

# **Summer Assignment: AP Lang & Comp**

## **Dialectical Journals**

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 texts you read. The process is meant to help you develop a better understanding of the texts as you read them. Use your journal to incorporate your personal responses to the texts, your ideas about the themes, and your evaluations of the texts’ rhetoric. You will find that it is a useful way to process what you are reading, prepare yourself for group discussions, and analyze the way the authors present their ideas and arguments. We will continue to use this format throughout the course as we engage with additional texts.

### **DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR ASSIGNMENT:**

- Select a nonfiction title from the provided list as your summer read.
- As you read, annotate your selection to help you choose passages that stand out to you.
- Record selected passages in the left-hand column of the chart – be sure your quotation is EXACTLY as it is written in the original text and use quotation marks. Use ellipses (...) to indicate any portion of the original text left out.
- ALWAYS include page and paragraph numbers in the middle column.
- In the right column, write your response to the text (ideas/insights, questions, reflections, and comments on each passage).
  - You must label your responses using the following codes:
    - **(Q) Question** – ask about something in the passage that is unclear
    - **(C) Connect** – make a connection to your life, the world, or another text
    - **(P) Predict** – anticipate what will occur based on what’s in the passage
    - **(CL) Clarify** – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction
    - **(R) Reflect** – think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense – not just to the characters in the story/author of the article. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work?
    - **(E) Evaluate** - make a judgment about what the author is trying to say
    - **(A) Analyze** – explain how the author is using rhetoric and language to make point and persuade the audience
- Your dialectical journal should have at least 20 well-developed entries and cover the entire book.
- Dialectical journals must be typed. Using the format shown in the examples.
- Your journal should be completed prior to the first day of class. You will be required to submit your Dialectical Journal to Google Classroom during the first week of school for a grade. Refer to the included rubric for information over grading.

## Sample Dialectical Journal entries

**Title:** *A School of Our Own: The Story of the First Student-Run High School*

**Author(s):** Samuel Levin & Susan Engel

Quotation From the Text You will need at least 20 entries	Page #/ Para #	Your Response w/code from list (ideas/insights, questions, reflections, and comments)
1. "...this had always been the case: mostly not very good teachers, mostly quite boring classes, but one or two life preservers to keep me afloat."	5/2	<b>(C)</b> Like Sam, I find this pattern in my own life having those couple gems who keep my sanity in check. It is those couple classes and teachers that allow me to allow me to still find joy in school, despite seeing it as a burden most of the time, which I find quite devastating. Ever since I was young, I have always enjoyed learning new things and expanding my knowledge on even the most random of concepts, but as I have gone through the years of school, I have slowly noticed myself hating it more and more and simply doing it for the grade.
2. I loved the farm...I loved sliding open the big red doors...I loved walking deep into the back fields...I loved...I loved...I loved the mornings..."	5/4, 6/1	<b>(A)</b> By incorporating anaphora as he repeatedly begins consecutive sentences with the phrase, "I loved...", Sam shows his small joys in life away from his high school environment. These parts of the day that make life good play a sharp contrast compared to the mediocre hours spent at school that he later describes. Along with his contrast comes an emphasis on the need for a reformed school system that has been seen to suck the life out of even the most dedicated student, further supporting his entire idea that he presents of creating his own student run school.
3. "...most parents and teachers readily agree that by the time our kids are somewhere around twenty years old...we want them to be independent. Yet, strangely, as Sam began to notice during his junior year, we want them to acquire all of those skills without giving them much more practice at any of it while they are in school."	8/4	<b>(Q)</b> If parents and teachers "readily agree" that they want students to be independent, but realize that the current school system is not effectively allowing that completely succeed in that, why haven't things already been changed?
4. "What I saw around me, what made me so mad, was that most of my friends were struggling...They didn't care about anything they were learning...Most of what we were learning was boring. Or even if the subjects matter itself was interesting, the way we learned it turned it into something lifeless and dull."	11/2	<b>(E)</b> Schools have turned the most capable students into the least motivated simply with methods of teaching that ineffectively excite the youth about learning. Teachers turn going to school and delving into knew material as a burden that seems to be never ending. This continually weak system is what creates "senioritis" and the dreading of a further education that has become so important for

		success in future life. Without doing something to attempt to bring learning to a more positive light universally, high school and future careers of students could be put at stake.
5. "Expertise, it seemed to me, was like anything else. It required practice. Yet we were being flung into the game of life without so much as a scrimmage."	30/2	<b>(R)</b> Unrealistic expectation put on people concerning all different aspects of life not only pertaining to education and career mastery, but also things like and athleticism, are what lead to many people's breaking point. It is commonly known that even with raw talent, practice is absolutely essential for success and expecting one to excel without such just creates unhealthy mental conditions that seem to consume so many nowadays.
6. "...Angela Duckworth, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, published an exciting new study showing that self-discipline, rather than intelligence, was the predictor of success in high school...that effort was more valuable than intrinsic ability."	31/4	<b>(P)</b> Because independence is most likely going to be a very key part of Sam's student run school, it will be essential for students to have this determination and grit to succeed in the new program. Without these things, it would be very difficult to partake in projects and other school work with an outside force pushing one to get things done eliminated. Education will be completely in the student's hands, and the student's fault if it falls to pieces. Therefore, without the right appreciation and motivation the success for that particular individual will fall short.
7. "Because the students would be in charge, they would be engaged, they'd discover real responsibility, and they'd be empowered by their newfound ownership of their school... they would discover and practice mastery. The would also get to work on something that truly excites them..."	45/1	<b>(CL)</b> I was right to predict earlier that independence and control over one's own education would be a primary part in the creation of Sam's student run school. In previous chapters, he stressed so greatly that one of the most significant reasons so many students seem to be unmotivated and discouraged is because of their feeling of no control in their education. Sam realized that it is very difficult to want to try to be successful at and be passionate about something you are being forced, by law, to take part in. Now he is able to reform this part of the American school system with a school of his own. Additionally, he addressed how widely understood it is that gaining skills that will later help with successfully living independently is essential for future life. Because schools failed to provide the education of such skills, the author strived to create a school that allows his graduated to know what it takes to be independent.

### CHOOSING PASSAGES FROM THE TEXT:

Look for quotes that seem significant, powerful, thought provoking or puzzling. For example, you might record:

- Effective &/or creative use of stylistic or rhetorical devices (*see list*)
- Passages that remind you of your own life or something you have seen before
- Structural shifts or changes of rhetorical mode (*see list*)
- A passage that makes you realize something you had not seen before
- Examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, words.
- Passages with confusing language or unfamiliar vocabulary
- Information you find surprising or confusing
- Passages you strongly agree or disagree with

### 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***. Your entries should be insightful, show evidence of authentic thought, and . While you may begin with initial annotations, entries themselves must be typed.

#### Basic Responses

- 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
- Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences
- Write about what it makes you think or feel
- Agree or disagree with the author

#### Sample Sentence Starters:

I really don't understand this because...

I really dislike/like this idea because...

I think the author is trying to say that...

This passage reminds me of a time in my life when...

This part doesn't make sense because...

The author is trying to .....

#### Higher Level Responses

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

## Rubric for Dialectical Journal

### Critical Reader (detailed, elaborate responses)—**90-100:**

- Extra effort is evident.
- You include more than the minimal number of entries.
- Your quotes are relevant, important, thought provoking, and representative of the big ideas of the text.
- You can “read between the lines” of the text (inference).
- You consider meaning of the text in a universal sense.
- You create new meaning through connections with your own experiences or other texts.
- You carry on a dialogue with the writer. You question, agree, disagree, appreciate, and object.
- Sentences are grammatically correct with correct spelling and punctuation.

### Connected Reader (detailed responses)—**80-89:**

- A solid effort is evident.
- You include an adequate number of legible entries.
- Your quotes are relevant and connect to the big ideas of the text.
- Entries exhibit insight and thoughtful analysis.
- You construct a thoughtful interpretation of the text.
- You show some ability to make meaning of what you read.
- You create some new meaning through connections with your own experiences and the text.
- You explain the general significance.
- You raise interesting questions.
- You explain why you agree or disagree with the text.

### Thoughtful Reader (somewhat detailed responses)—**75-79:**

- You include an insufficient number of entries.
- Sentences are mostly correct with a few careless spelling and grammatical errors.
- You selected quotes that may be interesting to you, but that don’t necessarily connect to the big ideas of the text.
- Entries exhibit insight and thoughtful analysis at times.
- You make connections, but explain with little detail.
- You rarely make new meaning from the reading.
- You ask simple questions of the text.
- You may agree or disagree, but don’t support your views.

### Literal Reader (simple, factual responses)—**70-74:**

- You include few entries.
- Entries exhibit limited insight or none at all.
- You accept the text literally.
- You are reluctant to create meaning from the text.
- You make few connections which lack detail.
- You are sometimes confused by unclear or difficult sections of the text.

### Limited Reader (perfunctory responses)—**below 70:**

- You include very few entries.
- Very little effort is evident.
- You find the text confusing, but make no attempt to figure it out.
- You create little or no meaning from the text.
- You make an occasional connection to the text, and the ideas lack development.
- Sentences contain numerous grammatical and spelling errors.