

THE READING (Dialectical) JOURNAL

Reading Journals are reaction records you keep while reading. They are not complicated and will help you keep track of important points in the text as you read, saving review time later. IT IS LIKE HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH THE TEXT!

Your goal is to make notes about ideas in the essay/story/novel/play/poem that you think are important, interesting, confusing, etc. during your reading. Sometimes you will do reading (dialectical) journals for an entire work, but other times your reading will be more focused. Write your journal on loose leaf notebook paper and follow the format below:

1. Divide your paper in half vertically (long ways).
2. On the left, label the column **Quotations from Text**.
3. On the right, label the column **My Responses**.
4. As you read, quote important ideas from the text in the left column and note the page numbers, as well.
5. In the response column, note your reaction—interpret a character's actions or words, trace important symbols as they develop in the reading, discuss author's themes, attitudes, etc., note unexpected turn of events.

Example:

Quotations from Text

My Responses

"The pigs did not actually work, but directed and supervised the others. With their superior knowledge it was natural that they should assume the leadership...."
(*Animal Farm*, 35)

Sounds like the pigs are getting ready to put one over on the other animals. How can the others be so stupid? The pigs have said everyone should work, but they aren't working. So everyone on this farm is NOT equal. This reminds me of stupid crowds who follow a person blindly like cattle. (Hitler)

"He (Napoleon) had seemed to oppose the windmill, simply as a manoeuvre to get rid of Snowball, who was a dangerous character.... The animals were not certain what the word meant, but...the three dogs who happened to be with him growled so threateningly, that they accepted his explanation...." (82)

Sounds like Napoleon revises the truth, a dangerous practice. It allows Napoleon to have power: if he is the only one who knows what is going on. And the dogs sound like the Gestapo. Is Napoleon preparing to use force to get his way?