

AP Language & Composition / Centennial High School

Explanation of Great Works Readers' Journal

1. **Philosophy of the journal:** It is our hope that your collection of journals will help you with your performance on the AP Language/ AP Literature exam and in college. Once you have completed these journals, you will always have them for referral. They are an excellent tool for reviewing. (One example: at Columbia, the freshman read *Inferno*, *Heart of Darkness*, and *Pride & Prejudice* – all novels we teach in AP Lit. Former students testify to the usefulness of the GWRJ).

2. **We are looking for quality rather than quantity.** You should prove that you are introspectively and reflectively considering the texts you are reading. However, the plot summary does not need to be long. You should summarize for your own use. Write the summaries in a way that makes sense for you. You want to understand what you have discovered when you look back on these journals.

3. **You should not, under any circumstances, consider outside sources** for the plot summary, for your choice of excerpts, for analysis of text, for personal response to the text, or the for character descriptions. You need to make those decisions on your own. You may seek outside sources for biographical information and the importance of the time period. Our hope is that you will analyze the text on your own, without the assistance of outside sources.

4. **You should complete the analysis of text like the example below.** Fill at least the space provided in each entry's section.

<p>Text: Record the text from the work in this space. Do not use the ellipsis mark before, after, or in the middle of the quote. If the quote is important enough to comment on, then quote it all. Don't forget to put the page number after the quote.</p>	
<p>Critical, Analytical Response</p> <p>In this space you are to analyze the author's use of language and his or her narrative techniques that you noted. Consider the following questions: (naturally you wouldn't answer all of them for every entry – these are just suggestions).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Discuss the language in a specific passage. How does the diction contribute to the overall tone? Consider connotations.▪ How is the personality of a specific character established within a specific passage or stanza?▪ Consider the use of dialogue, stream of consciousness, focalization, foils, and/or actions.▪ Setting is often a pivotal factor in the development of them.▪ Consider a notable literary technique in the texts. Is there irony, satire, symbolism, allusions, etc.? What is the impact of the technique on the overall work?▪ Are there any predominant images that keep recurring throughout the work?▪ Explain the effect of any unusual organizational or rhetorical strategies in the work – multiple narrators; pacing elements (flashbacks, intercalary chapters, time lapses, etc.); unusual punctuation or use of italics; chapter divisions; syntax, like repetition of words and phrases or rhetorical questions; letters about events.▪ What are the key characteristics of the speaker or narrator?	<p>Personal Response</p> <p>In this space write your personal response. Tell how the quote or events surrounding this quote make you feel. Use the pronoun "I" here. Make connections to your life, to other works of literature you have read, songs, etc.</p>