

The Awakening by Kate Chopin
AP Literature Summer Homework
Dialectical Journal Assignment

For AP Lit summer homework, you will be reading *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin and writing a dialectical journal. You may read any edition of the novel.

Links for the novel and other important information can be found on my NCHS website under AP Literature Summer Homework. You will find a dialectical template, a sample entry, as well as lit terms and helpful links.

The Awakening, novel by Kate Chopin, published in 1899.
Summary written by: Jinan Joudeh
Source: Britannica.com

When first published, the novel was considered controversial because of its frank treatment of both adulterous love between a married woman, Edna Pontellier, and an unmarried younger man, Robert Lebrun, and the subject of female sexuality. In fact, it was initially met with condemnation and outrage, forcing its author into financial crisis and literary obscurity.

Coming back from this apparent literary death-at-birth, the effects of this novel live on, inveterate and relentless. Now widely read, *The Awakening* is critically acclaimed as an American version of *Madame Bovary*. When Pontellier finds her position as young wife and mother in New Orleans unbearably stifling, her refusal to go by the laws and mores of society drives her up against a world at once disapproving and uncannily precognizant of her struggles, in a provoking and often progressive critique of marriage and motherhood in Creole society.

Chopin provides a startling account of what it might mean to "awaken" into a better understanding of one's position. The novel invites us to wonder if it might not be better to carry on "sleeping" through life, as well as dealing with the complicated ways in which different kinds of "production" and "destruction" merge with one another. Chopin's subject matter and observations are engrossing and, in many respects, ahead of their time. But what is most remarkable about *The Awakening* is the way in which it forces us to think about the very notion of time, of being ahead or outside of one's time, and of the time of reading. Reading, like awakening, is identified with a strange present; here the reader is left uncertain whether the awakening is still happening or, perhaps, has not yet begun.

You will be writing a dialectical journal as you read the novel. The term "Dialectic" means "the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer." Think of your dialectical journal as a series of conversations with the text. The process is meant to help you develop a better understanding of the texts we read. Use your journal to incorporate your personal responses

to the text and your ideas about the themes. You will find that it is a useful way to process what you're reading, prepare yourself for group discussion, and gather textual evidence.

PROCEDURE:

- As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column of a T-chart (*ALWAYS include page numbers*). Include the context of your quote and label it.
- In the right column, write your response to the text (ideas/insights, questions, reflections, analysis, and comments on each passage).
- Connect to the essential questions for the text
- The ratio between text and response should be 1:3; for every line of text, students should prepare three lines of explanation.
- You need at least twenty passages/responses. Space them out evenly throughout the text.
- Dialectical journals should be printed out and turned in on your first day of AP Lit. You will also be required to submit your journal to Turnitin.com. Details will be given in class.

RESPONDING TO THE TEXT: You can respond to the text in a variety of ways. The most important thing to remember is that your observations should be specific and detailed.

- 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(s)
- Agree or disagree with a character or the author

Higher Level Responses

- Analyze the text for use of literary devices (tone, structure, style, imagery)
- Make connections between different characters or events in the text
- Make connections to a different text (or film, song, etc...)
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s)
- Consider an event or description from the perspective of a different character
- Analyze a passage and its relationship to the story as a whole

Also connect to the following essential questions in at least 8 or more of your entries.

- What thematic issues does the text raise? How are these issues resolved?
- How do the various literary elements of *The Awakening* -plot, character development, setting, tone, diction, images, themes, etc.-both create and reinforce the text's meaning?
- How does *The Awakening* illuminate the traditional roles and expectations of women? How does it support them? How does it undermine them? What effect does this have on the text as a whole?

- How do the historical events of the Victorian Era and the preceding Romantic Era affect the plot points of the novel?

