**Guidelines for the Dialectical Journal**

Dialectic means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” The “dialectic” was the method Socrates used to teach his students how to be actively engaged in the struggle to obtain meaning from an unfamiliar and challenging work. A dialectical journal is a written conversation with yourself about a piece of literature that encourages the habit of reflective questioning. You will use a double-entry form to examine details of a passage and synthesize your understanding of the text.

There is to be NO collaboration with other students or with non-academic sources.

**Instructions:**

(1) Divide pages in half vertically. Label columns: left TEXT and right RESPONSE

(2) In the TEXT column cite passages verbatim from the novel, including quotation marks and page numbers

a. Choose two passages from each chapter or essay

b. When should you write passages down?

i. Details that seem important to you

ii. You have an epiphany

iii. You learn something significant about a character

iv. You recognize a pattern (overlapping images, repetitions of idea, details, etc.)

v. You agree or disagree with something a character says or does

vi. You find an interesting or potentially significant quotation

vii. You notice something important or relevant about the writer’s style

viii. You notice effective use of literary devices

(3) In the RESPONSE column reflect upon the passages

a. Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text

b. Give your personal reactions to the passage, the characters, the situation

c. Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character

d. Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences

e. Compare the text to other characters or written works

f. Write about what it makes you think or feel

g. Argue with or speak to the characters or author

h. Make connections to any themes that are revealed to you

i. Make connections among passages or sections of the work

j. Make predictions about characters’ futures or author’s purpose

k. DO NOT MERELY SUMMARIZE THE PLOT

(4) Each RESPONSE must be at least 60 words (include word count at the end of each response)

(5) Write down your thoughts, questions, insights, and ideas while you read or immediately after reading a chapter so the information is fresh

(6) As you take notes, you should regularly reread the previous pages of notes and comments

(7) First person is acceptable in the RESPONSE column.

(8) Remember that quotations do not have to be dialogue!

**Grading:**

A = Meaningful passages, plot, and quotation selections. Thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text; avoids clichés. Includes comments about literary devices such as theme, narrative voice (POV), imagery, conflict, etc. and how each contributes to the meaning of the text. Makes insightful personal connections and asks thought-provoking questions. Coverage of text is complete and thorough.

B = Less detailed, but good plot and quote selections. Some intelligent commentary; addresses some thematic connections. Includes some literary devices, but less on how they contribute to the meaning. Some personal connections; asks pertinent questions. Adequately addresses all parts of reading assignment.

C = Few good details from the text. Most of the commentary is vague, unsupported, or plot summary / paraphrase. Some listing of literary elements; virtually no discussion of meaning. Limited personal connection; asks few, or obvious questions. Addresses most of the reading assignment, but is not very long or thorough.

D = Hardly any good details from the text. All notes are plot summary or paraphrase. Few literary elements, virtually no discussion on meaning. Limited personal connections. Limited coverage of the text.

F = Did not complete or plagiarized