

Dialectical Journal

The “dialectic” was the method Socrates used to teach his students how to be actively engaged in the struggle to derive meaning from an unfamiliar and challenging work. In a dialectical journal, students divide their paper into two columns. One column is labeled TEXT; the other RESPONSE. As you read, you identify certain passages that cause you to stop and respond to what you are reading.

Example

Black Like Me by John Howard Griffin

TEXT (1 point)	RESPONSE (3 points)
<p>“How else besides becoming Negro could a white man hope to learn the truth? Though we lived side by side throughout the South, communication between the two races had simply ceased to exist” (Griffin 1).</p>	<p>This made me wonder if you can accurately understand someone unless you become them. After some thought, I discovered that there are no other ways in which you completely understand another person. Although I have lived in the same house with my sister my whole life and I feel as though I know everything about her, when I talk to people I do not know I always realize little things that I</p>
<p>do not know or understand about her. (79 words)</p>	
<p>“The completeness of this transformation appalled me. It was unlike anything I had imagined. I became two men, the observing one and the one who panicked, who felt negroid even into the depths of his entrails” (Griffin 11).</p>	<p>In many movies and books, people wake up and realize how old they truly are. I think that the people this happens to feel the same as Mr. Griffin does because he feels that he is still a white man; but when he looks in the mirror, he notices that his skin color disagrees with his thoughts. Likewise, some people feel they are still young, but they are trapped in a body of a person who looks too old or too different to be them. (85 words)</p>

You will use the model above to create your dialectical journal, and your teacher will use this model in evaluating your work. Please notice in the TEXT column, you cite verbatim passages from the novel and include quotation marks and page numbers according to the prescribed format.

For the RESPONSE column, you have several ways to respond to a text:

- 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
- Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences
- Write about what it makes you think or feel
- Argue with or speak to the characters or author

You are required to have at least six (6) passages with corresponding responses. Be sure the 6-10 passages are representative of the entire story. In other words, six passages taken only from the first half or even the last half of the story will not be acceptable.

Points will be deducted on the TEXT side for failure to document accurately and completely according to the model provided. Points will be deducted on the RESPONSE side for superficiality and incompleteness. Each response must be at least 30 words in length.

Model from Siddhartha:

<p>Narrator about Siddhartha's thoughts:</p> <p>"Siddhartha had begun to feel the seeds of discontent within him. He had begun to feel that the love of his father and mother, and also the love of his friend Govinda, would not always make him happy, give him peace, satisfy and suffice him. He had begun to suspect that his worthy father and his other teachers, the wise Brahmins, had already passed on to him the bulk and the best of their wisdom, that they had already poured the sum total of their knowledge into his waiting vessel; and the vessel was not full, his intellect was not satisfied, his soul was not at peace, his heart was not still"(5).</p>	<p>This quote highlights an INTERNAL CONFLICT with the main character, Siddhartha. With such words as "discontent" and "would not satisfy and suffice" the narrator conveys the need of the main character. This also shows that the narrator, who is speaking in 3rd person, can get into Siddhartha's head and tell us exactly how and what he feels.</p> <p>The symbol of the "seeds of discontent"... as if they would grow, or his discontent will grow in the future. I feel the anticipation in the imagery.</p> <p>I also like the symbol of the "Vessel"... it seems to be a Hindu/Indian object that is culturally significant, but also a universal ARCHETYPE for fulfillment. His vessel is "waiting", which shows that he is hungry for knowledge and experience, which makes me think that his journey will start soon.</p> <p>Lastly, I like that the narrator highlights that his intellect (mind), his soul (spirit) and heart (body) are not satisfied, at peace, or still.... It's repetitive (the #3) and it serves as a symbol for the dissatisfaction of the whole person. (175 words... 75 to 100 are minimal standard)</p>
<p>In his dream, the bird, which usually always sang at this morning hour, remained silent; and, since this attracted his attention, he stepped up to the cage and looked in; the little bird was dead, and lay rigid on the floor cage. He took it out, weighed it in his hand for a moment, and then threw it away, out into the lane; and, at the same moment, he received a terrible fright, and his heart ached as if he had cast away everything valuable and good from himself together with that dead bird (44)</p>	<p>Siddhartha has been experiencing the world of carnal and pointless pleasure; he has become addicted to gambling and sexual pleasure and the things in life that helped him get those pleasures. He is no longer Siddhartha, but a confused and self hating person. He realizes he is going nowhere in life and he is never going to achieve any of his goals by living this way, and so he sets out after having this terrible dream. After he left, Kamala realizes that she is pregnant and closes herself and her pleasure garden to any outside visitors. Why is he so addicted to all of this? How has he let himself get this far away from his goals? Does Kamala realize this?</p>
<p>From <u>Julius Caesar</u>: Flavius: Disrobe the images, if you do find them deck'd with ceremonies. Marullus: May we do so? You know it is the feast of Lupercal. Flavius: It is no matter; let no images Be hung with Caesar's trophies. (I.i.66-71)</p>	<p>Flavius and Marullus are angry because the common people (citizens of Rome) are having a feast in Caesar's name. They feel that any feast, where a hero is honored, should be in the name of the great Pompey. Marullus and Flavius search the streets of Rome and take down any decorations that honor the celebration of Caesar's "victory", feeling that is disrespectful for the city to not have had a feast in the honor or Pompey's victories.</p>