so on.

When your teacher asks for a response to a reading, you may begin the paper with a short summary of the piece in one paragraph (maybe longer, if the reading is a substantial piece of work like a novel), but the response should be the major part of your paper.