

## Summer Assignment—*Night* Dialectical Journal

### Assignment

You are to read the memoir *Night* by Elie Weisel and complete a dialectical journal to help prepare you for our discussions of the book next year. You will want to get the 2006 edition translated by Marion Weisel.

### What is a Dialectical Journal?

The term “dialectical” means “the search for truth through the resolution of conflicting forces.” Every text contains a hidden meaning, and the reader struggles to unlock it through a debate with the text. It is this argument, this tension, that illustrates the reader's involvement, and it is the journal that records the conversation.

Your dialectical journal is due at the end of the first week of school. It will be your first major grade. You will be graded on the following:

- Shows evidence of critical thinking throughout assignment
- Shows a personal connection to the topic and a unique perspective
- Shows attention to detail throughout
- Follows format directions

### Description

Begin with a spiral-bound notebook. Divide your pages into two vertical columns. Label the left side “Summary” and the right side “Response.” In the column labeled “Summary,” record important elements taken directly from the text (in your own words) in the order in which this information appears. Thus, when you finish, you will have a summary of the text you have read. You should have about a page of summary for every twenty pages of text if you have average-sized handwriting. Do not type this, please. This ability to summarize is an important skill, and it will help you to quickly review the book when we come back to school. Although you are all reading the same text, your summary should be your own. Please do not take a summary from an online source or a friend.

The right column of the notebook will be your personal response. Here you will record interesting quotes from the text along with your questions, comments, and ideas next to that part of the text that has prompted your reactions. You will want to include page numbers where appropriate in your response. You will later use these responses in class to help analyze the text and to express any thoughts or reflections you may have had as you read. In essence, the response section becomes an intellectual history of your reading experience and will be the basis for our class discussion when we return.

### Questions?

Email Mrs. Scharf ([amy.scharf@signature.edu](mailto:amy.scharf@signature.edu)).

# Song of Solomon - Toni Morrison

## Summary

Chap. 1  
pg. 1-5

Mr. Smith, an insurance agent, decides to "fly" from Mercy Hospital to the other side of Lake Superior. M. Hospital is on Not Doctor Street, where the colored doctor used to live. It's been called that because everyone used to call it Dr. Street, but no one would acknowledge it as Dr. Street.

The day Mr. Smith decides to jump from the white people's hospital, the colored doctor's daughter sees him on the roof and goes into labor.

pg. 6-10  
A poor woman sings. A nurse asks a big woman to send one of her kids (Guitar)

to tell a guard. The next day the daughter had a baby. But at 4 yrs. old, the child realized he could fly and lost interest in himself. He was the first colored baby born at Mercy. Changes to Son's p.o.v. - he would try not to be around during his mother's (Ruth Foster's) teas. He would

## Response

Cool beginning. You know which characters are the main ones - they have a presence about them. And you can tell what the community is like by the "Not Doctor" explanation

Who's Macon Dead?

What's a caul? (10)

he walked out "his back washed with the hum of their voices" (10)

Great name!

what is mooring? (10)

Time - 1950's?  
1940's?

→ why switched p.o.v.?