



#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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# Analysis of Theme Journal

A Guide to Using the Student Resource

#### ABOUT THIS RESOURCE

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This resource provides a structure for students when they are asked to keep a dialectical journal analyzing one or more themes developed in a text. Teachers are encouraged to use this model when assigning rich, multi-layered texts from their own curriculum.

This resource is included in Module 3: *Generating Text-Based Responses*.

#### **TEACHING SUGGESTIONS**

se the student activity pages to create a sample journal entry for students using whatever text they will be studying.

If students are new to tracing a theme through an extended work, focus students' attention on specific parts of the text they can use as the basis of their journal or give them a selection of thematic ideas to focus on.

Model how to complete the journal entries and give specific instructions on the number of entries a student is required to have in the journal, keeping in mind the amount of grading that will be involved when students turn in the journal. A few excellent entries will give students a richer learning experience than many mediocre ones.

One incentive for students to keep a journal with accurate and insightful commentary is their ability to use the journals in writing situations. Having a journal, especially for use in a timed writing, gives students some preparation before writing an analytical essay. ഗ



## Analysis of Theme Journal Student Resource

When reading a major work such as a novel, you might want to keep a dialectical journal that traces the development of one or more of the thematic ideas presented in the text. In an Analysis of Theme Journal, you will look for patterns of conflicts, ideas, or symbols that help you determine the universal ideas being explored by the author of the work. Complex works, such as novels or epic poetry, contain many themes, universal truths that are experienced by people throughout history. Themes can be revealed through a character's reaction to conflict, to other characters, even to particular settings. What the character (and the reader) learns about human experience may reflect the meaning of the work as a whole.

In this type of journal, you might use direct quotations that reveal important ideas or symbols, but more than likely it will be easier to summarize events that occur in the work and make inferences about how those events and the character's response to those events reveal personality and character traits.

Your teacher may give you a selection of passages to read carefully as the basis of your journal or a list of thematic ideas on which to focus, or your teacher may want you to pay attention to the major events of the work and find a pattern of ideas within those events yourself.

#### Use the following process for completing your theme journal:

#### In the left column:

• record evidence. If you are using a quote from the text, also record the context of the evidence.

#### In the right column:

- make an inference (an opinion based on the evidence) about the thematic idea suggested or explored in the textual evidence.
- write commentary that explains the connection between the evidence and the theme.

#### Thematic ideas:

Evidence (quotation or detail and context)	Inference—Commentary
Textual reference—	Thematic idea suggested by evidence—
Context:	Commentary:

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