Dialectical journals for *a separate peace*

The term “dialectic” means “the art of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” Think of your dialectical journal as a series of conversations between you and the text. The journaling is meant to help you develop a better understanding of the text as you read. Use your journal to incorporate your personal responses to the texts, your ideas about the themes we cover and any class discussion (i.e., Socratic Seminars, MWDS, novel reviews). You will find that it is a useful way to process what you read and prepare yourself for class participation.

**Due dates:**

You should have read and written your journals for the following chapters on the following days.

Chapters 1-4, Monday, October 3, 2016

Chapters 5-8, Monday, October 17, 2016

Chapters 9-13 (the end), Monday, October 24, 2016

**Procedures:**

* As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column of a T-chart (ALWAYS include page numbers).
* In the right column, write your response to the text (ideas/insights, questions, reflections, and comments on each passage)
* You can respond to the text in a variety of ways, but it is most important to remember that your observations should be ***specific and detailed***. You can write as much as you want for each entry. You will use a composition book for these journals.
* You will label your responses using the following codes:
	+ (Q) Question—Ask about something in the passage that is unclear.
	+ (C) Connect—Make a connection to your life, the world, or another text.
	+ (P) Predict—Anticipate what will occur based on what’s in the passage.
	+ (CL) Clarify—Answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction.
	+ (R) Reflect—Think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense—not just to the characters in the story. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work in general?
	+ (E) Evaluate—Make a judgment about the character/s, their actions, or what the author is trying to say.

**Sample entry:** from *The Things They Carried* by Tim O’Brien

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| passages from text | pg#s | comments & questions |
| “—they carried like freight trains; they carried it on their backs and shoulders-and for all the ambiguities of Vietnam, all the mysteries and unknowns, there was at least the single abiding certainty that they would never be at a loss for things to carry.” | p 2 | (R) O’Brien chooses to end the first section of the novel with this sentence. He provides excellent visual details of what each soldier in Vietnam would carry for day-to-day fighting. He makes you feel the physical weight of what soldiers have to carry for simple survival. When you combine the emotional weight of loved ones at home, the fear of death, and the responsibility for the men you fight with, with this physical weight, you start to understand what soldiers in Vietnam dealt with every day. This quote sums up the confusion that the men felt about the reasons they were fighting the war and how they clung to the only certainty—things they had to carry—in a confusing world where normal rules were suspended. |

**Choosing passages from the text:**

Look for quotes/passages/sections that seem significant, powerful, thought-provoking or puzzling. For example, you might record:

* Effective &/or creative use of stylistic or literary devices
* Passages that remind you of your own life or something you’ve seen before
* Structural shifts or turns in the plot
* A passage that makes you realize something you had not seen before
* Examples of patterns—recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols or motifs
* Passages with confusing language or unfamiliar vocabulary
* Events you find surprising or confusing
* Passages that illustrate a particular character or setting

**Grading specifics:**

**Basic Responses (B- & lower)**

* Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in a text
* Give your personal reactions to the passage
* Discuss words, ideas, or actions of the author or character/s
* Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences
* Write about what it makes you think or feel
* Agree or disagree without support with a character or the author

**Higher Level Responses (B+ & higher)**

* Analyze the text for use of literary devices (tone, structure, style, imagery)
* Make connections between different characters or events in the text
* Make connections to a different text (or film, song, poem, etc.)
* Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character/s with support
* Consider an event or description from the perspective of a different character
* Analyze a passage and its relationship to the story as a whole