

DIALECTICAL JOURNAL

Dialectical means: “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by the exchange of logical arguments” (dictionary.com). A dialectical journal, then, is used to arrive at the “truth” of a text by analyzing quotations from that work and writing about them.

The Purpose:

- To identify significant pieces of text and explain/discuss their significance.
- To practice highlighting/annotating text and thinking about, digesting, summarizing, questioning, clarifying, critiquing, and remembering what is read.

How to Set Up Your Journal: *Quotation-Response-Visual*

- **Page 1:** Title page
- **Page 2:** Table of contents
- **Next pages: Quotation and Written Response:** choose a quotation from the novel that is 25+ words and respond to it. (See ideas under “What do I Write?”)
- **Next page(s): Visual Component:** These visuals need to cover an entire page and must connect to the quotation, the specific chapter, or an idea that the author continues to build upon. (These can be drawn, computer generated, can contain words and symbols). Remember: variety and originality is necessary.
- **Next pages:** Continue the same format for the next chapters: Quotation/Response/Visuals.

****To clarify, you need 12-15 quotes/12-15 responses/8-10 visuals****

Specifics:

QUOTATION REQUIREMENTS:

- Select **12-15 passages** from the novel. Each passage (quoted segment) must be at least twenty-five words and be cited following the MLA parenthetical referencing criteria (see my website). Include all significant parts of the quotation. Do not cut a passage off or begin in the middle of an important thought. Copy down each quotation and put at the top of each entry. Choose quotations that both interest you and make you think.

VISUAL COMPONENT:

- Find an important idea from the chapter and visually present this idea. Use drawings, cut outs, or create a computer generated photo collage etc.
- Think of ways to make the visuals connect more specifically to the novel. One idea is to add details, such as snippets of text to your visuals.
- Provide a brief, but detailed explanation of what you intended your visuals to do.

****Remember, BE ORIGINAL.** Avoid simply printing a picture of an actress who has played that role. Think in terms of symbolism and don't pick the first thing you Google!

WRITING COMPONENT: **Choosing & Explaining Significant Quotations**

- Your goal is to discern why some passages hold particular significance to the events, characters, and themes in the writing.
- **Written Responses: 300-500 words each** (include a word count at the end). Each written response goes below the quotation. Write something insightful about the quotation to demonstrate that you understand the significance of the passage. This process is an important to help you understand a piece of literature. By writing about

literature, you make your own meaning. When you do this yourself, then the text belongs to you– you have made it yours. The connections and interpretations you make are uniquely yours. **DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.** I want your ideas, not sparknotes!

- You will be evaluated on the depth and breadth (analysis) of your responses. Remember, style, organization, and mechanics count, as this is formal writing.
- The types of entries should include genuine responses to the text. This includes persuasive writing, personal reflection, discussion of literary techniques and qualities, and most importantly, what you think the author is trying to tell us.

What do I Write? These are formal paragraph responses of 300-500 words each (do not set this up as numbered Q&A please!). Write an analytical or personal response.

- **First:** Decide: am I writing a personal response or an analytical response?
- **Next:** Establish the context of the quotation. (What is going on? Who is speaking?)
- **Then:** Discuss & explain the quotation.
 - Explain why the quotation is an important part of the literature you are reading and to the world in which we live.
 - Consider how the quotation relates to one or more of the following: plot, character, theme, foreshadowing, symbolism, or other literary techniques. How/What does it add to the writing or our understanding.

Personal Response Ideas:

- Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text.
- Give your personal reactions to the passage / reflect upon them.
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s).
- Tell what the quotation reminds you of from your own experiences.
- Connect to issues in the text to today's world.
- Write about what the quotation makes you think or feel.
- Agree or disagree with the author or a character's decisions/actions.

Analytical Response ideas

- Make connections between different characters or events in the text.
- Analyze the behaviours of characters and how they impact others.
- Comment on the big issues within the text.
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s).
- Analyze a passage and its relationship to the story as a whole.
- Analyze the text for literary devices (tone, structure, style, imagery, foreshadowing, etc.) and their effect.
- Make connections to a different text (or film, song, poem etc....but make sure this is meaningful and has a point).
- Write a compare/contrast between the book and the movie, arguing the aspects that the director does well or where he/she misses the mark.
- Analyze how the conflict impacts the characters.
- Analyze how the scene reveals the theme

PRESENTATION: Make an appointment to present your project to your teacher.

