

# THE DIALECTICAL JOURNAL

## What is a Dialectical Journal (DJ)?

A system of taking notes from a text by selecting interesting quotations responding to them by explaining why they were chosen, asking questions about them, or making observations about characters and situations.

## How do I write a DJ?

Stop at the end of every 1-3 pages to think about what you have just read. Choose a quote (one or two sentences long) to write down. Take at least five minutes to write a response to the quote—think about why you selected it.

## Why did you select the quote?

- ✓ attraction to characters or issues or problems
- ✓ connection with your own experience
- ✓ the reading reminds you of something or someone
- ✓ connection with other texts or concepts or events
- ✓ similarities (or differences) between this text and other texts
- ✓ confusion or question about a particular passage
  - "I wonder why..."
  - "It perplexes me that..."
  - "I'm having trouble understanding how..."
  - "I was surprised when ...."
- ✓ (dis)agreement with author/narrator/text—have a conversation with it
- ✓ imagine yourself in the character's or author's shoes
- ✓ make a prediction about future events in the story
- ✓ striking words, images, phrases, or details
  - Why did the author choose them?
  - What do they add to the story?
  - Why did you notice them?