

Honors English 11 Dialectic* Journal

*The term *dialectic* indicates the tension between reader and text that occurs when students struggle to derive meaning from a difficult or unfamiliar work.

What is it?

The journal is a double-entry, note-taking process done while reading any genre of literature. It is an attempt to transfer a reader's interior monologue on paper by providing two columns which are in dialogue with one another, not only developing a method of critical reading but also encouraging habits of reflective questioning/thinking.

Why is it Important?

In the right-hand column, the reader "owns" or "comments" on important text that has been identified. The dialectical journal helps readers critically think about the text they are reading. By keeping a dialectical journal, students are brought to think "for themselves" about a text and offer their own interpretations.

How is it done?

Draw a line down the middle of a piece of notebook paper, thereby making two columns. The left column, labeled "concrete" is used for traditional note forms of direct quotations and citations or summaries. Thus, when the reader finishes, he or she has a summary of the material read.

The right column is used for commenting on the left-column notes. Here students record their questions, comments, and ideas next to the text that has piqued their interest. They analyze rhetorical conventions of the author's writing style, looking for effective use of sentence structure and diction.

Format for Dialectic Journal:

Name _____

Name of piece _____

NOTE TAKING	NOTE MAKING
(also known as: text references or identification)	(commentary on the reference; your thoughts)
<i>notes about your left column: reading notes, direct quotes, summaries, lists, images, w/page numbers included</i>	<i>notes about your right column: evaluations, judgments, comparisons, contrasts, analysis</i>
citation....(pp)	Why did I copy this passage or make this note? Why is it important to me? Is there a connection to other information? What can I infer?
citation....(pp)	commentary
citation....(pp)	questions, meaning
citation....(pp)	inferences