**Dialectical Journal Guidelines**

Dialectic means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” The “dialectic” was the method Socrates used to teach his students how to be actively engaged in the struggle to obtain meaning from an unfamiliar and challenging work. 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.

*There is to be NO collaboration with other students. Any assistance from the Internet, movies, or secondary sources such as SparkNotes or Shmoop will be viewed as cheating. If you have questions about format, e-mail me!*

**Instructions:**

1. Purchase a spiral-bound notebook or a composition book or create an electronic document.

2. Fold pages in half vertically or draw a vertical line down the middle of the page or create a two-column table/chart in Word, Pages, or Google Docs

3. Label the top of each column: left TEXT and right RESPONSE.

**In the TEXT column… In the RESPONSE column…**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| TEXT | RESPONSE |
| Cite passages verbatim from the novel, including quotation marks, author’s last name, and page numbers:  ***Ex. “Talking ‘bout life, Mama. You all always telling me to see life like it is. Well-I laid there on my back today . . . and I figured it out. Life just like it is. Who gets and who don’t get. Mama, you know it’s all divided up. Life is. Sure enough. Between the takers and the ‘tooken’” (Hansberry 95).***   * Choose **10 passages** from the entirety of your novel or play to explore. * Quotations do not have to be dialogue * What passages should you choose? * Details that seem important to you * You have an epiphany * You recognize a pattern (overlapping images, repetitions of idea, details, etc.) * You find an interesting or potentially significant quotation * You notice something important or relevant about the writer’s style * You notice effective use of literary devices * You see the author refer to other texts, myths, symbols, famous figures, historical events, quotations, etc. | Reflect upon the passages. Each RESPONSE must be at least **100 words** (include word count at the end).  ***Ex. In this passage Hansberry brings to light Walter Lee’s realization that he is on the wrong side of life – he is one of the “tooken.” Walter is portrayed throughout much of the play as a despairing man who sees no possibility of his dreams coming true and little hope for a successful future. While he is buoyed by Mama’s giving him $3,500 to invest in his business, he is devastated when Willie Harris takes off with the entire $6,500 Mama had entrusted to him. In these lines, Hansberry is showing the reality in Walter’s life and perhaps a sentiment echoed in the lives of other poor families: they feel they will never get ahead. (114)***   * Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text * Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character * Question a character’s motivation * Compare the text to other characters or novels * Argue with or speak to the characters or author * Make connections to any themes that are revealed to you * Make connections among passages or sections of the work * DO NOT MERELY SUMMARIZE THE PLOT * First person is acceptable in the RESPONSE column. |

4. Write down your thoughts, questions, insights, and ideas while you read or immediately after reading so the information is fresh.

5. As you take notes, you should regularly reread your previous pages of notes and comments.

Adapted from <https://ahs.pasco.k12.fl.us/wp-content/uploads/ahs/2018/05/AP-LIT-Summer-Reading-18-19.pdf>

**Dialectical Journal Rubric**

Critical Reader (detailed, elaborate responses)—90-100:

☐Extra effort is evident.

☐You include more than the minimal number of entries.

☐Your quotes are relevant, important, thought provoking, and representative of the themes of the novel.

☐You can “read between the lines” of the text (inference).

☐You consider meaning of the text in a universal sense.

☐You create new meaning through connections with your own experiences or other texts. You carry on a dialogue with the writer.

☐You question, agree, disagree, appreciate, and object.

☐Sentences are grammatically correct with correct spelling and punctuation.

Connected Reader (detailed responses)—80-89:

☐A solid effort is evident.

☐You include an adequate number of legible entries.

☐Your quotes are relevant and connect to the themes of the novel.

☐Entries exhibit insight and thoughtful analysis.

☐You construct a thoughtful interpretation of the text.

☐You show some ability to make meaning of what you read.

☐You create some new meaning through connections with your own experiences and the text.

☐You explain the general significance.

☐You raise interesting questions.

☐You explain why you agree or disagree with the text.

Thoughtful Reader (somewhat detailed responses)—75-79:

☐You include an insufficient number of entries.

☐Sentences are mostly correct with a few careless spelling and grammatical errors.

☐You selected quotes that may be interesting to you, but that don’t necessarily connect to the themes of the novel.

☐Entries exhibit insight and thoughtful analysis at times.

☐You make connections but explain with little detail.

☐You rarely make new meaning from the reading.

☐You ask simple questions of the text.

☐You may agree or disagree, but don’t support your views.

Literal Reader (simple, factual responses)—70-74:

☐You include few entries.

☐Entries exhibit limited insight or none at all.

☐You accept the text literally. You are reluctant to create meaning from the text.

☐You make few connections, which lack detail.

☐You are sometimes confused by unclear or difficult sections of the text.

Limited Reader (perfunctory responses)—below 70:

☐You include very few entries.

☐Very little effort is evident.

☐You find the text confusing but make no attempt to figure it out.

☐You create little or no meaning from the text.

☐You make an occasional connection to the text, and the ideas lack development.

☐Sentences contain numerous grammatical and spelling errors.