

# Dialectic Journals

## Directions & Sample Responses

From: <http://www.pkwy.k12.mo.us/west/teachers/gerding/djs.pdf>

What is a dialectical journal?

Simply put, "dialectical" means "the art or practice of arriving at the truth by the exchange of 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.

How many quotations should I have?

1 entry for every 15 pages of reading *minimum*; you should have AT LEAST 14 entries. Make sure you write the date before each journal and that you include the page number for the quotations at the end of each (see format on back).

What exactly constitutes a quotation?

A quotation can be narration OR dialogue. You are NOT limited just to what the characters *say*.

What kinds of quotations should I choose and what should I write about? And what do I write?

Find passages that you think help us better understand the author's subject matter, characterizations, attitude, and especially THEMES (messages/"big ideas"). Use the left side of the double column notes to copy a significant quote or line from the story with its page number. Use the second column to *react to that line or interpret it*.

Types of responses you may use:

- Predict/identify foreshadowing
- Make a personal or in-text connection
- Question (and answer)
- Extend the meaning
- Challenge the text

**If you find yourself simply repeating what the quotation says, you might want to select a different quotation or reevaluate how you are approaching the response. *NO SUMMARIZING!*** You must vary the types of responses you write. I expect to see all of the types listed above, not one type over and over.

Should I write or type these?

**NO TYPING!!!**

You must neatly *handwrite*— just *make sure they are legible* (pen isn't bleeding through, responses aren't running together, writing can be easily read) and organized.

How long should my responses be?

While I am more concerned with the depth of your thought, you need to stretch yourself and write plenty. Remember—you are showing me depth of thought. Keep asking yourself, "Why?" and "So?" These questions will lead to deeper responses. You should have AT LEAST 3 sentences for each entry, and those sentences should be a mixture of sentence types (complex, compound, complex-compound...)

I have provided examples of different types of responses on the back of this page.

Sample Dialectic Journal entries for *The Giver*

Date	Page #	Quotation	Responses (MINIMUM 3 sentences each)
4/28	1	"It was December, and Jonas was beginning to be frightened."	<b>Predicting/identifying foreshadowing:</b> I think something bad is going to happen. I wonder what/if it has anything to do with the strange jet incident. What is the significance of December? And how far away is it?
4/28	3	"Jonas was careful about language. Not like his friend, Asher, who talked too fast and mixed things up..."	<b>Making a connection:</b> I'm careful about language, too. Sometimes I'm stumped for the right word because I know it exists, but I can't find it. This is particularly frustrating for me when I write poetry.
4/28	6-7	"'Like animals.' Neither child knew what that word meant, exactly, but it was often used to describe someone uneducated or clumsy, someone who didn't fit in."	<b>Questioning:</b> Why don't the children know what animals are? Do they call them something different, or do animals not exist in this community? I think animals don't exist; I haven't seen any evidence of any yet. I wonder where they think meat comes from.
4/29	7	"'Male,' Father said. 'He's a sweet little male with a lovely disposition, but he isn't growing as fast as he should, and he doesn't sleep soundly. We have him in the extra care section for supplementary nurturing, but the committee's beginning to talk about releasing him.'"	<b>Extending meaning:</b> It's odd to me that they talk about babies with the same language that we, in our society, use to talk about pets. It's also odd that a committee takes care of the needs of the newborns. I wonder how effective this strategy is in producing well-rounded people. And I wonder how a permanent emotional attachment doesn't form between the Nurturers and the newborns.
4/29	7	"There were only two occasions of release which were not punishment. Release of the elderly, which was a time of celebration for a life well and fully lived; and release of a newchild, which always brought a sense of what-could-we-have-done."	<b>Challenging the text:</b> How can something be a punishment for one group, a reward for another, and a loss for a third? Surely they don't send these people out into the wilderness to die. This isn't a very humane society if they send newborns out of the community when they have no way to care for themselves. This society* seems less perfect with every page I read.

\* The idea/definition of society will become part of the theme of this novel...

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Pd: \_\_\_\_\_ Book title: \_\_\_\_\_

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\* Use notebook paper as necessary for additional responses or responses that don't fit in the allotted space.

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