Name _____ Date _____ Class _____

Your Dialectical Journal & Summer Reading

The term "dialectic" means "discussion and reasoning by dialogue as a method of intellectual investigation." Think of your dialectical journal as a series of conversations between yourself and the texts we will read during this course. The process is meant to help you create a better understanding of what you read, so use your journal to incorporate your personal responses to texts, your ideas about the themes we cover, and your responses to class discussions. Your DJ is also a useful way to process what you're reading, prepare yourself for group discussion, and gather textual evidence to back up your opinions. These journal entries are also a conversation between you (the student) and me (the teacher) as I evaluate your journal entries and provide feedback.

PROCEDURE:

- As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column of a T-chart. Be sure to record the page numbers in the center column.
- In the right column, write your response to the text (ideas/insights, questions, reflections, and comments on each passage).
- Collect the required number of entries for each text, organize the pages in a binder, and turn in.

Sample Dialectical Journal Entries: *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

Passage from the Text	Page(s)	Comments & Questions
"-they carried like freight trains; they carried it on their backs and shoulders—and for all the ambiguities of Vietnam, all the mysteries and unknowns, there was at least the single abiding certainty that they would never be at a loss for things to carry"	16	O'Brien provides excellent visual details of what each solider in Vietnam would carry for day-to-day fighting. His simile—"they carried like freight trains"—helps me understand the physical weight of what soldiers have to carry for survival. When I combine the emotional weight of loved ones at home, the fear of death, and the responsibility for fellow soldiers, with this physical weight, I start to understand what soldiers in Vietnam dealt with every day. This quote sums up the confusion that the men felt about the reasons they were fighting the war, and how they clung to the only certainty—things they had to carry—in a confusing world where normal rules were suspended.

This response is insightful—the student tries to understand how O'Brien uses language to relate the emotional burden of being a soldier.

Passage from the Text	Page(s)	Comments & Questions
"They were called legs or grunts."	3	What does "grunts" mean in this context?

Good question, but it still needs further analysis! Do some research and reflect upon your discovery.

Passage from the Text	Page(s)	Comments & Questions
"In addition to the three stand weapons—the M-60, M-16, and M-70—they carried whatever presented itself."	7	I like guns!

You don't say! Why does this matter? Does is give you more insight into the story or the burden of a soldier? How does your personal interest enhance your reading?

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 literary devices
- Passages that remind you of your own life or something you've seen before
- Structural shifts or turns in the plot
- A passage that makes you realize something you hadn't seen before
- Examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols or motifs.
- Passages with confusing language or unfamiliar vocabulary
- Events you find surprising or confusing
- Passages that illustrate a particular character or setting

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.*** You can write as much as you want for each entry, and you can either use the template I give you or create your own T-chart on notebook paper.

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 or character(s).
- Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences.
- Write about what it makes you think or feel.
- Agree or disagree with a character or 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…
If I were (name of character) at this point I would…
This part doesn't make sense because…
This character reminds me of (name of person) because…

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

Responses to Avoid

- Never just summarize a passage! Dig into it and see what revelation you can excavate.
- Never just define a word. Analyze the implication of the word in this exact context.
- Never say the author has "good diction" or "good imagery." Diction is word choice. How does the author use words? Imagery is language that appeals to the senses. How does the author use imagery? How does it affect you, the reader?

Summer Reading Lists & DJ Breakdown

Organize all entries in a ½" binder using tabbed dividers to separate the entries by text. Each completed journal entry is worth 1.25 points. Limit three (3) completed entries per page. A cover sheet with your name, class number, and date should be the first page in your binder. Also, label each divider with book title and author. The neatness and organization of your binder also factor into the overall project grade.

CLASS	TEXT	AUTHOR	ISBN	DJ ENTRIES
AP ENG 3 DC ENG 3	*The Road*	Cormac McCarthy	9780307387899	30
	The Devil in the White City	Erik Larson	9780375725609	30
AP ENG 4	*How to Read Literature like a Professor*	Thomas C. Foster	9780060009427	30
	Wuthering Heights (Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism)	Emily Brontë (Linda H. Peterson, editor)	9780312256869	30
DC ENG 4	*The Power of Myth*	Joseph Campbell with Bill Moyer	9780385418867	30
	Beowulf	Seamus Heaney	9780393320978	30

THIS MAJOR GRADE IS DUE FRIDAY, AUGUST 30TH BY 3:00 P.M.

NO LATE PROJECTS WILL BE ACCEPTED!

Name _____ Text _____ Chapter _____

Passage from the Text	Page(s)	Comments & Questions

Name _____ Text _____ Chapter _____

Passage from the Text	Page(s)	Comments & Questions