

English 12R & Honors Summer Reading 2017

You will be reading *The Last Lecture* by Randy Pausch. A lot of professors give talks titled "The Last Lecture." Professors are asked to consider their demise and to think about what matters most to them. And while they speak, audiences can't help but mull the same question: What wisdom would we impart to the world if we knew it was our last chance? If we had to vanish tomorrow, what would we want as our legacy?

When Randy Pausch, a computer science professor at Carnegie Mellon, was asked to give such a lecture, he didn't have to imagine it as his last, since he had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer. But the lecture he gave--"Really Achieving Your Childhood Dreams"--wasn't about dying. It was about the importance of overcoming obstacles, of enabling the dreams of others, of seizing every moment (because "time is all you have...and you may find one day that you have less than you think"). It was a summation of everything Randy had come to believe. It was about living.

While you are reading, you will keep a dialectical journal (see instructions below). The journal will be collected Friday, September 8.

Dialectical Response Journal

Dialectic means "the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer." For this summer assignment, you will complete a dialectical journal for *The Last Lecture* to aid in your understanding of the story and to demonstrate that understanding to your teacher.

Dialectical journals will help you keep track of important points in the text as you read. Through them, you are essentially having a "conversation" with the text (jotting down insights, questions, ideas, and thoughts) and with yourself. Your goal is to make notes about points in the novel that you find significant, profound, noteworthy, ironic, troublesome, sad, interesting, confusing, etc...

For this summer reading assignment, you should use a composition book to keep your responses together. You must have at least **four quotes and reactions (commentary) for each section** of the book (there are 6 sections with smaller chapters in each section). You will have a total of 24 journal entries.

How to Create a Dialectical Response Journal

1. Purchase one composition or spiral notebook to serve as your journal.
2. Please put your name, the course title on the front cover in a clear hand. (Neatness in this journal is absolutely essential.)
3. Draw a vertical line in the middle of each page in your journal notebook.
4. At the top of the left column, write the heading "Quotes" and at the top of the right column, write the heading "Commentary."

As you read every chapter of each of the novel, complete four journal entries wherein you write the quotation which prompted your question/commentary in the left column. Use MLA style and include the page number in parentheses after each quotation.

In the right column, write down YOUR ideas, insights, questions, reflections, or comments on the quote in the corresponding left column.

To focus your reading, try to think about literary qualities such as tone, organization, word choice, style, syntax (phrasing and grammar), character analysis, theme, setting, symbolism, your response as a reader, rhetorical devices (devices the author uses to get a particular response from the audience), audience, or speaker.

Choosing Passages from the TEXT

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

- Effective and/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 (for fiction)
- A passage that makes you realize something you hadn't seen before
- Passages with confusing language or unfamiliar vocabulary
- Events you find surprising or confusing
- Passages that illustrate a particular character or setting

How should my dialectal journal be organized? Model Book used: Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt

| Quote from novel w/quotation marks [and pg. #] | Commentary (Your reaction, interpretation, evaluation and analysis to the quote) |
|--|--|
| <p>“The ship pulled away from the dock. Mam said, that’s the Statue of Liberty and that’s Ellis Island where all the immigrants came in. Then she leaned over the side and vomited and the wind from the Atlantic blew it all over us and another happy people admiring the view. Passengers cursed and ran...Mam hung limp and pale on the ship’s rail” (43).</p> | <p>It’s amazing how McCourt creates such a humorous tone even though he was experiencing a life-altering event. The statue of liberty symbolizes freedom and hope. However, McCourt’s mother “vomits” over the side of the ship after seeing it. I wonder if this action might represent the futility of the American Dream. McCourt’s family leaves Ireland for a chance at prosperity, but is McCourt saying (through his humorous tone) that this prosperity is nothing but an illusion?”</p> |

How Your Dialectical Journal will be Assessed

A = Detailed, meaningful passages, plot and quote selections; thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text; includes comments about literary elements (like theme, diction, imagery, syntax, symbolism, etc.) and how these elements contribute to the meaning of the text; raises many thought-provoking, insightful observations; coverage of text is complete and thorough; journal is neat, organized and readable; student has followed ALL directions in the creation/organization of the journal.

B = Less detailed, but good selections; some intelligent commentary about the text; includes some comments about literary elements (like theme, diction, imagery, syntax, symbolism, etc.) but less than how these elements contribute to the meaning of the text; raises some thought-provoking, insightful observations; coverage of text is complete and thorough; journal is neat, organized and readable; student has followed ALL directions in the creation/organization of the journal.

C = A few good details about the text; most of the commentary is vague, unsupported or plot summary/paraphrase; some listing of literary elements, but perhaps inadequate discussion; raises few or obvious observations; addresses most of the reading assignment, but not very thoroughly; journal is relatively neat; student has perhaps not followed all directions in organizing and/or formatting the journal.

D = Hardly any good details from the text; all notes are plot summary or paraphrase; few literary elements, virtually no discussion on meaning; no good observations; limited coverage of text/too short; did not follow directions; difficult to read/follow.

F = No dialectical journal completed on day checked or collected.