

Ms. Rivard
PreAP
Room 497

Directions for the Dialectical Journals

Dialectical relates to the process of logical discussion used to determine the truth. A dialectical journal is your record of your thoughts as you read your search for both the truth of the book and *your* truth as a thinking and feeling person. As a good reader, you question and assess what you read, holding it up against what you already know about people and the world. Your dialectical journal is your opportunity to show me how well you think as you read.

- § Choose eight quotations that made you think. Make sure that they are from the beginning, middle, and end of the book. Do *not* choose excerpts that a website suggests is important. Determine what is important for *you*. (Remember that I have a computer, too.)
- § Please note that a quotation can be narration, not just dialogue.
- § Fold sheets of lined paper in half and staple them together. Provide the excerpt and page number on one side and your comments on the other. If the quotation is long, you may use ellipsis (. . .). Write as neatly as you can and please use ink. I do not object to crossing out; it tells me that you rethink and proofread; however, do watch your spelling, punctuation, and grammar. (This will be my first impression of you.) You may type your journal if you prefer.
- § Tell me what struck you about the excerpt. Did it help you understand something that was mentioned earlier? Or did it confuse you? Did you disagree with the author? (In what way?) Did it allow you to make a prediction? Did you connect it with your own life? Provide a variety of comments. Do not, for instance, just ask questions.
- § About connecting it with your own life: be sure to tell me how it enlarges your understanding of the book. One of last year's reading was about a young child with cancer. Many students wrote that they had a grandparent with cancer. I needed to hear how they connected that with the child. Did they think that it was easier for a child because she could not imagine her own death? Or would she perhaps be more scared?
- § Your response should be at least 2-3 sentences long and may be much longer.

I believe that most of you have read *To Kill a Mockingbird*. I have therefore included an example of a dialectical journal from the website of another teacher, Julie Gerding. (You, of course, will not be commenting every couple of pages.)

Remember that you need a journal for each book and that the books must be from the list in my letter to you. Be sure that one is fiction and one nonfiction.

Please email me if you have any questions: rvivard@fallriverschools.org.