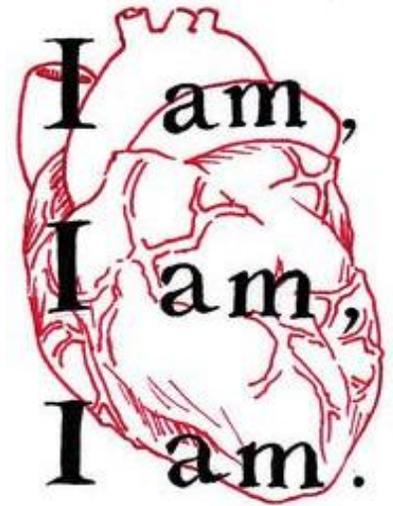


***The Bell Jar***  
**Reading Journal**  
**Options:**  
**a menu**



**Choose one for each chapter—you may repeat as often as you'd like, and you may combine/add to each journal in a way that is beneficial to you.**

**At the top of your page, before every journal, please write the necessary information:**

*The Bell Jar* Reading Journal  
Chapter \_\_\_\_, Option \_\_\_\_.

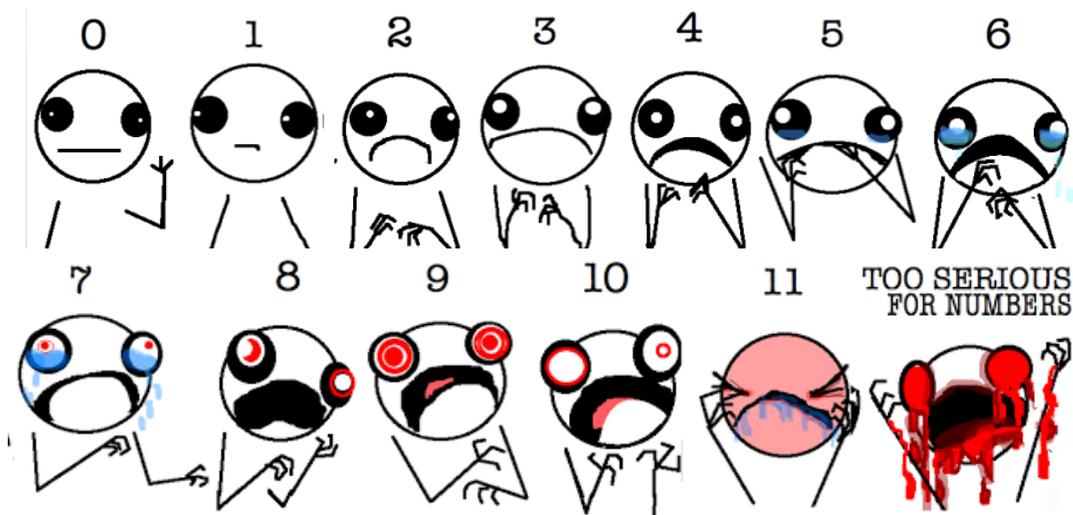
# OPTION #1

(Ms. Prokott's from last year)

## ***The Bell Jar: Image, Theme, and Esther's State of Mind.***

Do all three:

1. Make a list of vocabulary you had to look up and any historical or cultural references you needed to look up.
2. Write down three images from the chapter and offer a brief explanation of their significance (individually, or collectively).
3. Choose one of the mood/pain scale faces below and identify which best defines Esther at this time and **tell me why you chose that face.** Be specific. Take it seriously.



Note: I know these faces are comic in nature.

They are in no way meant to make light the struggles of our protagonist. They come from the blog *Hyperbole and a Half*, whose author suffers from mental illness and uses humor as a way to handle dark times. Sometimes, it's all you can do. ❤️

## OPTION #2

### ***The Bell Jar Found Poem.***

1. Construct a poem (at least 10 lines), using various images from the chapter. Do not simply record the images (and especially not the sentences); rather break-up/rearrange the images in a way that makes sense to the character, theme, or conflict of the chapter. Use line breaks in a practical way—don't just create a line break because the image ends there (i.e., you can (should?) break up images between lines).
2. Please add words to your poem so it is clear. While list poems are lovely, make it more than a list poem. The speaker of your poem may be whomever you desire, including an outside voice.
3. Give your poem a title that explains the theme or conflict the poem addresses.
4. In one or two sentences, tell me what you are “going for” so I understand that your poem has a purpose.

*Here's a sample from chapter one:*

#### **The Problem with Doreen**

The problem with Doreen  
is she's so white she looks silver  
or like a bright white cotton candy fluff—  
she carries pocketbooks made of the same material  
as her dresses, these lace jobs you could  
half see through. Tonight it's a strapless  
white lace dress over a snug  
corset affair. She lifts spoons to her mouth,  
which is a perpetual sneer, she's the eye  
of a tornado, she's the bride but the rest  
of the world is a wedding party with nothing  
but bridesmaids. I met her that queer, sultry  
summer—I wasn't steering anything,  
New York was mirage-gray, and the streets  
were hot. The problem with Doreen  
is that the city faded my tan, but Doreen  
smelled as strong as a whole perfume store.

I wrote this poem because I noticed in chapter one that Esther was preoccupied with Doreen. She thought about Doreen even more than herself, and the way she described herself physically versus how she described Doreen was complex...it was like at the same time she was somewhat critical of Doreen, she still wanted to be like her. I wrote the poem from Esther's point of view, and I rearranged the images so they were all about Doreen first and then just a little about Esther at the end. This emphasizes my point from earlier that more of Esther's preoccupations are about other people—she puts Doreen first.

## OPTION #3

### ***The Bell Jar: Character, Theme, Lenses, and Vocabulary.***

1. Divide your paper into four squares. Label them as follows:

Characters	Lenses
"Things I had to look up"	Themes

2. In the character box, you may write about one or all characters. Write statements such as:
  - I noticed this character... blah blah blah.. because...
  - This other character changed too, because...
    - Etc.
3. In the lens box, write down moments where you go *aha!* Or *ooo!* *That makes me think of \_\_\_ lens!*
4. In the "things I had to look up" box, write down what you had to look up and what it is.
5. In the themes box, identify any new themes that you encounter in the chapter or expand on themes you may have already seen. Express themes as full statements. (Remember that themes can be arrived at by answering the question "what is Plath saying about the human experience in this chapter"?)

## OPTION #4

### ***The Bell Jar: Literary Devices, Themes, Character Developments, Responses, & Predictions (choose three).***

#### **Literary devices:**

- a. As you read, make a list of at least five literary devices you see in the text and explain how they help your understanding of the text.

#### **Themes:**

- b. Identify any new themes that you encounter in the chapter or expand on themes you may have already seen. Express themes as full statements. (Remember that themes can be arrived at by answering the question “what is Plath saying about the human experience in this chapter”?)

#### **Character Developments:**

- c. Make a list of any significant character developments or conflicts in the chapter. (E.g., character vs. character—Esther vs. Buddy or character vs. society—Esther vs. female expectations)

#### **Questions:**

- d. Make note of any questions you’d like to pose to the class, big or small.

#### **Predictions:**

- e. Make note of any predictions you have about the book. (Do you think you spotted some foreshadowing?)

#### **World Relevance:**

- f. What did this chapter make you think of? Are there any personal connections you’re having with the setting, plot, or characters?

# OPTION #5

## ***The Bell Jar: Jigsaw Journal.***

1. Find a partner that you trust and who is a hard worker. Create a Google document with this partner that you are able to add to as necessary. After you each read your section, write a one or two sentence summary of the chapter in your own words.
2. Divide and conquer aspects to track for each chapter. **You will both track theme for each chapter**, but you will change up literary devices for the other chapters. Each partner will choose one of the following (in addition to theme) and take copious notes to show they are masters of the device:
  - symbolism/motifs
  - character development and conflict
  - imagery
  - literary device of their choosing

\*\*\*Remember to express themes as full statements. (Remember that themes can be arrived at by answering the question “what is Plath saying about the human experience in this chapter”?)

## OPTION #6

### ***The Bell Jar: Dialogue Document.***

1. Find a partner that you trust and who is a hard worker. Create a Google document with this partner that you are able to add to as necessary. Timing will be crucial to communicate with this partner, so make sure you are able to check-in throughout the night of assigned reading.
2. Each partner will pose a high-order open-ended question about the reading on the Google document, and the opposite partner will respond to the question in a decent paragraph in the same document. (Be sure to name who is doing what so when you print it I can clarify.)
3. After your partner has responded to your question, please write a follow-up response to them. You may agree, disagree, offer another example, or indicate further questions you now have.

**Example (this would happen twice in the journal with a question posed from each partner):**

Jean's question:

*Do you sympathize with Esther in this chapter? There are moments when I like her, and moments where I am really frustrated by her. Thoughts?*

Phil's response:

*I think Esther is struggling with blah blah blah here's my really smart response with direct references to the reading.*

Jean's follow-up:

*Yes! I totally agree with you because blah blah blah look at us we are so insightful! Doesn't this make you think of blah blah blah? I can't wait to talk about this in class! I'm so glad we have such great teachers.*

# OPTION #7

## ***The Bell Jar: What Do You Find Significant? (choose one)***

- a. Choose a critical lens to track throughout the whole chapter, and offer very specific examples of how that lens reveals itself. Afterwards, write a paragraph explaining what you've learned.

OR

- b. Choose a character (not Esther) and write a ½ page response from the point of view of that character. *Then* from *your* point of view, write a half page response to the chapter, making sure to include real-world connections and personal connections you have with the text. You could also do this as a letter to Esther.

OR

- c. Find a way to annotate the text fluently. Buy your own copy and write all over it, or buy a million Post-Its, write on them, and stick them into the book. (When you hand in your journal, you'll show the teacher your book.)

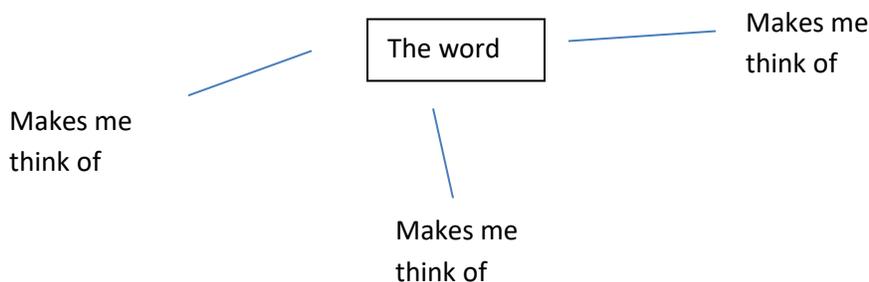
OR

- d. Make a list of all of the characters in the chapter, including Esther, and write down:
- A significant quote and explanation of why it matters
  - A paragraph response of the significance of that character to Esther in the text (e.g., is the character a foil, what are her conflicts with the character, how you predict her relationship with the character will develop, etc.)

OR

- e. As you read, make a list of the most striking images/word choices you encounter in the chapter. Choose your top three images, and *draw* them, beautifully (no sticks) in your notebook, or find images online that depict the same image. Or, if you prefer, choose three of the meaningful words from the text and free associate denotations and connotations of the word.

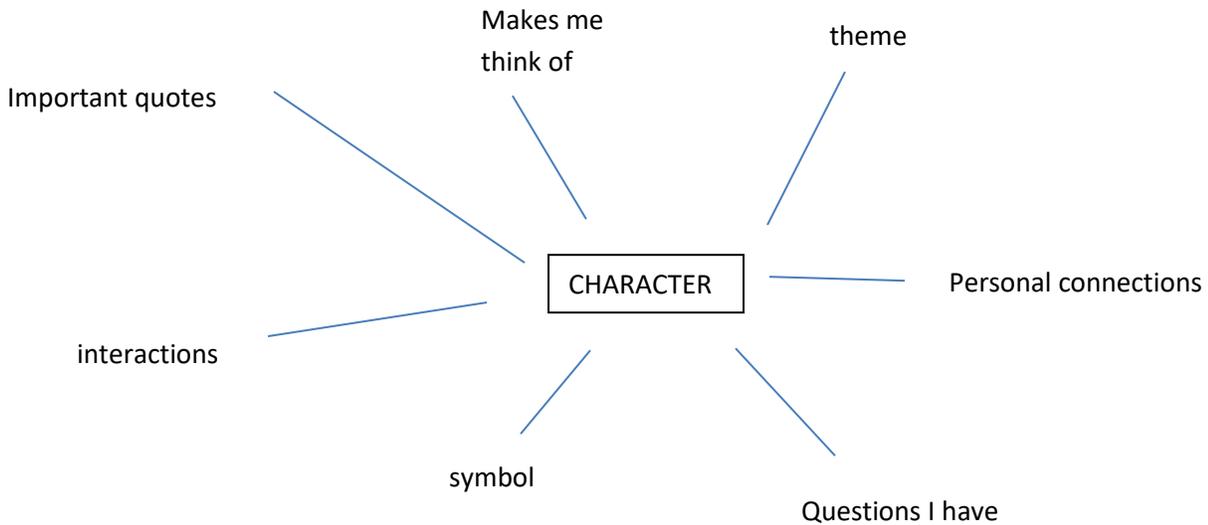
E.g.:



# OPTION #8

## ***The Bell Jar: Visual Representation/Charts (choose one).***

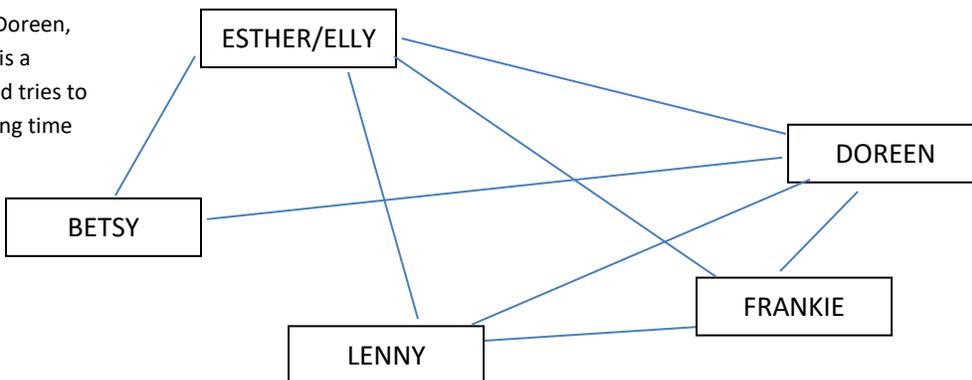
- a. Choose any character in the chapter and create a chart that connects that character to multiple areas. Do it like this:



OR

- b. Make a social map of the characters you see in the chapter. Indicate all of the relationships you see between the characters (you may also include prior chapters) and write a sentence about each connection. It might look something like this:

Esther, Like Doreen, thinks Betsy is a Pollyanna and tries to avoid spending time with her.



## OPTION #9

### ***The Bell Jar*: Rewrite the Text (choose one).**

- a. Choose one of the characters in the chapter (not Esther) and rewrite the significant events of the chapter from *that* character's point of view. Write the chapter in first person point of view—feel free to get into this new character's head and let us hear their voice.

OR

- b. Rewrite the chapter as though the setting is 2018. Choose key moments in the text and write them from 2018 Esther's point of view. Think about clear contemporary issues that she would consider; that is, add "slang", proper nouns, current events, etc.