

Summer Reading 2018 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 text you read during the summer; the process of writing a dialectical journal will help you develop a better understanding of the text. It is a useful way to process what you are reading, prepare yourself for group discussion, and gather textual evidence for your in-class essay during the second week of school.

Procedure

- Use a spiral/composition notebook or neatly bound sheets of notebook paper, and create a t-chart on your paper. **Your dialectical journal MUST BE HANDWRITTEN.** Electronic copies will not be accepted.
- As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column of 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

You must have a minimum of 15 dialectical entries by the first day of the 2018-2019 school year. You will bring your completed assignment to class on the first day of school.

Sample Dialectical Journal entry: Beyond the Yellow Highlighter

Passages from the text-- Must quote at least 10 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." 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) I can relate since I often used to highlight what I thought was important and then end up with most of the page highlighted. (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?

Be sure to number
your 15 entries.

How do I know which passages would be good enough for my dialectical journal? Look for quotes that seem significant, powerful, thought provoking, or puzzling.

For example, you might record:

- Effective and/or creative use of stylistic or literary devices
- Passages that remind you of your own life or something you've seen before
- 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

How do I know what to write as a response in the right column of my dialectical journal? 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, but each of your responses should be a minimum of one complete sentence. ***More effort will result in a better grade.***

Basic Responses (earning a low B or C)

- ✓ Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text
- ✓ Give your personal reactions to the passage
- ✓ Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s)
- ✓ 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

Higher Level Responses (earning a B or A)

- ✓ Analyze the text for use of literary devices (tone, structure, style, imagery)
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Analyze a passage and its relationship to the story as a

whole

Sample Sentence Starters for Your Responses:

I really don't understand this because...

I really dislike/like this idea because...

I think the author is trying to say that...

This passage reminds me of a time in my life when...

This passage reminds me of the movie/song/TV show _____ because...

If I were (name of character) at this point I would...

This part doesn't make sense because...

This character reminds me of (name of person) because...

The author's use of _____ suggests that _____.....

The character's action suggests...

The characters _____ and _____ are similar/different because...

The author's description of _____ suggests...

This passage affects the novel's message because.....