

## DIALECTICAL JOURNAL ENTRIES

The “dialectic” was the method Socrates used to teach his students how to be actively engaged in the struggle to derive meaning from an unfamiliar and challenging work. In a dialectical journal, students divide their paper into two columns. One column is labeled TEXT; the other RESPONSE. 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 text.

### **PROCEDURE: YOU MAY HANDWRITE OR TYPE YOUR ENTRIES.**

- As you read, choose phrases, sentences, and/or paragraphs 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)
- If you choose, you can 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 something you knew or perhaps saw on TV.
  - (P) Predict – anticipate what will it be about based on the title and the pictures.
  - (CL) Clarify – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction. Write down words you don’t understand or questions you have about what you read.
  - (R) Reflect – think deeply about what you just read. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work?
  - (E) Evaluate - make a judgment about what you just read.

### **SAMPLE: Dialectical Journal Entry**

**TITLE OF READING:** The Moral Basis of Vegetarianism

**WRITER:** Mohandas Gandhi

**DATE OF RESPONSE:** April 15, 2010

<u>TEXT</u>	<u>RESPONSE</u>	<u>CODE</u>
<i>"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."</i>	<i>My dog (Zeke) is a family member. We play with him and love him. He has toys, including a football. The ball looks like a kid's football, but it's a dog toy. Still, on the news, I saw how dogs are injured and killed in dogfights. Some people in the U.S. abuse man's best friend.</i>	C
<i>"To my mind the life of a lamb is no less precious than that of a human being. I should be unwilling to take the life of a lamb for the sake of the human body. I hold that, the more helpless a creature, the more entitled it is to the protection by man from the cruelty of man."</i>	<i>What does the word, "entitled" mean? (I need to look this up now.) Okay, I looked it up. I guess I get that word now. Entitled is like deserving. So, does this mean that Gandhi doesn't think animals should be used for research? He doesn't believe in eating them, so maybe no research too? What year did he die? Did they do animal research testing then? I think I get what he is saying, so I don't know if this is exactly a question about the reading, but I wonder how far his belief in this goes.</i>	Q

**Dialectical Journal Entry**

**TITLE OF READING:**

**WRITER:**

**DATE OF RESPONSE:**

<b><u>TEXT</u></b>	<b><u>RESPONSE</u></b>	<b><u>CODE</u></b>