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Out of Class Reading- Dialectical Journals

You will complete ten dialectical journal entries per novel. Depending on the length of your novel, you might want to divide them up by page number (divide the total number by ten), chapter, or at ten significant points throughout the novel.

Each journal entry will have two parts, hence the word “dialectical.”

**Summary:**

This should cover major events, introduction to setting, characters, what the characters do, conflicts, or new information you learn. A summary needs to be at least seven sentences long. Here is an example from Chapter 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird*:

The story is narrated by a young girl named Jean Louise Finch, who is almost always called by her nickname, Scout. Scout starts to explain the circumstances that led to the broken arm that her older brother, Jem, sustained many years earlier. She begins by recounting her family history. As a successful lawyer, Scout’s Father Atticus makes a solid living in Maycomb, a tired, poor, old town in the grips of the Great Depression. He lives with Jem and Scout on Maycomb’s main residential street. Their cook, an old black woman named Calpurnia, helps to raise the children. In the Summer of 1933, when Jem is nearly ten and Scout almost six, a peculiar boy named Charles Baker Harris, nicknamed Dill, moves in next door.

**MOST IMPORTANT PART!**

**Analysis:**

Analysis paragraphs should be ten sentences long. Analysis is LEVEL 2, which means that it should all be inferences (your own thoughts) about the text. It may include evidence from the text, but is not simply paraphrase of that evidence. Analysis should answer WHAT IS THE AUTHOR TRYING TO CONVEY, AND HOW IS THE AUTHOR TRYING TO CONVEY THAT MESSAGE. Answers to any of the following questions may be relevant:

* Why would the author include this event?
* What was the author’s tone, or mood, and has that changed from previous sections?
* How do you believe the characters changed or grew?
* **What universal truths were revealed in this chapter?**
* How was a conflict introduced or solved?
* What was the most important part of this chapter?
* What strategies (diction, figurative language, dialect, imagery, irony, suspense, foreshadowing, flashback) did the author use to convey her ideas? (USE AND UNDERLINE TERMS FROM YOUR LITERARY TERMS LIST.)
* What can you predict will happen next? Why?

Analysis from Chapter 1 of *To Kill a Mockingbird.*

The story that constitutes almost the entirety of *To Kill a Mockingbird* is set in the time between Scout Finch’s fifth and ninth birthdays, but Scout presumably commences the first-person narrative that opens the novel much later in her life. As a result, the narrative voice fluctuates between the child’s point of view, chronicling the events as they happen, and the adult voice, looking back on her childhood many years later. The child’s naïve voice dominates the central plot, allowing the reader to make connections and understand events in a way that the young Scout does not. At the same time, the narrative often digresses into anecdotes or descriptions presented retrospectively, like Scout’s depiction of Maycomb in the first chapter: “Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it. . . . Somehow, it was hotter then . . . [p]eople moved slowly then.” Here, Lee’s language indicates an adult’s recollection rather than a girl’s experience.

Structurally, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is circular: the story begins where it ends. The first line of the novel introduces Jem’s broken arm, and the novel then flashes back to cover the events leading up to his accident. The narrator uses this device to provide background for the Finch family, introducing the legendary Simon Finch and his three descendants. But at this stage of the novel, the family history is treated as background information, of secondary importance to the private world of the young Finch children. In this way, the first chapter provides only a brief sketch of Atticus, whose importance increases as the novel progresses. Jem and Scout are the center of the story, filling it with their world of imagination and superstition, centered on town myths such as the curious history of Boo Radley and imaginative diversions such as acting out stories from books.