

### **Dialectical Journal (EXAMPLE—SEE END FOR REQUIREMENTS)**

The “dialectic” was the method Socrates used to teach his students how to be actively engaged in the struggle to derive meaning from an unfamiliar and challenging work. In a dialectical journal, students divide their paper into two columns. One column is labeled TEXT; the other RESPONSE. As you read, you identify certain passages that cause you to stop and respond to what you are reading.

Example

*Black Like Me* by John Howard Griffin

#### **TEXT (1 point)**

*“How else besides becoming Negro could a white man hope to learn the truth? Though we lived side by side throughout the South, communication between the two races had simply ceased to exist” (Griffin 1).*

*“The completeness of this transformation appalled me. It was unlike anything I had imagined. I became two men, the observing one and the one who panicked, who felt negroid even into the depths of his entrails” (Griffin 11).*

#### **RESPONSE (3 points)**

*This made me wonder if you can accurately understand someone unless you become them. After some thought, I discovered that there are no other ways in which you completely understand another person. Although I have lived in the same house with my sister my whole life and I feel as though I know everything about her, when I talk to people I do not know I always realize little things that I do not know or understand about her. (79 words)*

*In many movies and books, people wake up and realize how old they truly are. I think that the people this happens to feel the same as Mr. Griffin does because he feels that he is still a white man; but when he looks in the mirror, he notices that his skin color disagrees with his Thoughts. Likewise, some people feel they are still young, but they are trapped in a body of a person who looks too old or too different to be them. (85 words)*

You will use the model above to create your dialectical journal, and I will use this model in evaluating your work. Please notice in the TEXT column, you cite verbatim passages from the novel and include quotation marks and page numbers according to the prescribed format.

For the RESPONSE column, you have several ways to respond to a text:

- 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
- Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences
- Write about what it makes you think or feel
- Argue with or speak to the characters or author

You are required to have at least five (5) passages with corresponding responses for each of the four (4) parts of the novel. At the end of the unit, be sure to have twenty (20) passages that are representative of the entire book. In other words, twenty passages taken only from the first few chapters or even the last few chapters will not be acceptable.

Each text and response combination will be worth four (4) points for a total of 100 points for this assignment. Points will be deducted on the TEXT side for failure to document accurately and completely according to the model provided. Points will be deducted on the RESPONSE side for superficiality and incompleteness. Each response must be *at least 60 words in length*.

**Dialectical journals are *due the first day of class after the assigned reading is to be completed* (i.e., Reading completed on Thursday, Dialectical Journals due Friday).**