Finding Nemo (sample) summer reading assignment

**Beginning passage:** “OK. I’m thinking of something orange, and it’s small..." — Dory

**Critical Response:** This quote was chosen because it demonstrates multiple personality traits that are vital to character development later on in the plot. When she is repeating this quote for the I Spy game with Marlin, we determine that she is oblivious to her impact of having short-term memory loss on those around her. Her innocence is what, later on in the story, helps her get genuine help from strangers. At the same time, this quote being repeated for the I Spy game is what triggers frustration out of Marlin. This provides a pivotal moment in the plot line where we get to see how he responds when others don’t think/process issues the same way he does. This connects to his internal conflict throughout most of the story. He struggles to understand why others don’t view situations the same way he does.

**Middle passage:** “When life gets you down, you know what you gotta do? Just keep swimming." — Dory

**Critical Response:** This passage directly links to the theme of the story. When she references to continue swimming, this is a symbolic moment. This is not indicating that you should literally dive in for a swim when times get tough, but that you should continue to press on and try to stay positive during difficult times. This theme begins building from the moment the character of Dory enters the story. She embraces her struggles with short-term memory loss from the moment we are introduced to her and tends to cope with it using humor. This theme progresses even into the ladder portion of the story and expands to support other characters.

**End passage:** “Nemo, newcomer of orange and white, you have been called forth to the summit of Mt. Wannahockaloogie to join with us in the fraternal bonds of tankhood!" — Jacques

**Critical Response:** This portion of the text is highly symbolic of the acceptance that all adolescent crave. It also helps support another theme developed in the plot line. Nemo began this journey by wanting so badly to fit in with those at his school. So, this leads to him changing his personality in order to defy his own father. The remainder of the plot line demonstrates him, along with many other characters, just trying to find a safe place to feel accepted for who they are. The moment Nemo goes through this ceremony in the dentist’s tank, it represents the fact that he can now regain his confidence due to the fact that he is no longer alone. The topic of acceptance can be viewed progressively throughout this plot line in these ways: Marlin wanting his son to accept him, Nemo wanting to feel supported and accepted while being different from others and his father, and Dory wanting to be accepted in spite of her short-term memory loss issues and the frustration around that.

**NOTES FOR STUDENTS:**

\*Please notice that I try to spend very little time telling you about what happened in this story, as I can assume you have already seen it.

\*Please note that I am not just including my opinion about the characters. Do not simply state that you selected a quote because you really liked it, or that you focused on a character because you feel like they are really nice/supportive/cool/etc.

\*Please note that I specifically focus on a literary element in each of my critical passages (1- character development, 2- theme, 3-theme). In addition to that, I don’t just mention the literary element and then move on. My entire paragraph is completely focused on elaborating on that literary element.

\*Feel free to use this as a guide. But, obviously, your content will need to fit for the summer reading book you read.