

Dialectical Journals

For Essay #4 you are expected to complete a dialectical journal for three readings. (You don't need to write journals for general textbook information on how to write an essay.) Use the chart template to create your dialectical journal and keep adding to it as you get assigned more reading. Type directly into the chart and save it somewhere safe on your computer, like you would a notebook full of your notes. If you'd rather handwrite your notes, you can print the template and write into it. (Check the assignment calendar for journal due dates.)

What is a dialectical journal?

A dialectical journal is a space for you engage with texts in meaningful ways and in ways that will help prepare you to respond to texts later in more formal papers. Here, you can explore what interests you, what confuses you, and/or what reminds you of other things you've experienced or read.

How do I write a dialectical journal?

Dialectical journals are written in two columns. On the left column you will transcribe word-for-word important quotes from the text including page #s. On the right-hand column, you will explain why you chose the quote – here is where you make connections to other texts you've read in and out of the class, relate the quote to your own experiences and/or observations, ask questions for clarification, express whether you agree or disagree and why, and/or explain what is interesting or confusing to you.

What are the expectations for the dialectical journal in this course?

- ✓ For each assigned reading, complete ten entries (ten quotes and ten responses)
- ✓ Each response should be at least 3-4 complete and thoughtful sentences
- ✓ Each response should show careful attention to the text and awareness of other related texts
- ✓ Each quote should be typed clearly and accurately and include page #s
- ✓ Quotes should be selected from across the entire reading rather than just at the beginning, end, or middle
- ✓ Responses should show awareness of the quote's context in the reading and not just be selected randomly
- ✓ Responses should aim to understand the readings more fully and make meaningful connections to yourself and the world around you
- ✓ Responses should be grammatically-correct and have few typos or misspellings

Sample Dialectical Journal

Title of Text: "Chapter 2" from Pedagogy of the Oppressed, by Paulo Freire

(I've completed two entries here as examples, but you would do ten for each reading.)

<p>1. "A careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level, inside or outside of school, reveals its fundamentally narrative character" (71).</p>	<p>What does Freire mean by teachers and students having a "relationship"? I don't really have any relationship to my teachers except that they give me assignments and I do them. Maybe that's a relationship? What does Freire mean when he says this relationship has a "narrative" character? I think of narratives as stories and I don't understand how there can be a story about teachers, students, and their relationship to each other.</p>
<p>2. "Narration (with the teacher as narrator) leads the students to memorize mechanically the narrated content. Worse yet, it turns them into 'containers,' into 'receptacles' to be 'filled' by the teacher" (72).</p>	<p>It almost sounds like Freire is comparing students to garbage cans or storage bins in the garage. He's definitely critiquing this comparison, I think. It kind of reminds me of when I was in history class and I had to memorize all of these dates and names and then fill in the blanks on tests with them. But, if I didn't do this, then how else could I learn all of this stuff? Isn't it important that I memorize these kinds of things? Doesn't it make me smarter? How else will I be prepared for college?</p>