

Analytical Journal Response (from prose).

As you read your novel or play, look for passages that interest you, bother you, make you angry, or bore you to tears. Look for examples of characterization, setting, symbolism and interesting (or non-interesting) language. These journal entries will be due when you return to school in August.

Prepare 10 dialectical reading journal entries on a novel. A dialectical journal is an interaction between you and the written word. Divide your paper in half the long way. On the left, write out the section of the text to which you are responding, with the page number. **DO NOT WRITE ONLY THE PAGE NUMBER!** Write out the exact words. In the right hand column, respond to the author's words. Your response should consist of at least five sentences and must show a thoughtful connection to the chosen text. You might want to comment on diction, syntax, setting, character development, symbolism, or any other aspect of the text. Avoid general comments such as "The diction is nice and flows smoothly." Work to make your responses specific and relevant.

SAMPLE ENTRY:

"The moonlight in the yard was getting more and more bright. The lights in the camp looked dim and there were black shadows from the barracks. There were four big steps up to the mess hall and they were in shadow too. There was a little bulb over the door and it was swinging and creaking in the freezing cold. And there was a kind of rainbow around all the lights but it was hard to say if it was from the frost or because they were so dirty." (page 160).

This graphic example of setting demonstrates the frigid and bleak conditions under which the prisoners labored. The "moonlight" creates "black" shadows, harsh and cold. The contrast between the bright snowy landscape and the prison camp in "shadow" suggests prisoners live a black and white, half existence. The image of "dirty frost" furthers the idea that in this environment, even something as lovely as a moonlit landscape can be hard and lonely when you have little hope.

2000/02

Analytical Journal (from poetry).

Poetry is meant to be an interactive experience. A dialectical journal is one way that we can actively participate in a poem. As you read a poem, mark words, phrases, line and/or passages which strike you as moving, meaningful, beautiful, horrific, etc... In other words, find images which in some way speak to you on a personal level. Next, write these words or phrases down and respond to them in the form of a dialectical journal. You will be responding to the poet's use of language. How do these images create a specific effect? How do they make the reader feel? Why do you feel this way? Speculate on why the poet chose these words and phrases and how they create, enhance or develop meaning within the poem. An example of a dialectical response has been provided for you below.

** Please respond to TWO IMAGES in your selected poem.

A dialectical journal is actually an interaction between you and the written word. It asks you to comment upon, philosophize about and speculate on words, phrases and lines of prose or poetry. It is YOUR RESPONSE, but is also ANALYTICAL. Here is an example of a dialectical response to three lines from "The Garden" by Ezra Pound.

"Like a skein of loose silk blown against the wall she walks by the railing of Kensington Gardens... And she is dying piecemeal some emotional anemia..."

The words "loose silk" have a soft and light feeling. Silk blowing in the wind is a beautiful image; however, Pound has the silk "blown against a wall." This light, sort of beautiful thing cannot fly free, but instead flutters helpless against a hard wall. This seems to reinforce the idea that the woman is "dying." "Piecemeal" means one by one and suggests some type of fragmentation. She seems to be cratering in stages. Pound may use these words to show that her emotional state is a process, something that seems to be ongoing. This is also reinforced by the word "anemia." An anemic person is one who is pale and becomes weak due to lack of red blood cells. This could mean that the woman's emotions lack substance or content, and as a result, she is slowly fading away. Each image progresses the idea that the woman is frail, weak and insubstantial, and so is confronting life-ill prepared. "Wall" and "emotional anemia" also demonstrate a very negative attitude. Apparently, the poet has no great respect for the woman; however, I feel pity that something as beautiful as silk is so lacking in meaning.