

Dialectical Journals

A dialectical journal is a written conversation with yourself about a piece of literature that encourages the habit of reflective questioning. You will use a double-entry form to examine details of a passage and synthesize your understanding of the text.

❖ Completing your Dialectical Journal ❖

As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column of a T-chart (ALWAYS set up your quotes/use signal phrases and include page numbers).

In the right column, write your response to the text (ideas/insights, questions, reflections, and comments on each passage).

❖ Choosing Your Passages ❖

When should you write passages down?

- You notice details that seem important to you
- You have an epiphany
- You learn something significant about a character
- You recognize a pattern (overlapping images, repetitions of idea, details, etc.)
- You agree or disagree with something a character says or does
- You find an interesting or significant quotation
- You notice something important or relevant about the writer's style
- You notice effective use of literary devices
- Remember that quotations do not have to be dialogue!



❖ Responding to the Text ❖

- Each RESPONSE must be at least 60 words (include a word count at the end of each response).
- Write down your thoughts, questions, insights, and ideas while you read or immediately after reading a chapter so the information is fresh.
- Follow the guidelines established on the “Words of Doom” handout. (Yes, it is possible to discuss your personal reactions without using “I think.”)
- The most important thing to remember is that your observations should be specific and detailed.

❖ Things to Discuss... ❖

- 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
- Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences
- Compare the text to other characters or novels
- Write about what it makes you think or feel
- Argue with or speak to the characters or author
- Make connections to any themes that are revealed
- Make connections among passages or sections
- Make predictions about characters' futures
- Do **NOT** merely summarize or paraphrase the passage!!!

❖ Grading ❖

A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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, 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.
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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.
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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; no columns; no pages numbers; etc.
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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.
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did not complete or plagiarized <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't be lazy and do your own work!!!

❖ Additional Grading Information ❖

- Points will be deducted on the TEXT side for failure to document accurately and completely according the model provided.
- Points will be deducted on the RESPONSE side for superficial and/or incomplete responses.