Screening Guide

As you screen *The Jazz Singer*, consider the following questions. Turn your screening guide in to me in class on Monday! You may type or write by hand, but there is no need for answers any longer than a short paragraph--try to focus your responses into pithy, succinct

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1.	Where, according to the film, is <i>The Jazz Singer</i> set? Why do you think the film is set here?	
2.	How does the film characterize, depict, or describe "jazz"? What does "jazz" mean to Jakie Rabinowitz/Jack Robin? To his father, Cantor Rabinowitz? Return to this question as you watch the entirety of the film. You might notice <i>where</i> Jakie is first caught singing "raggy time" tunes.	
3.	What elements distinguish Jakie from his father? What characterizes Jakie? How are Jakie and his father alike?	
4.	Notice the scenes when one moment cross-fades into another. What comparisons are being drawn? Return to this question as you watch the entirety of the film; in your response, point out as many of these moments as you can find, and suggest how we might read them.	

5.	What is the song "Dirty Hands, Dirty Face" about? Why might the lyrics be appropriate for the film at this moment? Look up the lyrics on the web. Are you surprised when Jakie speaks?
6.	On one level, the film is about a Jewish "jazz singer" who, on stage, dresses in blackface. How can we interpret this? What does it suggest about race, American-ness, identity, entertainment? Look up "minstrelsy" and "blackface" on the web to help flesh out your answer.
7.	In what ways is Jakie caught between two worlds? What are those two worlds, and who are the two worlds represented by? How does he resolve this conflict?
8.	The last song in the film is "Mammy," a sentimentalized and condescending term given by white America to a Black plantation mother—often someone who took care of white children. Why do you think the film brackets or frames Jakie's Jewish singing with the two "jazz" songs, "Mother" and "Mammy"?