

Honors 9th Grade Literature and Composition Pre-Course Reading for School Year 2019-20

TEXT: *Of Mice and Men*, by John Steinbeck

The required Pre-Course Reading Assignment pairs thematically with our curriculum in Honors 9th Literature and Composition. It is important that you read the entire text prior to the course so that you are prepared to discuss and analyze the text during our first unit of study.

The assignment that follows will be assigned at the start of the semester and is not required to be done prior to the course; however, you will probably find it helpful to complete the dialectical journal entries as you read. It will also be a good idea to complete as much as you can of the assignment prior to the course so that you have sufficient time and do not feel rushed or overwhelmed with all of the responsibilities you have at the beginning of the semester.

Dialectical Journal Assignment

A dialectical journal requires you to have a “discussion” with the text you are reading in a prescribed way; in reality, we should always be having a discussion with the texts we read.

Directions: Read the book *Of Mice and Men* by Jon Steinbeck. While you are reading, keep a dialectical journal to develop and record your thoughts about the text. The structure consists of two columns. In the left-hand column, write quotations (“Passages”), and for each quotation there are three reflection parts in the right-hand column (“Commentary”): Context, Explanation, and Personal Response.

Requirements:

1. *Choose six short passages (a few sentences to one paragraph each) from the entire book that you think are significant. Make sure that the passages selected show a full range of your reading and do not just come from one section of the book.*
2. *Type or hand write your dialectical journal using the format on the back of this page, making sure to include a context, explanation, and personal response for each of the ten passages.*
3. **Turn in your dialectical journal with six passage entries by Friday, August 9th, 2019** (you will receive extra credit if you turn in the assignment on or before Friday, August 2nd).

Guidelines for Choosing Passages:

Read the whole chapter first. As you are reading, note passages that you think might be important and flag them with sticky notes or place stars in the margins next to them.

- Here are a few types of passages that you may consider in fictional literature:
 - **Setting:** passages that tell important information about place and/or time
 - **Character:** passages that help you understand more about a character or characters
 - **Plot:** passages that narrate events that are or might be important
 - **Dialogue:** lines spoken by different characters (connects to character and plot)

Guidelines for providing commentary:

- **Context:** What’s going on in the chapter around this passage?
- **Explanation:** What does this passage mean? Why is it important?
- **Personal Response:** What is your reaction to this? Does this passage trigger an emotional response from you (e.g., surprise, suspense, anger)? If a fictional piece, does it elicit a prediction of events to come, or do you feel a connection with one or more of the characters?

Sample Journal format expectations are on the back.

Student Name: _____

Title of the book: _____ Author: _____

These passages are from chapter: (chapter number)	
Passages	Commentary
#1 “Type or handwrite the passage word-for-word in quotation marks” (cite the page number in parentheses).	Context: Type or handwrite - what’s going on in the chapter around this passage? Explanation: Type or handwrite - what does this passage mean? Why is it important? Personal Response: Type or handwrite - what is your reaction to this? Does this passage trigger an emotional response from you (e.g., surprise, suspense, anger)? If a fictional piece, does it elicit a prediction of events to come, or do you feel a connection with one or more of the characters?
#2: (Use this format with a #2 if you choose more than one passage from a specific chapter. For most chapters you will probably choose only one passage).	Context: Explanation: Personal Response:

This passage is from chapter: (chapter number)	
Passage	Commentary
##	Context Explanation Personal Response

*Continue this format for each of the six required passages for *Of Mice and Men*.*

Rubric is on the next page.

Quality	Grade Earned	A	B	C	D	F
Passage selection	_____ /10	Detailed and meaningful (10-9 points)	Less detailed but good selections (8-6 points)	A few good details (5-4 points)	Few quality details (3-1 points)	No dialectical journal on the day collected.
Context	_____ /10	Detailed and accurate explanation of the context surrounding the selected passage. (10-9 points)	Accurate, but simple explanation of the context surrounding the passage. (8-6 points)	Overly simplified and/or inaccurate explanation of the context surrounding the passage. (5-4 points)	Little to no context or mere summary provided in place of context. (3-1 points)	
Explanation	_____ /10	Thoughtful interpretation of theme, diction, imagery, syntax, and/or symbolism, and how these contribute to the text. (10-9 points)	Some intelligent interpretation about literary elements. (8-6 points)	Vague interpretation, unsupported plot summary or paraphrasing. Some listing of literary elements. (5-4 points)	All notes are plot summary or paraphrase with few literary elements and little interpretation of meaning. (3-1 points)	
Personal Response commentary	_____ /10	Thought provoking and insightful observations. Thorough discussion. (10-9 points)	Some insightful observations. Personal connections or questions may be discussed. Limited discussion. (8-6 points)	Few or obvious observations. Inadequate discussion. (5-4 points)	Very little observation and little discussion. (3-1 points)	
Coverage	_____ /5	Excellent coverage of text. (5 points)	Limited coverage of text. (4 points)	Coverage of text is inadequate. (3 points)	Minimal coverage of text. (2 points)	
Organization and neatness	_____ /5	Neat and organized (5 points)	Neat and readable (4 points)	Neat but hard to read (3 points)	Hard to read, poorly organized (2 points)	

Total Points: ____/50 (Formative Reading Grade)