

English 2 Honors Summer Reading: *Of Mice and Men* by John Steinbeck

This year's summer reading assignment has two parts. The first part is completion of the dialectical journal. Next, review the three AP prompts. Organize your thoughts and be prepared to answer any of these prompts in an in-class essay during the first full week of school.

Dialectical Journal

The term "dialectic" means "the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer." Think of your journal as a series of conversations with the texts we read during this course. The process is meant to help you develop a better understanding of the texts we read. Use your journal to incorporate your personal responses to the texts, your ideas about the themes we cover and our class discussions. You will find that it is a useful way to process what you're reading, prepare yourself for group discussion, and gather textual evidence for other assignments. This assignment will be turned in on Monday, August 20, 2018. Be honest and challenge yourself.

Procedure

- As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column of a notebook (ALWAYS include page numbers).
- In the right column, write your response to the text (ideas/insights, questions, reflections, and comments on each passage)
- Label your responses using the following codes:
 - (Q) Question – ask about something in the passage that is unclear.
 - (C) Connect – make a connection to your life, the world, or another text
 - (P) Predict – anticipate what will occur based on what's in the passage.
 - (CL) Clarify – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction.
 - (R) Reflect – think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense – not just to the characters in the story. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work?
 - (E) Evaluate - make a judgment about the character(s), their actions, or what the author is trying to say.

****You should have a total of 20 journal entries to receive full credit for this assignment.***

Sample dialectical journal entry: *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

Passages from the text	Pg#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".	Pg 2	(R) O'Brien chooses to end the first section of the novel with this sentence. He provides excellent visual details of what each soldier in Vietnam would carry for day-to-day fighting. He makes you feel the physical weight of what soldiers have to carry for simple survival. When you combine the emotional weight of loved ones at home, the fear of death, and the responsibility for the men you fight with, with this physical weight, you 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.

Choosing your quotes

Look for quotes that seem significant, powerful, thought provoking or puzzling. For example, you might record:

- o Effective &/or creative use of stylistic or literary devices
- o Passages that remind you of your own life or something you've seen before
- o Structural shifts or turns in the plot
- o A passage that makes you realize something you hadn't seen before
- o Examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols or motifs.
- o Passages with confusing language or unfamiliar vocabulary
- o Events you find surprising or confusing
- o 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. You can use loose-leaf paper for your journals or create a chart in Google Docs.

Basic Responses

- o Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text
- o Give your personal reactions to the passage
- o Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s)
- o Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences
- o Write about what it makes you think or feel
- o Agree or disagree with a character or the author

Higher Level Responses

- o Analyze the text for use of literary devices (tone, structure, style, imagery)
- o Make connections between different characters or events in the text
- o Make connections to a different text (or film, song, etc...)
- o Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s)
- o Consider an event or description from the perspective of a different character
- o Analyze a passage and its relationship to the story 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 literary elements (like theme, diction, imagery, syntax, symbolism, etc.) and how these elements contribute 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 literary elements (like theme, diction, imagery, syntax, symbolism, etc.) but less than how these elements contribute 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 literary elements, 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 literary elements, 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.

AP Prompts

You may be assigned one of these prompts to answer in a formative in-class essay during the first week of school. Consider how you could respond to each of these prompts.

1. Choose a character from a novel or play of recognized literary merit and write an essay in which you (a) briefly describe the standards of the fictional society in which the character exists and (b) show how the character is affected by and responds to those standards. In your essay do not merely summarize the plot.
2. In a novel or play, a confidant (male) or a confidante (female) is a character, often a friend or relative of the hero or heroine, whose role is to be present when the hero or heroine needs a sympathetic listener to confide in. Frequently the result is, as Henry James remarked, that the confidant or confidante can be as much “the reader’s friend as the protagonist’s.” However, the author sometimes uses this character for other purposes as well. Choose a confidant or confidante from a novel or play of recognized literary merit and write an essay in which you discuss the various ways this character functions in the work.
3. The most important themes in literature are sometimes developed in scenes in which a death or deaths take place. Choose a novel or play and write a well-organized essay in which you show how a specific death scene helps to illuminate the meaning of the work as a whole. Avoid mere plot summary.