

Welcome to Honors Lit 1!

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As you begin your high school career, you will find many challenges old and new await you. The whole process of high school, and life in general, can be described as a quest, or a journey with great reward in store. As a result, to equip you with a wonderful story and to prepare you for some of the deep thinking required of you in Honors Literature, your summer reading requirement is *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien.

Please be watching throughout the summer for email updates! It is YOUR responsibility to stay on top of your assignments, so CHECK YOUR EMAIL regularly. My email is ruth.wolleat@tcslions.org if you have any questions!

Overview:

1. Read *The Hobbit* by J.R.R. Tolkien.
2. Create a dialectical journal which you will keep while you are reading *The Hobbit*.
3. Journals will be turned in **by 8/20 for full credit**.

What is a dialectical journal?

“Dialectical” means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth through logical arguments (dictionary.com). A dialectical journal, then, is used to arrive at the “truth” of a written work through the written response to quotations from that work.

A dialectical journal is a double-entry journal which records a dialogue, or conversation, between the ideas in the text (the words being read) and the ideas of the reader (the person who is doing the reading). Journaling will help you, as a reader, think critically about the text you are reading. By keeping a dialectical journal, you will think for yourself about a text and offer your own interpretations.

How do I keep a dialectical journal?

Your journal will use a two-entry form:

1. Create a two column table in a Google Doc. (Look at page #3 for example.)
2. Insert a Header. The Header will be a ONE row, TWO column table. Type the word “Text” in the left column and the word “Response” in the right column.

3. As you read, use the left column labeled "Text" to write down the quote or part of the paragraph you are choosing (ALWAYS include the **CHAPTER and PAGE NUMBER** after the quote).
4. Use the right side labeled "Response" to write down YOUR OWN thoughts, commentary, and questions about the quotes in the left column.
5. Find quotes/passages that you think help us better understand the author's subject matter, characterizations, attitude, and especially THEMES (messages/"big ideas").
6. If you find yourself simply repeating what the quotation says, you might not be analyzing. I don't want you to tell me what the quote means, tell me what the quote reveals about the theme/plot/characters/attitude of the author.... **NO SUMMARIES!**
7. As part of your response, you can analyze the style of the text - reflect on elements like symbols, imagery, metaphors, point of view. Below are some suggestions on how you can respond.

Label your responses using the following codes:

- ➔ QUESTION (Q): Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text OR raise questions about passages that are unclear. When you QUESTION a passage, you must journal your question(s) and discuss possible answers.
- ➔ CONNECT (C): Make connections to a different text (or film, song, etc.) Tell what the passage reminds you of from your own experience, or write about what it makes you think or feel. Discuss your personal reactions to the passage.
- ➔ REFLECT (R): 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? Consider an event or description from the perspective of a different character. How might that character's past experiences lead them to respond to or view an event differently? Make predictions about what might happen later in the text.
- ➔ EVALUATE (E): Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the character(s) or the author. Make a judgement about the character(s), their actions, or what the author is trying to say. Do you agree or disagree with the character(s) or the author?
- ➔ ANALYZE (A): Analyze the text for use of literary devices or analyze a passage and its relationship to the story as a whole.

What are the requirements for the dialectical journal?

- Minimum of **fifteen quotes from the book**
- **Eight of the fifteen** responses **must** be from the "(A) ANALYZE" category
- Chapter and page numbers must be included with quotes/passages and recorded in chronological order.
- Quotes/passages selected must be detailed and meaningful
- Responses must be at least 125 words
- First-person is acceptable in the RESPONSE column
- Interpretation, commentary, and connections must be thoughtful and insightful
- Coverage of text must be complete and thorough, where quotes/passages are selected from beginning to end
- Must include a variety of response types

NOTE: If evidence of copying (or sharing your entries with a friend) is found, then each party involved will receive a “0” on the entire assignment.

Examples

Text	Response
“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” (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.

Text	Response
“Jem gave a reasonable description of Boo: Boo was about six-and-a-half feet tall, judging from his tracks; he dined on raw squirrels and any cats he could catch, that's why his hands were blood-stained—if you ate an animal raw, you could never wash the blood off. There was a long jagged scar that ran across his face; what teeth he had were yellow and rotten; his eyes popped, and he drooled most of the time” (Ch. 1, p.16)	(C) This passage was very relatable to me. I was a very imaginative child. One specific example of this in my life was a time when I was about 10 years old, and I heard a noise near my bedroom window when I was trying to go to sleep. It scared me so much that I went to my parents and asked if I could get in bed with them. My Dad said, “absolutely not.” I begged my Mom, but she remained steadfast in my Dad's decision. While I was in my bed, I imagined a man hanging on to the outside of my second floor bedroom window. The wind blew fiercely as his tattered clothing whipped against the window. His face was distorted, and he had jagged teeth. His fingernails were very long. My heart raced as I imagined this creature of a man. It took a long while to finally drift off to sleep. My imagination was so strong that I believed the image that I had created truly existed.

How will the dialectical journal be graded?

Grading: (This is a 50 point assignment in the "Assessments" category)

A= Meaningful passages, plot, and quotation selections. Thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text. Includes comments about literary devices such as theme, imagery, conflict, allusions, 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. The student has followed directions in creation of the journal and has met all of the minimum requirements.

B= Less detailed, but good plot and quote selections. The student uses some intelligent commentary and addresses some thematic connections. Includes some literary devices, but less on how they contribute to the meaning. The student makes some personal connections and asks pertinent questions. Adequately addresses all parts of the reading assignment. The student has followed directions in the organization of the journal and has met all of the minimum requirements.

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. The student has not followed all directions for organization. The student has not met all minimum requirements.

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, no good questions. Limited coverage of the text; way too short. Did not follow directions in organizing the journal; difficult to follow or read. The student has not met minimum requirements of the assignment.

F= Did not complete or plagiarized

- (1) Points will be deducted on the TEXT side for failure to document accurately and completely according to the model provided.
- (2) Points will be deducted on the RESPONSE side for superficial and/or incomplete responses.