

AP English Literature and Composition
Summer Reading Assignments
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How to Read Literature Like a Professor by Thomas C. Foster

A thoroughly revised and updated edition of Thomas C. Foster's classic guide—a lively and entertaining introduction to literature and literary basics, including symbols, themes and contexts, that shows you how to make your everyday reading experience more rewarding and enjoyable.

Task 1: Complete a Dialectical Journal (see instructions) Be prepared to share and discuss your entries.

The Consolations of Philosophy, by Alain de Botton

Despite its somewhat intimidating title, this book breaks down complicated topics in a simplistic way. The author takes us on a tour of six great minds of western civilization: Socrates, Epicurus, Seneca, Montaigne, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, each of whom offers consolation for life's travails. None could change the world, but each could change the way he looked at it.

Task 1: Annotate (see instructions)

Task 2: Choose a philosophy from the book that causes you to look at your own life, way of thinking, or a specific event, differently. Briefly explain the idea and write a personal essay about how/why this idea is important to you. Be specific, use concrete examples, and show me something about who you are and how you think. Write as you would speak to me. (Typed, double spaced, about 2 pp.)

Blindness by Jose Saramago

A magnificent parable of loss and disorientation and a vivid evocation of the horrors of the twentieth century, *Blindness* has swept the reading public with its powerful portrayal of man's worst appetites and weaknesses—and man's ultimately exhilarating spirit. The stunningly powerful novel of man's will to survive against all odds, by the winner of the 1998 Nobel Prize for Literature.

Task 1: Annotate

Task 2: Dialectical Journal

You will be graded for the thoroughness of your annotations and dialectical journals. Your dialectical journals must contain at least one passage for every 10 pages. Instructions and example are attached. Your annotation instructions and rubric are attached.

ALL ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE ON THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL. FAILURE TO COMPLETE ANY COMPONENT OF THE SUMMER READING ASSIGNMENTS WILL RESULT IN REMOVAL FROM THE CLASS.

A Reader's Guide to Annotation

Marking and highlighting a text is like having a conversation with a book – it allows you to ask questions, comment on meaning, and mark events and passages you want to revisit. Annotating is a permanent record of your intellectual conversation with the text. As you work with your text, think about all the ways that you can connect with what you are reading. What follows are some suggestions that will help with annotating.

~**Begin to annotate.** Use a pen, pencil, post-it notes, or a highlighter (although use it sparingly!). *Summarize important ideas in your own words. □ *Add examples from real life, other books, TV, movies, and so forth. □ *Define words that are new to you.

*Mark passages that you find confusing with a ??? □ *Write questions that you might have for later discussion in class. □ *Comment on the actions or development of characters. □ *Comment on things that intrigue, impress, surprise, disturb, etc. □ *Note how the author uses language. A list of possible literary devices is attached. *Feel free to draw picture when a visual connection is appropriate □ *Explain the historical context or traditions/social customs used in the passage.

*If you are a person who does not like to write in a book, you may want to invest in a supply of post it notes.

~**Suggested methods for marking a text:**

*If you feel really creative, or are just super organized, you can even color code your annotations by using different color post-its, highlighters, or pens.

*Brackets: If several lines seem important, just draw a line down the margin and underline/highlight only the key phrases.

*Asterisks: Place an asterisk next to an important passage; use two if it is really important.

*Marginal Notes: Use the space in the margins to make comments, define words, ask questions, etc.

*Underline/highlight: Caution! Do not underline or highlight too much! You want to concentrate on the important elements, not entire pages (use brackets for that).

*Use circles, boxes, triangles, squiggly lines, stars, etc.

Summer Reading Assignment

For this assignment, you must read both assigned novels and complete the following activities. **Non-fiction: keep a dialectical journal.** Your dialectical journal should include **at least one passage for every 10 pages.**

Carefully read the directions and rubric for the assignment.

DIALECTICAL JOURNALS

The term “Dialectic” means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” Think of your dialectical journal as a series of conversations with the novel you are reading.

Procedure: As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column of a T-chart (*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:

- o (Q) Question – ask about something in the passage that is unclear
- o (A) focuses on how plot/structure, character, setting, and many other techniques are used by the author to create meaning. Always be sure to discuss the significance of your observations to the main idea about life (the theme).
- o (C) Connect – make a connection to your life, the world, or another text
- o (P) Predict – anticipate what will occur based on what’s in the passage
- o (CL) Clarify – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction
- o (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?
- o (E) Evaluate - make a judgment about the character(s), their actions, or what the author is trying to say

Sample Dialectical Journal entry: THE THINGS THEY CARRIED by Tim O’Brien

Passages from the text	Pg #s	Comments & Questions
<p>"-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".</p>	Pg 2	<p>(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.</p>

Sample Dialectical Journal entry: Beyond the Yellow Highlighter

<p>1. "The yellow marks in my college textbooks...did not help me very much." 2. "Annotations do make me read a lot slower and I wish I didn't have to do them. It is so much harder to fake read if you have to annotate like we have to do now. So now I actually read, because it's too hard to fake annotate"</p>	Pg 5	<p>(C) I can relate since I often used to highlight what I thought was important and then end up with most of the page highlighted. (C) It is harder to fake annotate--it almost takes more time. (R) People are prone to find the easy way to do something. Since there's really no easy way to annotate--fake or real--it makes sense to really read and think about the texts. (Q) Is it really harder to fake read if you have to annotate? Or does it just take longer?</p>
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Sample Dialectical Journal entry: Night by Elie Wisel

<p>"Death wrapped itself around me till I was stifled. It stuck to me. I felt that I could touch it. The idea of dying, of no longer being, began to fascinate me. Not to exist any longer"</p>	<p>Pg 82</p>	<p><i>(A) In this passage, Wiesel personifies death to show the control it has over those who are suffering in the camps. In this case, Death silences Elie, overpowering his will and subduing his hope of survival. Elie is conflicted. He wants to survive. He wants to take care of his father. But he doesn't know how much more he can take. (E) This is important because we see that Elie has reached a breaking point. Death has come for him so many times but has failed. This time, however, Elie is too tired to run, too tired to fight. He has had enough. Death is offering a gift—an escape from this hellish existence.</i></p>
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CHOOSING PASSAGES FROM THE TEXT:

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

- Effective &/or creative use of stylistic or literary devices
- Passages that remind you of your own life or something you've seen before
- Structural shifts or turns in the plot
- A passage that makes you realize something you hadn't seen before
- Examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols or motifs.
- Passages with confusing language or unfamiliar vocabulary
- Events you find surprising or confusing
- Passages that illustrate a particular character or setting
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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***.

Proficient Level Responses

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

Higher Level Responses

- Analyze the text for use of literary devices (tone, structure, style, imagery)
- Make connections between different characters or events in the text
- Make connections to a different text (or film, song, etc...)
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s)
- Consider an event or description from the perspective of a different character
- Analyze a passage and its relationship to the story as a whole

Sample Sentence Starters

The writer implies _____ when she writes _____ in order to _____

The word _____ suggests _____.

The atmosphere established in the paragraph/passage is one of _____.

The author uses the image of _____ for the purpose of _____.

The effect of the metaphor comparing _____ to _____ is _____.

This _____ can be connected to _____ (another character, event, text, film, song, etc...)

This passage is related to the _____ (greater theme, symbol, event...)

_____ (character) might view _____ from a different perspective because _____

I really don't understand this because...

I really dislike/like this idea because...

I think the author is trying to say that...

This passage reminds me of a time in my life when...

If I were (name of character) at this point I would...

This part doesn't make sense because...

This character reminds me of (name of person) because...