

Sample Research Questions

Using a Template:

Many students find that using a template to develop their research question can be of benefit, especially if this is the first time they have written an analysis essay of this nature. One possible template is as follows:

How do/does XXXX function in YYYY?

In this model, the YYYY is the book(s) you have chosen to study. XXXX is a key concept, term, or idea, such as:

culture, race, gender, sexuality, internationalism, adaptation, genre, poetic devices, principles of visual design, folklore traditions, mythology, oral traditions, power, retelling, binaries, femininity, masculinity, science fiction, archetypes, narrative structures, adult/child relationships, motif, villainy, good/evil, animal characters, the gothic, uncanny, agency, narration, perspective, parody, dystopia, historical fiction considerations, word/picture interaction, war, disability, character, didacticism

Sample One Book Questions:

- How does Gail Carson Levine's *Ella Enchanted* shift the Cinderella story to offer a new interpretation of gender and relationships than other fairy tale retellings?
- What makes *Alvin Ho* a unique beginner reader series, and how does it engage conceptions of culture, gender, and disability in notable ways?
- How are Molly Bang's principles of visual design used to deepen understanding of culture and gender in the graphic novel *The Arrival*?
- How are contemporary conceptions of childhood challenged by exploring experiences of children in African in *A Long Walk to Water*?
- What problematic depictions of Native Americans are found in *The Indian in the Cupboard*?
- In what ways is gender challenged through the visual choices of the Babymouse graphic novel series?
- What key ideologies does Jacqueline Woodson engage in blending memoir and poetry in *Brown Girl Dreaming*?

Sample Questions that Compare Related Texts:

- How do picture book biographies about Harriet Tubman such as *Moses: When Harriet Tubman Led her People to Freedom* and *Minty: A Story of Young Harriet Tubman* present the concepts of history, slavery, oppression, and freedom in different ways?
- How is the concept of motherhood complicated in books such as *Becoming Naomi Leon* and *One Crazy Summer*?
- How is the figure of the cat used to explore adult/child relationships in *Coraline* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*?
- How do film retellings of *Peter Pan* offer differing portrayals of what it means to be an adult versus a child?
- How are commercialism and consumerism portrayed differently in the *Lorax* film and Dr. Seuss's original text?
- How do fantasy books like the Magic Schoolbus series differ in their presentation of science than nonfiction picture books offering similar information?
- How do Junie B. Jones and Ramon Quimby present childhood in different ways?
- What different portrayals of gender and culture can be found in survival tales like *Island of the Blue Dolphins* and *My Side of the Mountain*?

Sample Questions that Look For Patterns:

- How do picture books about immigration present the concept of the "American Dream" in differing ways?
- How are gender and sexuality portrayed in film adaptations of fairy tales marketed to young people?
- How do nonfiction picture books portray concepts related to science and scientists?
- What kinds of gender portrayals are offered in graphic novels featuring young female protagonists?
- How have picture books focusing on the middle-east changed in the last ten years?
- What does Nickelodeon's programming for preschool children reflect about adult's views of children of this age?
- How do different genres (verse novel, picture book, diaries, and time-travel narratives) present the Holocaust?
- How many of the Caldecott winners and honor books from the last ten years feature characters of color and/or focus on themes related to gender, culture, or diversity? What key themes to these books present or fail to offer effectively?