

HARVEST CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

High School Required Summer Reading 2026

Research has proven that summer reading for students is equivalent to a month of instruction. Students who read advance academically, while students who do not may fall behind, creating what is called a reading gap. Summer reading improves students' overall test scores, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing abilities. This summer, take the time to enjoy the following novels and complete the accompanying assignment.

Required Novels

Course	Assigned Novel
English I	To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee
English II	The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe by C.S. Lewis
English III	The Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka
English IV	Beowulf translated by Seamus Heaney

Assignment

- Complete a Dialectical Journal for your assigned novel.
- Include a variety of thoughtful entries from each chapter.
- QUALITY work and THOUGHTFUL responses are expected.

Accountability

- All assignments must be completed by the end of the second week of school.
- Assignments should be submitted in a professional manner.

*Have a wonderful summer and enjoy the readings!
I look forward to working with you this new school year.*

Contact Information

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DIALECTICAL JOURNALS

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 texts you read during this summer. The process is meant to help you develop a better understanding of the texts. Use your journal to incorporate your personal responses to the texts, your ideas about the themes in the reading. You will find that it is a useful way to process what you’re reading, prepare yourself for future group discussion, and gather textual evidence for writing assignments.

Procedure

- As you read, choose passages 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)
- 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 another text
 - (P) Predict – anticipate what will occur based on what’s in the passage
 - (CL) Clarify – answer earlier questions or confirm/disaffirm a prediction
 - (R) Reflect – think deeply about what the passage means in a broad sense – not just to the characters in the story. What conclusions can you draw about the world, about human nature, or just the way things work?
 - (E) Evaluate - make a judgment about the character(s), their actions, or what the author is trying to say
 - (Com) Compare- identify an idea and or situation that is in agreement or disagreement with the Bible. Use scriptures to decipher whether an idea or situation is correct.

Grading

You need to have at least one dialectical journal entry for every five pages of your reading. You will be graded based on the **quality** of your responses.

Sample Dialectical Journal Entry

THE THINGS THEY CARRIED by Tim O’Brien

Passages from the text	Pg#s	Comments & Questions
“-they carried like freight trains; they carried it on their backs and shoulders-and for all the ambiguities of Vietnam, all the mysteries and unknowns, there was at least the single abiding certainty that they would never be at a loss for things to carry”.	Pg 2	(R) O’Brien chooses to end the first section of the novel with this sentence. He provides excellent visual details of what each soldier in Vietnam would carry for day-to-day fighting. He makes you feel the physical weight of what soldiers have to carry for simple survival. When you combine the emotional weight of loved ones at home, the fear of death, and the responsibility for the men you fight with, with this physical weight, you start to understand what soldiers in Vietnam dealt with every day. This quote sums up the confusion that the men felt about the reasons they were fighting the war, and how they clung to the only certainty - things they had to carry - in a confusing world where normal rules were suspended.

Choosing Passages from the Text

Look for quotes that seem significant, powerful, thought provoking or puzzling. For example, you might record:

- Effective &/or creative use of stylistic or literary devices
- Passages that remind you of your own life or something you've seen before
- Structural shifts or turns in the plot
- A passage that makes you realize something you hadn't seen before
- Examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, colors, symbols or motifs.
- Passages with confusing language or unfamiliar vocabulary
- Events you find surprising or confusing
- Passages that illustrate a particular character or setting

Responding to the Text

You can *respond* to the text in a variety of ways. The most important thing to remember is that your observations should be ***specific and detailed***. You can write as much as you want for each entry. You can use college ruled paper for your journals or use the attached template.

Basic Responses

- Raise questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text
- Give your personal reactions to the passage
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s)
- Tell what it reminds you of from your own experiences
- Write about what it makes you think or feel
- Agree or disagree with a character or the author

Sample Sentence Starters:

I really don't understand this because...

I really dislike/like this idea because...

I think the author is trying to say that...

This passage reminds me of a time in my life when...

If I were (name of character) at this point I would...

This part doesn't make sense because...

This character reminds me of (name of person) because...

Higher Level Responses

- Analyze the text for use of literary devices (tone, structure, style, imagery)
- Make connections between different characters or events in the text
- Make connections to a different text (or film, song, etc...)
- Discuss the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character(s)
- Consider an event or description from the perspective of a different character
- Analyze a passage and its relationship to the story as a whole

