



## How Your Dialectical Journal Should be Formatted

- Label the top of each journal page with the THEME being discussed and its definition (provided for you above). You will have a minimum of five pages as there are five central themes you will be exploring. You may list more than one example of a theme on each page.
- Label the left side of each journal page “TE – Textual Evidence” and label the right side of each journal page “CM – Commentary.”
- The “TE” side is where you record **examples of the theme**: paraphrase, quotations, notes, direct quotes, summaries, evidence, support, images, etc. from the book. Always accompany TE with page numbers.
- The “CM” side is where you record corresponding **analysis**: reactions, ideas, opinions, comments, inferences, insights, questions, etc. from your head. This is where your discussion will take place. **Be sure to identify the context of the quotation.** You will also want to discuss how each quotation is demonstrative of the given theme and how your selected quotation adds to the deeper meaning of the story.
- Your dialectic journal should be typed and in MLA format complete with an MLA formatted cover page and page numbers. An example has been provided for you at the end of this letter.

### How to Choose Quotations for Your Dialectical Journal

**Select quotations:** Choose at least twenty-five quotations that stand out in the text for their effect; find quotes that are significant to the theme of the work; select quotes that affect you as a reader.

**Identify:** Note the context of the quotation (Where/when does it appear in the text? What is happening in the text at the time of your selected quote?)

**Understand:** Take some time to consider each quotation's relevance to both the section of the work in which it is found and its relevance to the work as a whole.

### How Your Dialectical Journal will be Assessed

A = Detailed, meaningful passages, plot and quote selections; thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text; includes comments about theme and how the theme contributes to the meaning of the text; raises many thought-provoking, insightful observations; coverage of text is complete and thorough; journal is neat, organized and readable; student has followed ALL directions in the creation/organization of the journal.

B = Less detailed, but good selections; some intelligent commentary about the text; includes some comments about theme but less about how the theme contributes to the meaning of the text; raises some thought-provoking, insightful observations; coverage of text is complete and thorough; journal is neat, organized and readable; student has followed ALL directions in the creation/organization of the journal.

C = A few good details about the text; most of the commentary is vague, unsupported or plot summary/paraphrase; some listing of theme, but perhaps inadequate discussion; raises few or obvious observations; addresses most of the reading assignment, but not very thoroughly; journal is relatively neat; student has perhaps not followed all directions in organizing and/or formatting the journal.

D = Hardly any good details from the text; all notes are plot summary or paraphrase; few examples of theme, virtually no discussion on meaning; no good observations; limited coverage of text/too short; did not follow directions; difficult to read/follow.

F = No dialectical journal completed on day checked or collected.

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As you read, you will need to think outside the proverbial box, but the themes are there. I promise! Upon your return in the fall, your identification and analysis of these themes will be the basis upon which our discussions will start.

Happy reading,  
Mrs. White

**Sample Dialectical Journal Cover Page**

*Do not include this line  
on your dialectic journal.*

*To Kill a Mockingbird* —Dialectic Journal

By Student Name

Sophomore Honors English

Mrs. White

Due Date

