Zenzele Reading Log

Rationale: One way to increase your understanding of a novel is to keep a reading log while you read it. Essentially, a reading log is another way to annotate a novel. As you read Zenzele, I want you to stop at the end of each chapter and make an entry on loose-leaf paper. These entries will become your reading log for Zenzele.

Format: You should identify the chapter number at the top left of each page. You should divide each page of your reading log into two columns. Title the left-hand column, “Quotations.” Title the right-hand column, “Comments.” For each chapter your entry will have three required parts:

**1. Language:** In the left-hand column, **copy one sentence or section that uses strong**

**Imagery and/or figurative language (with page number, of course).** Don’t forget to

Use quotation marks correctly. In the right-hand column, explain what you like

About this quotation and why this quotation is important to the chapter.

2. **Lesson:** **What is the most important lesson that Zenzele’s mother wants her to**

**get from the stories she’s told her (and us) in this chapter?**  Often she clearly

states this lesson. Sometimes she only implies it. In the left-hand column, copy the lesson she states (with page number, of course). If the lesson is only implied, write the lesson in your own words in the left-hand column (with page numbers, of course). In the right-hand column, explain how the stories in the chapter fit the lesson.

3. **Personal Connection:** In the left-hand column, **copy one general statement or conclusion that Zenzele’s mother makes in the chapter that you either agree or disagree with.** Don’t forget to include the page number and to use quotation marks correctly. In the right-hand column explain why you agree or disagree with her comment.

Reading Log for Zenzele - Sample Entry

Chapter 1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Quotations | Comments |
| Language:  “I took up my ironing board, leaving you dancing to your chant of opportunities” (5). | I like the contrast of actions that set up the differences between the mother and daughter. The mother is ironing; Zenzele is dancing to music, however, she’s dancing to the opportunities she imagines are waiting for her at Harvard. Calling this a “chant” means it’s something she says over and over to her parents. This is exactly what Zenzele does in this chapter until her parents agree that she can leave Zimbabwe and go to Harvard. |
| Lesson:  “I have learned something in my awkward journey through womanhood. The lessons are few, but enduring...These are the stories that have made me what I am today. It is...an old woman’s privilege to impart her wisdom. It is all that I have to give to you, Zenzele” (5). | Her mother doesn’t seem to know how to talk to Zenzele because they seem to argue a lot or at least she says when she talks to Zenzele she feels “defeated” and “exhausted” (4). She wants to write down the stories she wants to tell Zenzele as a legacy. She doesn’t have money to leave her when she dies; she only has her wisdom that she gained from living. This fits the loving conflict between the two that’s shown in the dialogue throughout the chapter. |
| Personal Connection:  “I was often bewildered by the task of motherhood, that precarious balance between total surrender and totalitarianism” (3). | I really agree with her definition of motherhood. While I was raising my daughter and stepson, I constantly had to switch between making and enforcing the rules and totally surrendering to crises I couldn’t control. On one hand, I was all-powerful; on the other hand, I had no power. It was exhausting. |