

DIALECTICAL JOURNALS: 25 Entries Required

For a video tutorial, visit: bit.ly/SJEnglishClass //Click the “**Summer Reading**” tab

*Do not select a class period

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. Think of this as a way to guide your thinking as you read and record your questions and insights.

- 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). This passage should only be a sentence or two.
- 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.
 - Ex: Why would he betray his friend like that?
 - (C) Connect – make a connection to your life, the world, or another text
 - Ex: This reminds me of the song *Cry* by Kelly Clarkson. You never know who you can trust.
 - (P) Predict – anticipate what will occur based on what’s in the passage
 - Ex: I bet he didn’t really betray his friend. This is an act. They’ll work it out.
 - (CL) Clarify – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction
 - Ex: Ohh, I understand what was happening now. I was right. He never betrayed his friend, it just seemed like that because he told his dad all of his friend’s secrets.
 - (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 are? Reflections are usually *universal*.
 - Ex: Sometimes we have to break someone’s trust in order to help them. It’s hard, and sometimes it hurts, but that’s what love does.
 - (E) Evaluate - make a judgment about what the author is trying to say
 - Ex: I disagree with the author. He seems to think it’s okay to break a friend’s trust if you have a good reason, but I don’t. You just stabbed your friend in the back. You don’t ever have a good enough reason.

Make sure to use a **variety**. Using the same codes for most or all of your entries will result in a lower score.

Sample Dialectical Journal entry: *Beyond the Yellow Highlighter*

#. "Passage from the Text"	Pg#/Paragraph	(Code) Commentary
1. "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"	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?

Whenever you need to quote two parts of a long passage, but don't need what is written in the middle, you can use "..." to show that you left it out.

CHOOSING PASSAGES FROM THE TEXT:

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

- Effective &/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

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.

Responses

Basic Responses:

- 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:

*Try for at least 3 of these!

- 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

If you don't know where to start, here are some sentence starts that may spark a thought!

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...

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...