

**C2-d: What was your first reaction to this text? Explain.
(fiction, nonfiction)**

Grade level: 1-3

Teaching tips: Sometimes I worry that students are not even aware that they are *supposed* to have a reaction to a text. They are very aware that their teacher may ask them about the theme or main idea, the sequence of events, or a character. But in this age of accountability, educators are much less likely to ask, “So, how did this book make you *feel*?” Or, “What was the first thought that came to your mind after you finished this book?”

The lack of attention to this affective dimension of reading makes me sad since, above all, we want students to find personal meaning in what they read. It’s that personal connection that leads to action: taking a stand on an important issue, fighting for a just cause, reading more to uncover additional answers.

In order for students to have a strong reaction to a text, they need to read something that evokes a strong emotion. The emotion can be positive or negative. But it should make them want to laugh out loud, cry, give someone “a piece of their mind,” hug the main character, etc.

It is also important to provide students with the language to express these reactions: Which words on the “Feeling Words” list (page 120) are the most powerful? A few possibilities to characterize a reaction might be: *thrilled, horrified, shocked, delighted, astounded, astonished, depressed, joyful, excited, disgusted, sick, relieved, or peaceful*.

Texts that encourage a strong emotional reaction

Primary

- *Allie’s Basketball Dream* by Barbara E. Barber
- *Big Al* by Andrew Clements
- *Coming on Home Soon* by Jacqueline Woodson
- *Mr. George Baker* by Amy Hest

Intermediate

- *Aunt Harriet’s Underground Railroad in the Sky* by Faith Ringgold
- *Baseball Saved Us* by Ken Mochizuki
- *Heroes* by Ken Mochizuki
- *Stealing Home: Jackie Robinson: Against the Odds* by Robert Burleigh
- *The Story of Ruby Bridges* by Robert Coles
- *When Marian Sang* by Pam Muñoz Ryan
- *White Socks Only* by Evelyn Coleman

Name: _____ Date: _____

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Strategy for reading

Think about how this text makes you *feel*. As you read it, do you find yourself cheering the character on, hoping she succeeds even when it looks like she will surely fail? Do the actions of the characters make you angry? Do they create some other feeling? Think of a word that describes how you are feeling as you read this text. Find specific places in the text that cause this reaction.

Strategy for writing

1. Tell how this text makes you *feel*.
2. Tell *why* it makes you feel this way.
3. Give one or two examples that *show* what you mean.

My first reaction to this book was _____ _____.
I felt this way because _____ _____.
Here is an example that shows what I mean: _____ _____ _____.