Text Analysis Procedures

Throughout the reading of a text, there will be teacher-led and student-led discussions. Students are ***required*** to participate in the discussions.

To prepare for these discussions, students must read the assigned texts as well as do the given assignments for the texts.

If the assignments are typed, they must be printed prior to class. I will not print any assignments.

During the discussions, it is ***required*** that students take notes on what is discussed. The format of the notes is up to the individual.

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| --- | --- |
| Longer Texts (novels/plays) | Shorter Texts (short stories/poems) |
| For each assigned section of the text:   * DJs: 4 quotes with page numbers and commentary * Critical Questions: 4 insightful questions that will add to any discussion of this section of text. | Each assigned text:   * TPS-FASTT analysis * Critical Questions: 4 insightful questions that will add to any discussion of this section of text. * Occasionally, there will be specific questions assigned. |
| Discussions:   * Teacher-led throughout the text. * At the end of the text, a Socratic Seminar for which students must have their DJs, Questions, and Class Notes to participate. | Discussions:   * Teacher-led AND/OR * Small group |
| Discussion Notes:   * Must be taken during the discussions | Discussion Notes:   * Must be taken during the discussions |

During the discussions, it is ***required*** that students take notes on what is discussed.

# Dialectical Journals

Dialectical Journals (DJs) will be done for every book read in the course. Each book will be broken up into sections and requirements for the DJs will be required for each section.

* I post the electronic version of the books. You can use these to copy/paste the passages from the text, but you still need page numbers from the physical book copy.
* In the textual evidence column, you will write exact quotes—using ellipses ( . . .) for long passages—and enclosing text in quotation marks. For long passages, you can summarize the passage. If focusing on a description of something or someone, you can summarize the description, but quote meaningful words and phrases that can be used as direct evidence in an essay. Document page number, speaker, and context of the passage. See the examples below.
* In the commentary column, you will record your thoughts and reactions using the reading strategies listed below. Each entry must be labeled according to the strategy used, i.e. (P) for a prediction you are making or (LT) for identification of a literary term and its use.
* Your textual evidence should be collected evenly throughout the book, reflecting consistent journal-keeping effort. The accompanying commentary must demonstrate use of all reading strategies and insight, a focus on details, and the beginning of analysis.

## Reading Strategies:

**(C) CONNECT**: Relate to a quote, description, character, setting, etc. by connecting it to your own life, another text, or to the larger world.

**(P) PREDICT**: Anticipate what might happen in the story based on details and plot.

**(Q) QUESTION**: Address any confusion by posing a question about a quote, passage, character, etc. – Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

**(CL) CLARIFY**: Answer questions you raised earlier to aid your understanding of the plot, a character’s motivation, etc. Confirm that earlier predictions you made were true or comment on how the story took a different course than anticipated.

**(DS) DETERMINE SIGNIFICANCE**: Explain why you think the line, passage, or description is important. How is it connected to other events? What does it reveal about theme?

**(LT) LITERARY TERM**: Consider techniques, such as symbols and allusions, the author uses to reveal theme. How does the author use diction and dialogue to reveal character? What is the author’s tone?

## Examples of Journal Entries from *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| TEXTUAL EVIDENCE | PAGE # \* | COMMENTARY |
| 1. “I know I fib a good deal. After all, a woman’s charm is fifty percent illusion, but when a thing is important I tell the truth, and this is the truth: I haven’t cheated my sister or you or anyone else as long as I have lived.”   *Blanche to Stanley when he questions her about losing Belle Reve* | Sc. 2, p.41 + | The word “illusion” seems consistent with Blanche’s character. She is secretive about her age and concerned about how she looks, as if she is trying to be someone she is not. Could illusion be part of the theme of the play? (DS) (Q) |
| 1. Description of “shadows and lurid reflections” and prostitute struggling with drunkard until police officer breaks it up; Negro woman comes along and takes purse that prostitute dropped | Sc. 10, p. 128 | Does Blanche see this scene played out or is it only for the eyes of the audience? This scene of struggle might serve as foreshadowing for what is about to happen between Blanche and Stanley. Is the purse symbolic of something Blanche will lose, like the high-class persona she tries to portray? Do the sequins represent Blanche’s false decadence? (LT) (Q) (P) |

\*Please NOTE: The page number column is small, only big enough for PAGE NUMBERS.

+ When referencing a play, you must include the act and scene numbers as well. When referencing a novel, just have the page number.

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# Critical Analysis Questions

You must have 4 questions that allow for a more open discussion of the book.

## Critical Questions and Quality Talking Points

Critical questions are questions that require an analysis of the text. Quality talking points result in an active discussion of several perspectives and responses.

There is no real “right” or “wrong” answer but is open to many interpretations along the spectrum of right to wrong.

There is no “yes” or “no” response without some serious explanation.

Examples:

* What do these actions portray about the character’s traits and values?
* This event was foreshadowed back in…. Why is the author focusing on this event and what could follow this?
* What potential themes does… illustrate and why?
* What is the author’s purpose in… creating this character? ...including this event? ...using these images? …etc.?

## Terrible/Stupid Questions and How to Fix Them

### “What do you think of the chapter/section/act/volume/book so far?”

* This adds nothing to the discussion; in fact it hints that you have not done the reading and are asking the group to summarize the reading for you.
* If you want others’ viewpoints, be more specific.
  + “I interpreted the nunnery scene this way, but I would like other views of it.”
  + “I'm not sure how to interpret the final scene in which Fortinbras takes the throne of Denmark and orders Hamlet to be honored. Can you help me?”

### “What if…?”

* This question is highly overused and prevents any real analysis of the text.
* When deciphering ambiguity of a text, it can be somewhat acceptable:
  + “What if Hamlet truly is insane?”
  + However, a better phrasing of the above question would be “If Hamlet is truly insane, how does that affect the interpretation of his behavior?”
* Instead of focusing on the “What if…?” focus on the “Why?” or “How?”
* Instead of “What if the ghost had never appeared?” ask “Why would Shakespeare have the ghost show himself to Hamlet after Hamlet has killed Polonius?”

### Comparisons of the characters’ actions and reactions to what is expected “nowadays” (putrid word; DO NOT USE) is pointless.

* Analysis of the text means you look at the text, not make comparisons to a culture that has nothing to do with the culture that produced the text.