



May 2019

Dear Incoming American Literature Student,

With your summer vacation right around the corner, I know you are looking forward to having some time to rest, read some good books, and enjoy the lovely weather.

I am excited to tell you about the books you'll be reading for your summer reading assignment. This summer, you will read two books and complete an assignment for each book. Please notice that you must read the required book, but that you have a choice of selected options for your second book.

**Book #1: Required Reading**

*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Frederick Douglass

**Book #2: Reader's Choice (choose one)**

*Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Harriet Beecher Stowe

*Of Mice and Men*, John Steinbeck

*My Antonia*, Willa Cather

*The Good Earth*, Pearl S. Buck

*A Separate Peace*, John Knowles

**Book Assignments**

For **both** books, you will complete a Dialectical Journal logging your response and analysis as you read.

Your dialectical journal should include **18 entries per book**.

Directions:

1. As you read, choose quotes or passages (Concrete Details) that stand out to you and use Google Docs or Microsoft Word to record them in the left-hand column of a T-chart, like the one below. Always include page numbers, or if you are reading a digital version, chapter numbers.
2. In the right column, write your commentary (1:2+) responding to that quote using one of the following codes:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (CH) Characterization – Analyze details or dialog the author gives you to build his/her characters.</li><li>• (C) Connect – Make a connection to your life, the world, or another text</li><li>• (P) Predict – Anticipate what will occur based on the passage</li><li>• (L) Literary Device – analyze the author's craft using literary terminology</li><li>• (R) Reflect – Think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense –</li></ul> |
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not just to the characters in the story. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, about God, or just the way things work?

- (T) Theme - Determine the author’s overall message about some aspect of life through a close reading of a passage.
- (M) Mood – Determine the mood or tone of a scene and explain how that might be important.
- (BW) Biblical Worldview - Identify a passage that offers insight into the worldview of a character or the author

Sample Dialectical Journal

Quote (CD)	Response (CMs)
“A second look showed her that the living eyes, under the bushy gray eyebrows, were kinder....and there was a sly twinkle in them.” (50)	(CH) In this quote, Alcott shows that all the earlier perceptions of Mr. Laurence were wrong. They thought him to be a grouch who kept his grandson shut up in the house all day, but when Jo actually met him he was a very nice and welcoming man.
“For love casts out fear, and gratitude can conquer pride.” (61)	(T) Alcott was trying to show the lesson of this whole ordeal with Beth being afraid of Mr. Laurence. She is showing that when two people are kind and loving to each other, they can break any barriers between them.

Remember that the use of SparkNotes or any online summary or resource as a replacement for reading the full text is considered cheating. Make sure you give yourself plenty of time to read and enjoy these wonderful novels!

Please bring your printed Dialectical Journals and both summer reading books with you to class on the first day of school. You will be completing activities in class about these books to kick off the year.

If you have questions, please contact me at [tmeyer@fremontchristian.com](mailto:tmeyer@fremontchristian.com)  
Enjoy your summer vacation!

Sincerely,

Dr. Tricia Meyer, EdD.  
Head of School