

Common Reader 2026 Rubric

Criteria	4 points - Exemplary	3 points- Accomplished	2 points- Developed	1 point- Beginning
Creative thinking - Think innovatively - create an innovative or unique idea, question, format, or product that pushes existing boundaries.	Extends an innovative or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge or knowledge that crosses boundaries.	Creates an innovative or unique idea, question, format, or product within existing boundaries.	Experiments with creating an innovative or unique idea, question, format, or product within existing boundaries.	Reformulates a collection of available ideas that represent a safe approach.
Connection to Theme - Makes meaningful connections to <i>What the Current Carries</i> , exploring change, movement, loss, belonging, resilience, identity, place, or other personal, social, historical, political, cultural, or environmental currents.	Makes a compelling and insightful connection to "What the Current Carries," exploring change, movement, loss, belonging, resilience, identity, place, or other personal, social, cultural, historical, political, or environmental currents in a way that deepens or expands the theme.	Makes a compelling and insightful connection to "What the Current Carries," exploring change, movement, loss, belonging, resilience, identity, place, or other personal, social, cultural, historical, political, or environmental currents in a way that deepens or expands the theme.	Makes an identifiable connection to the theme, although the relationship or significance is somewhat general or underdeveloped.	Makes a limited or unclear connection to the theme; the relationship between the work and the contest's central ideas requires significant interpretation by the audience.
Meaning & Impact - Brings ideas, experiences, images, or perspectives together in ways that create meaning and invite the audience to think, feel, question, or see something differently.	Brings ideas, experiences, images, or perspectives together powerfully and cohesively that creates new meaning and invites the audience to think, feel, question, or see something differently.	Brings ideas, experiences, images, or perspectives together effectively, creating meaning and a clear response or impression for the audience.	Makes meaningful connections among ideas, experiences, images, or perspectives, but their overall impact or significance is not fully developed.	Presents recognizable ideas, experiences, images, or perspectives, but connections among them or their intended impact are limited or unclear.
Craft & Composition - Uses the elements	Uses the elements of the chosen medium or form	Uses the elements of the chosen medium or form	Demonstrates developing control of the chosen	Demonstrates limited control or intentional use of

of the chosen medium or form intentionally and effectively to develop and communicate the work's ideas.	with exceptional intentionality and effectiveness. Creative choices work together cohesively to strengthen meaning, voice, mood, and overall impact.	effectively and purposefully. Creative choices generally work together to communicate the work's central ideas or experience.	medium or form. Some creative choices effectively support the work's ideas, while others may distract from or weaken the overall composition.	the chosen medium or form. Creative choices do not yet consistently support clear communication of the work's ideas or experience.
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