

Summer Assignments for AP English III

Dear AP English III Student,

Congratulations on challenging yourself to take Advanced Placement Language and Composition for the 2023-2024 school year! The College Board designed this course to enable high school students to meet the requirements of a college freshman composition course, and for those who score high enough on the AP exam, to earn credit for that course. Like its college equivalent, one purpose of this AP course “is to enable students to read complex texts with understanding and to write prose of sufficient richness and complexity to communicate effectively with mature readers” ([College Board](#)).

The College Board portion of AP English III focuses primarily on rhetorical analysis of non-fiction texts. The additional WCPSS portion meets the state curriculum goals that include the reading of fiction, drama, and poetry through its exploration of a wide array of American literature, ranging from sixteenth through twenty-first century works. To help us make the most of our limited time for covering major works, AP summer reading assignments are not only customary, but also necessary.

For your summer reading, you are to choose and obtain a copy of two (2) of the following novels, read them closely, and create a dialectical journal for each:

- *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin
- *The Nickel Boys* by Colson Whitehead
- *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck
- *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison

Feel free to purchase inexpensive copies at a used bookstore ([Abe Books](#) and [Thrift Books](#) are reliable online stores, along with a few brick and mortar used bookstores in the area). *If you have any financial hardship procuring your own copies, please let me know as soon as possible via email.*

Close Reading

Close reading enables us to understand and appreciate a text beyond its explicit meaning. Practicing close reading involves diving beneath the surface to explore the depths of a work, analyzing its ideas and how the writer’s craft enhances meaning and impact, including recognizing and analyzing patterns and relationships between elements.

Dialectical Journal

One way to enrich your understanding of a text is to approach it as if you were carrying on a conversation with the work and even with yourself—a dialogue between your ideas and the ideas within the text—and even between you and your ideas.

Originating from the teaching methods of Socrates and Plato, the dialectic approach now includes many variations, but all of them boil down to “the art or practice of logical discussion as employed in investigating the truth of a theory or opinion” (“Dialectic”)—the basis for argumentation. As an approach to learning, some even argue that “Dialectical thought is the most authentic form of the mind's critical activity” (Pavlidis).

Dialectical journals give you a space where you can explore and analyze the ideas, philosophies, themes, character motivations and choices, etc.; the writer’s craft; and your own ideas as you engage with the text through close reading. “The point is to . . . actively engage in the argument with the writer as if you were having a conversation with him/her, face to face” (Riaz). Ultimately, this kind of interaction with the text enables readers “to facilitate the production of original ideas, to reach insights about the text and one’s own self, and to think clearly and critically about the ideas one reads” (Riaz).

This last sentence underscores the need for you to completely avoid secondary sources of any kind (works about your primary source/the text you are analyzing) or any other unauthorized assistance. There are no right or wrong answers here, and using someone else’s thoughts defeats the purposes of this assignment and the opportunities for growth that it offers. *Use your own good brain!*

Instructions

Modeling the format of the sample dialectical journal (p. 5 of this document), divide your paper into three columns, making the third column the widest (links to templates provided after instructions).

As you read closely, pick out at least twelve passages throughout the work that appeal to you and write about them, using the guidelines below.

The following bulleted lists are a heavily edited synthesis of several sources, including my own good brain.

For the **QUOTED PASSAGE** column, consider choosing passages that present any of the following:

- Meaningful or striking quotations: words to live by; words to remember
- Evidence of theme, tone, mood, character development, conflict, plot complication, setting significance, point of view, etc. (any element of fiction)
- Figurative language such as metaphors, similes, personification, etc.
- Effective and/or stylistic use of literary and rhetorical devices
- Connections with your own experiences or observations
- New or unique perspectives, ideas, or realizations for you; moments of epiphany or insight
- Significant structural shifts or turns in the plot
- Patterns: recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols, or motifs
- Ambiguities to explore
- Confusing ideas or language to wrestle with
- Events you find surprising or thought provoking
- Memorable depictions of a particular character or setting
- Author’s style: artful syntax or sentence structure that significantly impacts meaning—often presented in repeated and/or parallel grammatical patterns
- Diction that presents a particular tone or bias
- Depictions that establish a striking mood
- Narrative intrusion or evidence of narrative tone or reliability
- Shifting points of view
- Anything else that sparks your interest!

The **CONTEXT** column is where you will supply enough plot information to give each passage its relevant backdrop—to place each passage in its relative space to enable a full understanding of its significance. Include the following essential pieces of information:

- Who is communicating the words of the passage—the narrator? a character?
- What’s the basic situation? What’s happening immediately before and during the passage? Who is involved?
- *As with literary analysis, assume that your readers (only you and I for this assignment) have read and have a basic understanding of the work: you only need to give enough plot detail to establish the context of each particular passage.*

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

- Analyze and discuss what makes the passage meaningful, striking, or important.
- Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text.
- Give your personal reactions to the passage: tell how it connects to something from your own experiences or observations; write about what it makes you think or feel; argue with/speak to the characters or author.
- Discuss conflict and/or character development and its significance.
- Discuss diction and what it reveals.
- Discuss how the passage presents theme or prevailing philosophies of its time.
- Discuss the meaning and effects of figurative language in the passage.
- Discuss a character’s role and/or the values of the character—what purpose does this character achieve in the work? What effects do they have on other characters and the work as a whole?
- Discuss the significance of a setting.
- Comment on the relevance of a passage to its historical context or to the present.
- Draw conclusions about recurring symbols or images—what meaning do they collectively present?
- Analyze structural elements and their significance to the work as a whole.

(2019-2020; Dialectical Journal; Introduction to Dialectical)

When it comes to analysis, understand that identifying literary devices, grammatical/syntactical devices, structural elements, point of view and narrative influence, character development, plot and thematic elements in a work is only the first step of close reading. Your main job is to move beyond simply telling *what* devices authors use, to analyzing and articulating *how* and *why* they use them. The question to answer, ultimately, is not the simple “*What?*” but the essential “*So what?*” Consider what effects devices create and how they impact meaning.

Overall, be sure that your comments “demonstrate fully developed thoughts and connections to the text” and not appear “hasty, shallow, or lacking in relevance” (Neuffer). As “the goal of any dialectic is to develop greater understanding and reveal truth,” your comments—your side of the conversation with the text—should present sincere and authentic attempts to arrive at new understandings and insights (Neuffer).

Requirements

1. Use digital format for submission through Canvas the first day of class. Logging in to your WCPSS (My Wake ID) Portal, you can access either a [Word Docx template](#) or a [Google Doc template](#)—your choice. (also available at jbennettenglish.weebly.com)
2. Include a **minimum of twelve** (12) passages per work. The length of your responses should be at least 4-5 connected sentences/clauses (think paragraph)—they should show thinking that explores deeply each passage you choose. Don't concern yourself with correctness—your grade for this assignment is not based on getting “right” answers—focus instead on making connections and exploring and developing your ideas and analyses of the passages.
3. Use MLA (9th ed.) formatting guidelines for all quotation usage, mechanics, and internal/parenthetical documentation.*
4. **Imperative!** You are to complete your work independently. Do not use any secondary sources (writings *about* the texts) or other unauthorized assistance:
 - a. to avoid plagiarism—taking someone else's words or ideas and passing them off as your own
 - b. to avoid stunting your own intellectual courage and growth—relying on others' thoughts and analysis becomes a crutch that you start to believe you need—when you do not. Using given techniques for close reading and dialectical journaling, you are to rely on your own good brain to interact with the texts you choose. *Keep in mind: I am interested in your thoughts and how you think, not what any subject expert has to say!*

The only outside sources you may consult are those strictly regarding MLA formatting which you will not need to cite.

Be sure to acquaint yourself with [WCPSS policies on cheating and plagiarism](#), and be assured that I have zero tolerance for either.

** Please note that throughout this document I have modeled for you consistent and accurate quotation usage, mechanics, and documentation per MLA guidelines, for which you, too, are responsible. I also paid particular attention to give credit where credit is due. I was more than a little concerned to see many sources published online that had clearly used others' work (the same work) without attribution.*

For this assignment, you will not be using any secondary sources and will, therefore, not need a list of Works Cited. Future research assignments, however, will require documentation, so take the initiative to acquaint yourself with MLA guidelines.

Dialectical Journal (Original Example)

NAME: Jennifer Bennett

TITLE: *The Things They Carried*

AUTHOR: Tim O'Brien

Quoted Passage: record the passage exactly as written in the text; place within quotations marks; record page number/s, using MLA parenthetical documentation.	Context: <i>briefly</i> summarize what's happening when the passage appears.	Comment: your <i>detailed response</i> to the passage—analyses, questions, connections, reflections, evaluations, predictions, clarifications, comments on the significance of the passage, explorations, etc. <i>AVOID plot summary in this section!</i>
<p>"For the most part, they carried themselves with poise, a kind of dignity. Now and then, however, there were times of panic when they squealed or wanted to squeal but couldn't, when they twitched and made moaning sounds and covered their heads and said Dear Jesus and flopped around on the earth and fired their weapons blindly and cringed and sobbed and begged for the noise to stop and went wild and made stupid promises to themselves and to God and to their mothers and fathers, hoping not to die" (18).</p>	<p style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; color: red;">the "who, when, where?"</p> <p>O'Brien has just presented the different ways that Cross, Kiowa, and Bowker are dealing with the death of fellow soldier Ted Lavender.</p>	<p style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px; display: inline-block; color: red;">the "what?" and especially the big, fat "SO WHAT?"</p> <p>I'm amazed at how many ways O'Brien uses the word "carry" throughout this work to cover all the different things the soldiers bring with them—physical, spiritual, and emotional—that help, hinder, heal, and burden them. <i>I wonder what I would carry with me into battle.</i> In this case, however, "carried" refers to the way the soldiers conduct themselves, their behavior and physical composure (or lack thereof).</p> <p>Even his syntax and structure reflect their different states of composure. The first sentence about dignity is a simple 13-word sentence, an independent clause with a short phrase on either side—a sentence that presents balance, calm, and "poise." The sentence that follows, however, loses that control—77 words that grammatically flail about, reflecting the soldiers' "times of panic." O'Brien's use of polysyndeton further underscores their frantic distress as he jumbles the soldiers' panic into one long string of wildly disparate actions, the word "and" repeatedly connecting each to the next without pause.*</p>
<p>"When she was nine, my daughter Kathleen asked if I had ever killed anyone. She knew about the war; she knew I'd been a soldier. 'You keep writing these war stories,' she said, 'so I guess you must've killed somebody.' It was a difficult moment. . . . This is why I keep writing war stories" (125).</p> <p style="color: red;"><i>Note: The passages you choose don't need to be long; they only need to pique your interest and prompt plenty of thought and discussion.</i></p>	<p>This passage immediately follows the chapter, "The Man I Killed," where the narrator's friend tries to get him to stop staring at the body of and ruminating over the life of the enemy soldier he has just killed with a grenade.</p>	<p>As a writer, the narrator understands the power of story to help us make sense of the world—to deal with trauma, to create justice where there is none, to give us a sense of closure when we have none—a neat weaving-up of all the loose ends in a tapestry that the realities of life rarely offer, no matter how desperately we crave them.</p> <p>He continues to write his war stories to help him process this horrific experience but admits that even after so many years, "I haven't finished sorting it out. Sometimes I forgive myself, other times, I don't" (128). Only in story does he have the power to rewrite the ending—to revise history, even temporarily: ". . . he'll pass within a few yards of me and suddenly smile at some secret thought and then continue up the trail to where it bends into the fog" (128). The stories we tell to survive—</p>

** I don't expect that you are experienced in advanced syntactical analysis at this stage—yet. By the end of the course, you will be!*

Evaluation

Entries in each area of the journal should reflect professionalism and attention to detail, following the standards of English usage for academic/scholarly work.

QUOTED PASSAGES

Exemplary (4/A)	Proficient (3/B)	Developing (2/C)	Emerging (1/D)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accurately copied, including spelling, capitalization, and punctuation ▪ Properly formatted (MLA) for all mechanics and any alterations, including correct ellipsis usage ▪ Properly formatted (MLA) for page documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May contain no more than two errors (see details under “Exemplary” to the left) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May contain up to four errors (see details under “Exemplary” to the left) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contain numerous spelling and mechanical errors ▪ Present a general disregard for professional responsibility (accuracy) and attention to detail ▪ Ignore MLA formatting guidelines

CONTEXT ENTRIES

Exemplary (4/A)	Proficient (3/B)	Developing (2/C)	Emerging (1/D)
<p>Clearly identify—</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Speaker/s ▪ Significant plot details to give sufficient context for the passage, including— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Characters involved - Situation at hand - Event preceding the passage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Could use more clarification ▪ May be missing one of the required elements (see left) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Needs more information ▪ Missing two or three of the required elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Insufficient information to establish context for and/or enable understanding or significance of the passage

COMMENTS

Exemplary (4/A)	Proficient (3/B)	Developing (2/C)	Emerging (1/D)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Present thorough and thoughtful engagement with the text through analysis, personal connections, questions, exploration, etc. ▪ Elaborate fully on ideas—dig in, explore, and develop them, supporting all claims with specific details ▪ Identify literary devices/ elements of craft, focusing especially on analyzing their effects—their contributions to meaning ▪ Discuss the significance of the passage to the work as a whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Present thoughtful, but not necessarily thorough, engagement ▪ Elaborate on most ideas; support most claims with textual details ▪ May identify devices without discussing their effects ▪ May not consider the passage’s significance to the work as a whole 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Present partial/incomplete engagement ▪ May not elaborate on most ideas; support for claims may be spotty ▪ May miss important literary elements/craft ▪ Ignore significance altogether 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sparse: lacking development of ideas ▪ Shallow: stating the obvious, surface facts; lack depth of thought ▪ Vague: general statements that lack specificity or focus

The following examples come directly from the Baker and Spencer source with minimal editing. The boxed annotations are my additions.

Excellent, thorough analysis of character—follows/develops each lead and draws concise conclusions!

Exemplary Journal Entry from *The Cat in the Hat* by Dr. Seuss

Quoted Passage	Context	Comments (Exemplary)
“Now! Now! Have no fear. Have no fear!” said the cat. “My tricks are not bad,” said the Cat in the Hat. “Why, we can have lots of good fun, if you wish, with a game that I call, UP-UP-UP with a fish!” (7)	In this passage, the Cat is speaking to the two children who are currently alone in the house. Just before this moment, the Fish has told the children that the Cat should leave because he does not have permission to be there.	This passage reveals the dark side of the Cat’s character. After being asked to leave, the Cat threatens the only responsible character in the house. By ignoring the request to leave, the Cat demonstrates his disregard for authority and the feelings of others. The Cat’s dismissive tone – seen in the repetition of the phrase “have no fear!” – emphasizes his desire to have fun, regardless of the consequences.

Accurate quoting; correct mechanics, formatting, and page documentation

Different Levels of Comments for the Same Passage—

So? So what? What’s your point? Take these ideas somewhere!

Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Emerging (1)
The Cat sounds pushy. This is partly because of the repetition ‘Now! Now! Have no fear. Have no fear!’ It is also partly because of the use of exclamation marks.	The cat comes off as fun but also like someone who doesn’t care much about others.	The cat is suggesting a game to play.

Needs further development—dig in deeper and follow through on the concept of pushiness—so what?

Evidence? Develop further--support your claims!

Stating the obvious; no attempt at analysis; shallow

Exemplary Journal Entry from *Night* by Elie Wiesel

Quoted Passage	Context	Comments (Exemplary)
“Twenty bodies were thrown out of our wagon. Then the train resumed its journey, leaving behind it a few hundred naked dead, deprived of burial in the deep snow of a field in Poland” (67).	Elie and his father are travelling by train from one concentration camp to another as the Nazis are fleeing the approaching Russian army. During the journey, a number of passengers die. In this moment, the narrator is describing the bodies being thrown out.	The author’s diction reinforces the sense of dehumanization that has been developed throughout the novel. The narrator never refers to the deceased individuals by name, or even as human beings. Words like “bodies,” “naked,” and “dead” reveal the loss of identity and even humanity among these victims of the Holocaust.

Both context entries give exactly what we need

Insightful analysis of diction (writer’s craft); supports all claims; makes historical connections; draws a greater conclusion, reaching beyond the work itself

Different Levels of Comments for the Same Passage—

P.S. The word *very* is not your friend. Avoid it.

Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Emerging (1)
This passage creates a very cold feeling. This is partly because it talks about bodies in the “deep snow.” And it is also because the author does not use any words that feel very emotional.	The passage gives another example of how badly prisoners were treated.	The author uses great imagery. The imagery helps the reader see what’s going on.

A surface hit—needs further development; lacks follow-through and specific evidence to support claims

How so? Develop further—discuss specifics (evidence)!

The weakest kind of comment—vague in nature, showing a lack of any analytical thought. Avoid at all costs!

Works Cited

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