

DIALECTICAL JOURNALS

The term “Dialectic” means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” Think of your dialectical journal as a series of conversations with the texts we read during this course. The process is meant to help you develop a better understanding of the texts we read. Use your journal to incorporate your personal responses to the texts, your ideas about the themes we cover and our class discussions. You will find that it is a useful way to process what you’re reading, prepare yourself for group discussion, and gather textual evidence for your Literary Analysis assignments.

PROCEDURE:

- As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column the chart (ALWAYS include page numbers).
 - In the right column, write your response to the text (ideas/insights, questions, reflections, and comments on each passage)
 - You must label your responses using the following codes:
 - (Q) Question – ask about something in the passage that is unclear
 - (C) Connect – make a connection to your life, the world, or another text
 - (P) Predict – anticipate what will occur based on what’s in the passage
 - (CL) Clarify – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction
 - (R) Reflect – think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense –not just to the characters in the story/author of the article. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work?
 - (E) Evaluate - make a judgment about what the author is trying to say
- Sample Dialectical Journal entry: Beyond the Yellow Highlighter

Sample Dialectical Journal entry: Beyond the Yellow Highlighter

Passages from the text-- Must quote at least 2 per reading assigned. Make sure to number them.	Pg#//	EACH Passage you Quote must relate to one of the following codes above. Make sure to use a variety. Using the same codes for most or all of your entries will result in a lower score.
1. "The yellow marks in my college textbooks...did not help me very much."		(C) I can relate since I often used to highlight what I thought was important and then end up with most of the page highlighted.
2. "Annotations do make me read a lot slower and I wish I didn't have to do them. It is so much harder to fake read if you have to annotate like we have to do now. So now I actually read, because it's too hard to fake annotate"	82/1 87/2	(C) It is harder to fake annotate--it almost takes more time. (R) People are prone to find the easy way to do something. Since there's really no easy way to annotate--fake or real--it makes sense to really read and think about the texts. (Q) Is it really harder to fake read if you have to annotate? Or does it just take longer?

CHOOSING PASSAGES FROM THE TEXT:

Look for quotes that seem significant, powerful, thought provoking or puzzling. For example, you might record:

- Effective &/or creative use of stylistic or literary devices
- Passages that remind you of your own life or something you've seen before o Structural shifts or turns in the plot
- A passage that makes you realize something you hadn't seen before
- Examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols or motifs.
- Passages with confusing language or unfamiliar vocabulary
- Events you find surprising or confusing
- Passages that illustrate a particular character or setting

RESPONDING TO THE TEXT:

You can respond to the text in a variety of ways. The most important thing to remember is that your observations should be specific and detailed. You can write as much as you want for each entry. You can choose to type and save your journals as PDFs or you can write by hand and then scan and save as PDF.

Basic Responses

- Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text o Give your personal reactions to the passage
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s) o Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences
- Write about what it makes you think or feel
- Agree or disagree with a character or the author

Sample Sentence Starters:

- o I really don't understand this because...
- o I really dislike/like this idea because...
- o I think the author is trying to say that...
- o This passage reminds me of a time in my life when... If I were (name of character) at this point I would... This part doesn't make sense because...
- o This character reminds me of (name of person) because...

Higher Level Responses

- Analyze the text for use of literary devices (tone, structure, style, imagery) o Make connections between different characters or events in the text
- Make connections to a different text (or film, song, etc...)
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s)
- Consider an event or description from the perspective of a different character o Analyze a passage and its relationship to the story as a whole

GRADING:

Advanced = Meaningful passages, plot, and quotation selections. Thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text; avoids clichés. Includes comments about literary devices such as theme, narrative voice (POV), imagery, conflict, etc. and how each contributes to the meaning of the text. Makes insightful personal connections and asks thought-provoking questions. Coverage of text is complete and thorough. Journal is neat, organized and professional-looking; student has followed directions in creation of journal.

Proficient = Less detailed, but good plot and quote selections. Some intelligent commentary; addresses some thematic connections. Includes some literary devices, but less on how they contribute to the meaning. Some personal connections; asks pertinent questions. Adequately addresses all parts of reading assignment. Journal is neat and readable; student has followed directions in the organization of journal.

Basic = Few good details from the text. Most of the commentary is vague, unsupported, or plot summary / paraphrase. Some listing of literary elements; virtually no discussion of meaning. Limited personal connection; asks few, or obvious questions. Addresses most of the reading assignment, but is not very long or thorough. Journal is relatively neat, but may be difficult to read. Student has not followed all directions for organization; loose-leaf; no columns; no pages numbers; etc.

Minimal = Hardly any good details from the text. All notes are plot summary or paraphrase. Few literary elements, virtually no discussion on meaning. Limited personal connections, no good questions. Limited coverage of the text; way too short. Did not follow directions in organizing journal; difficult to follow or read. No pages numbers.

Incomplete = Did not complete or plagiarized

(1) Points will be deducted on the TEXT side for failure to document accurately and completely according the model provided

(2) Points will be deducted on the RESPONSE side for superficial and / or incomplete responses.

Directions: In your dialectical journal, you are required to make a total of 15 entries (about 3 per act or an average of about 2 per reading). Please include the PAGE NUMBER AND SPEAKER.

IN YOUR JOURNAL SECTION, set aside about 5 pages of loose leaf and label them so that it looks like the columns on this page.

TEXT	RESPONSE