A Dialectic Journal for To Kill a Mockingbird | Directions & Sample Responses for Chapter One

Below, please find examples of different types of responses for the first chapter. Notes to you are in boldface for each section. For your journals please continue where this sample leaves off (AFTER PAGE 10). Note that the two paragraph responses for each section in this sample are shorter than the two paragraphs expected in your writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quotations</th>
<th>Responses</th>
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<td>“When he was nearly thirteen, my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow“ (3).</td>
<td>It is interesting to note that the narrator is also one of the main characters. I wonder how her brother broke his arm? Is this whole story going to be about how this happened? Did she break his arm herself? Was there anyone else hurt in this accident? Was it even an accident? <em>(Asking a Question)</em> This quote certainly introduces <em>conflict</em> right away in the <em>exposition</em>. The story is obviously a <em>flashback</em> since Scout is looking back over the years to talk about when Jem was thirteen. Lee wants her adult <em>protagonists</em> commenting on what happens in her youth. Perhaps this will affect the details to come. Lee also pulls in the reader faster with this particular quote. <em>(Extending the meaning)</em></td>
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| Atticus, the lawyer, “knew his people, they knew him, and because of Simon Finch’s industry, Atticus was related by blood or marriage to nearly every family in the town” (5). | Atticus seems to be a well-respected person in Maycomb, and since he is a lawyer, he also must be fairly intelligent. Maycomb must be a relatively small town where everyone knows everyone if Atticus is indeed related to most of the people. Atticus most likely will play an important role in this book because of his position. *(Interpreting/Making a Prediction)* Lee is providing the reader with some background information that certainly *develops character*. Atticus seems as though he will be a reliable character whom the reader can trust. *(Interpreting)* |

(Note: Instead of quoting the part about Atticus and his job immediately before this, I integrated the quote by starting with my own sentence and then seamlessly adding the quote. Check out where the quotation marks are.)
When Scout is talking to Dill about his lack of a father, she says, “’Then if he’s not dead you’ve got one, haven’t you?’”(8).

(Note the “’ quotation marks. See the Owl web site on how to quote a quote. Also note the placement of the question mark and the period.

Scout certainly does speak her mind. She is not mindful of Dill and his feelings. Perhaps there will be no friendship because of this. Dill may never want to open up to her. As she grows older, she may learn how to be more tactful. My sister has not learned this skill yet. I cringe every time we meet new people. I never know what will come out of her mouth. (Making a Connection)

Lee is developing Scout’s character. She is rather a rude child who needs to be taught. She is very capable of causing conflict since words can be more damaging than fists. It also seems as though Lee wants the reader to view Scout as not just a protagonist but also an antagonist as well. (Interpreting)

“There was no hurry, for there was nowhere to go. . . nothing to see outside the boundaries of Maycomb County. But it was a time of vague optimism for some of the people: Maycomb County had recently been told that it had nothing to fear but fear itself” (7- 8).

(Note: Since my quotation wraps to the next page, I made a note of it by putting both pages numbers after the quotation with a hyphen between them. Notice that there is ALWAYS a page number after each quotation.

In addition, please note the use of the ellipsis. Use it only when eliminating words in the MIDDLE OF A QUOTE – not in the beginning or the end.)

(Apparently Maycomb is also a very slow, sleepy town that is pretty isolated from everything else. This seems to be especially true since they only have a “vague” notion of FDR’s speech (an allusion to the Great Depression of the 1930s – must be the era in which the story takes place) and there is “nothing” outside of Maycomb County. I wonder why they see the world this way – maybe people don’t travel because of the Depression or because that’s just not what people did. (Interpreting/Asking a Question)

This certainly sets the mood in this part of the story. Lee could possibly continue this mood or use it to contrast what is to come.

“The Radleys, welcome anywhere in town, kept to themselves, a predilection unforgivable in Maycomb” (9). (Note: In my response, I touched on one of the themes of the novel—prejudice—which is appearing in an atypical way.)

It seems that the town is a little closed minded in viewing the Radleys since they don’t go to church or do other things common in Maycomb. This seems to be a prejudice against their lifestyle since it seems that the town might not really know them and has become pretty superstitious about them. People often get suspicious about what they don’t understand or what seems strange to them. (Extending the Meaning)
| “One night, in an excessive spurt of high spirits, the boy backed around the town square in a borrowed flivver” (10). | This doesn’t sound like a six year old, so it might not be as realistic. However, this is written as a flashback, so Scout must be MUCH older now as she is telling this. Maybe she is just smart. *(Challenging the Text)* |
Summer Reading: Definition of Terms

For your dialectic journal you must “categorize” your quotes. You can find definitions for these categories below.

Making a Connection

- How does the quote relate to me?
- In what ways does the quote have meaning in my life? How will this relate to what the author is trying to say?

Making a Prediction

- What may this quote foreshadow?
- What will happen later in this story?

Interpreting - done in the second paragraph of the pair

- What does this quote mean literally (on the surface level)?
- What symbols could the author be using?
- What is the author really trying to tell me? What is the deeper meaning?

Ask a Question

- What questions does this quote raise?
  - This is a question that you have, not a question that the characters ask.

Extending the Meaning – done in the second paragraph of the pair

- How does this quote relate to society in general – American culture/society outside the novel?
- What idea/theme/motif might be illustrated through this quote and does this same thing apply in the real world?

Challenging the Text

- I disagree with what the character is saying because....