

AP Language and Composition Summer Reading Assignment Dialectical Response Journals

1. *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald
2. *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair

Dialectic means "the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer." For this summer assignment, you will complete dialectical journals for EACH novel to aid in your understanding of the stories as you read them, and to demonstrate that understanding to your teacher. Through these journals, you are essentially having a "conversation" with the text (jotting down ideas, insights, questions, and thoughts) and with yourself. Your goal is to make notes about points you think are significant, profound, noteworthy, ironic, emotional, rhetorical, etc. Write down reactions as they occur to you, and as long as they are honest, you can not be wrong. You will keep the journals for BOTH books in ONE standard composition book. Be prepared to hand-in these completed composition books in the first week of school. **YOU MUST HAVE AT LEAST 2 QUOTES FOR EVERY CHAPTER OF *THE JUNGLE*, AND 3 QUOTES FOR EVERY CHAPTER OF *THE GREAT GATSBY*.**

How to create a dialectical response journal:

- Draw a vertical line in the middle of each page of your comp. book
- At the top of the left column, write "Quotes from Text." At the top of the right column, write "My Commentary." You don't have to label these every page, but you should every 10 or so.
- As you read each chapter, complete the specified number of quotations. Put these, along with the page number in parentheses, in the LEFT column.
- In the RIGHT column, write down your response to that quote. This should be thoughtful, insightful, and mature.

Try to focus your reading and responses to literary qualities such as tone, organization, diction, syntax, symbolism, allusion, irony, theme, etc. Though you are not restricted to these devices...if you feel it has significance, respond to it...this is YOUR "conversation!" Try to be as specific as possible in your observations. Here are a few suggestions:

- Make a judgment about the character's actions.
- Look at the character's behavior based on his/her era
- Analyze the author's organization and its effect on the purpose
- Explore the use of specific language
- Discuss the author's tone toward various themes or characters
- Connect parts of the novel to modern circumstances
- Compare/contrast a character to other literary characters
- Show your understanding of the thematic significance
- Discuss the archetypal qualities of characters or themes.

If you have any trouble or questions, please contact Ms. Howitt (rm 201) at bhowitt@avhsd.org, or Mr. Speaks (rm 415) at jspeaks@avhsd.org Please DO NOT come to an advanced class without this assignment completed and expect to have a successful year!

We look forward to hearing your thoughts on these books. Enjoy!!

■ Your AP Language and Composition Teachers

Sample from *To Kill a Mockingbird*

Quotes from Text	My Commentary
"...as I read the alphabet a faint line appeared between her eyebrows, and after making me read most of <i>My First Reader</i> and the stock market quotations from the <i>Mobile Register</i> , she discovered that I was literate and looked at me with more than faint distaste. Miss Caroline told me to tell my father not to teach me anymore, it would interfere with my reading." (p 21)	The novel takes place during the Depression, a time when kids have little to look forward to and it is sad that Miss Caroline does not seem to understand that she could really help them. She singles kids out for mistreatment and doesn't try to inspire them. Adults during the Depression had to have been afraid of losing their jobs and feeding their own children. Perhaps Miss Caroline is so harsh because she is afraid of losing control of her class and then losing her job. Fear can make people react to their surroundings and situations instead of acting rationally. The characters here have a lot of fear...poverty, failure, other races.

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