**DIALECTICAL JOURNALS**

The term “Dialectic” means “the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” Think of your dialectical journal as a series of conversations with the texts we read during this course. The process is meant to help you develop a better understanding of the texts we read. Use your journal to incorporate your personal responses to the texts, your ideas about the themes we cover and our class discussions. You will find that it is a useful way to process what you’re reading, prepare yourself for group discussion, and gather textual evidence for your Literary Analysis assignments.

**PROCEDURE:**

* As you read, choose passages that stand out to you that gives evidence to the question given and record them in the left-hand column the chart (ALWAYS include page numbers or paragraph number!).
* In the right column, write your response to the text (interpretation, reasoning, ideas/insights, questions, reflections, and comments on each passage)
* Look at my example below.

**“My Heart Is in the Highlands”**

Dialectical Journal Entries

**Directions:** Jane Yolen uses the subject of ***“stones”*** a few times in this short narrative. Below, please try your best to come up with **3 entries** why the idea of ***“stones”*** is so important to the *purpose* of Jane Yolen’s narrative (**author’s purpose**). Think… do stones mean something else? Make sure to back up your claims with evidence and interpretation. I did one example for you.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Evidence** (make sure to use “quotations” and page #) | **Interpretation** (at least 3 well written sentences) |
| *1.“Absorbing stones from an old building into the fabric of the later one is… a way of holding on to the past”* page 11 | Jane Yolen uses this quote from a book she read about Scottish kingdoms. I think this means that reusing old Scottish stones is important to the people of Scotland. When making new homes and businesses by reusing parts of old buildings, they’re keeping traditional architecture alive even when many years pass. |

**How-To Answer a Question Successfully in ELA  
(CEI)**  
   
**Claim** – This is your answer, or what you’re “claiming” is truthful.  
   
**Evidence** – Evidence are facts that back up what you’re trying to say. Detectives use evidence when they try to prove their case. In ELA we use evidence as direct important facts, lines, or sentences to help back up our answers.  
   
**Interpretation** – This is the most important part to answering a question! Once you claim your answer, then you back up what you’re saying with direct facts, you then have to EXPLAIN why your evidence helps support your answer. This is YOU directly saying why your evidence makes sense to your claim. It’s kind of like you thinking out loud.