



DIALECTICAL NOTEBOOK

OSUN Teaching Resources

Bard College Institute for Writing and Thinking

Course Type/ Level:	Any course, any level
Assignment Goals:	The Dialectical Notebook is a tried and tested Institute for Writing & Thinking Practice that works very well in an online environment. The Notebook activity invites students into a sustained written conversation about a topic, text or series of texts.
Materials to Provide Students:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whichever texts you want students to work with. 2. A dialogical notebook in a Google doc. When setting up google documents, you will have to pay attention to the settings (students will likely be more skilled at this than many faculty!)
Technological Resources Needed:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Google Documents 2. A way for the faculty member to deliver prompts for each column over the course of three or four days (this could be via email, what's app or moodle) 3. A forum on which to share conclusions (Moodle?)
Preparatory Steps:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Put students into pairs 2. Ask them to copy the Google doc, save it with their names, and save it to a Google folder accessible by all students and the teacher.

<p>Tasks/Activities:</p>	<p>The Dialectical Notebook is divided into columns. You can have as few as three columns or as many as six. The columns can each have a specific prompt from the professor or can be more open-ended. It is recommended that the faculty member give one column per day – one prompt per day – to give students time to write.</p> <p>Here's an example:</p> <p>Column 1: Student 1 will turn to X reading and select a quote that you want to think more about. Copy the quote into column 1 and write about it – what is interesting about it? How does it relate to the text itself?</p> <p>Column 2: Student 2 will open the google doc and read what student 1</p>
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	<p>wrote. This faculty member will give a particular prompt – it could be something like “imagine you are having a conversation with student 1. Agree or disagree and explain why.”</p> <p>Column 3: Student 1 reads what student 2 has written. This is where the faculty member could ask student 1 to bring in a quote from a different text.</p> <p>Column 4: The digital notebook returns to student 2 and the faculty member gives another prompt.</p> <p>If you continue on with additional columns, you can also ask students to come up with a question or to reflect on images from the text, for example.</p> <p>After the activity is completed, put the pairs into groups with other pairs – groups of six (three pairs) would work well. Give them a task to complete after reading each other's notebooks. This could be something like: collaboratively develop three probative questions to post on the Moodle.</p>
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<p>Additional Tips or Advice:</p>	<p>The dialectical notebook is very useful for sustained student conversation, for idea generation, and to get students to a place where they might have a question with which to begin an essay.</p>
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