

# Westhill High School Summer Reading

## AP English Language and Composition

For this year's summer reading assignment, **select your own nonfiction book** to read and enjoy. Then, complete a **dialectical journal** using the template provided on the Westhill website. You can also access the template by [clicking here](#).



Your completed dialectical journal must be **submitted electronically by Friday, September 6, 2024**. Any student submitting any amount of plagiarized and/or AI generated content will receive a zero for this assignment. **Your teacher will provide specific instructions for where to submit the document at the start of the next school year.**

Also, keep in mind that this is the *first* assignment your teacher will receive from you next year, so make sure that your work is reflective of your potential as an AP student.

### What is a “Dialectical Journal”?

| Quote:  | Analysis:  |
|---|--|
| "As each situation in life represents a challenge to man and presents a problem for him to solve, the question of the meaning of life may actually be reversed." (p.109)  | I thought that this was an interesting point for Frankl to bring up. For people who don't think too deeply into the question of their meanings, it may seem that there is only one meaning that they must find and fulfill throughout their lifetime. This is false. Meanings of life, although they are so utterly important to living a happy life regardless of your conditions, are not concrete and are not set in stone. One's meaning can change at any time based on what random and uncontrollable circumstances are thrust upon an individual. He stated, in different words, at another point that the meaning of life is not something that is on its own, it is merely a question that life asks of you at any given moment, and it is your personal answer to that question at that moment, that truly counts. |
| "In a word, each man is questioned by life; and he can only answer to life by answering for his own life." (p.109)  | This brings back the notion that one must not seek out for a meaning, yet one simply needs to take the responsibility to answer for his life and decide what would make his life meaningful. One is obliged to take the responsibility to think deeply and to answer for themselves the meaning to life. It is impossible for someone to give one another a true meaning because the meaning itself is personal and subjective. It is not impossible for one to help guide others to the answers to their own questions, as Frankl demonstrates, but it must be something that an individual finds for themselves.   |
| "by his love he is enabled to see the essential traits and features in the beloved person; and even more, he sees that which is potential in him, which is not yet actualized but yet ought to be actualized. Furthermore, by his love, the loving person enables the beloved person to actualize these potentialities. By making aware of what he can be and of what he should become, he makes these potentialities come true." (p.112) | I thought this was an interesting quote, because he sort of moves away from logotherapy and gives a very valid point of view on what Love actually is. I really agree with him on all of his views on love. Love goes beyond thinking someone is fun to be around and enjoying their company. That doesn't mean love is this crazy fantasy that a lot of people seem to believe either. Love does not exist only in movies and story tales.  |

A **dialectical journal** is a conversation between you and a text through writing. Works of nonfiction (including biography and memoir) present arguments developed with compelling evidence and an engaging style. First, read a work of nonfiction\* and identify its central argument. Then, create a dialectical journal **citing 15 notable quotes that represent evidence** (e.g. **data, facts, examples, anecdotes, narratives, case studies, eyewitness or expert testimonies, concession, rebuttal**) the author uses to build the argument. Present the quote in **context** and **analyze** how it contributes to the development of the argument. Make sure that your quotes span the *entire* text.

Please see the [example](#) on the next page for more information about how to set up a dialectical journal. Use the template provided on the Westhill website (or make your own) to help you format the assignment correctly.

\*For help finding a non-fiction book, browse popular titles on Goodreads. Use the following link: <https://www.goodreads.com/shelf/show/non-fiction>

### Questions?

If you have any questions about the expectations for this assignment, please contact Ms. Calandro ([acalandro@stamfordct.gov](mailto:acalandro@stamfordct.gov)) or Ms. Wheeler ([cwheeler@stamfordct.gov](mailto:cwheeler@stamfordct.gov)).



## Dialectical Journal - Sample Entry & Instructions

First, **identify the title and author of the book**, and the **argument** it makes. Then create a dialectical journal (typed) as a chart with two columns: the left column must include a **direct quotation** from the text, **cited** with the page number, and the **context** of the quotation (or a brief summary of what is happening in the book at the time); the right column must include the **type of evidence** it presents (see examples listed above) and an **analysis** of how it develops the argument or contributes to the overall meaning of the text. Use the sample below as a guide.

### General Information about the Text

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Title and Author</b><br/>Who wrote this book and what is it called?</p>          | <p><i>The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration In the Age of Colorblindness</i> by Michelle Alexander</p>                                  |
| <p><b>Central Argument</b><br/>What is the main argument of the text (as a whole)?</p> | <p>The end of Jim Crow only marked the beginning of a reinvented and highly adaptive system of discrimination: mass incarceration.</p> |

| Quotation (in Context)  | Type of Evidence and Analysis  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Context:</b><br/>Alexander introduces the ways in which the Jim Crow era and era of mass incarceration differ. The author makes it clear, that even with their own distinctions, the goal of the two systems is the same: to legally justify discrimination on the status of a group of people, specifically minorities, in the social hierarchy.</p> <p><b>Quote &amp; Citation:</b><br/>“Today it is perfectly legal to discriminate against criminals in nearly all the ways that it was once legal to discriminate against African Americans. Once you’re labeled a felon, the old forms of discrimination-employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service-are suddenly legal.” (Alexander 2)</p> | <p><b>Type of Evidence: Facts</b></p> <p><b>Analysis:</b><br/>While it may be tempting to categorize the two under the same umbrella term, their differences define the way society responds to the issue at hand. Jim Crow laws specifically intended to change societal structure, with explicit laws enforcing segregation on the basis of race. Discrimination in the current era of colorblindness is much harder to detect, as it has adopted new ways to discriminate against a minority. This quote reveals the similarities between Jim Crow and the current system of mass incarceration, only now it is criminals that are discriminated against. The discrimination against Black Americans remains mostly unchanged from Jim Crow, except for arguably the most significant aspect: its target. Society has had to adapt to the way it is no longer acceptable to be publicly and explicitly racist. Therefore, labeling criminals charged with minor offenses as “felons” has become the new system of control. Reintroduction back into society for a felon could not be more difficult, having to face severe injustices in nearly all aspects of life. By including the list of opportunities a person labeled as a felon is denied, Alexander not only proves the extensivity of the issue, but also the fact that it has barely changed since Jim Crow.</p> |