

**AP Seminar: Summer Reading Assignment**  
Girls Academic Leadership Academy, Ms. Knopfler

This summer, you will read *Outliers: The Story of Success* by Malcolm Gladwell.

**Link to book PDF:**

<https://bit.ly/3MECt2Z>

Do not wait until the last minute to read your book. You will not be able to read on the intense level the assignment requires if you wait until the last week of August to read it. Read the ENTIRE book, including the preface and afterword.

**Assignment:** Create a dialectical journal that chronicles your close reading. A dialectical journal is a tool that allows readers to engage with the ideas in the text. While reading, you will select thoughtful passages from the text, then respond to those passages. Your entries should move beyond personal comments and more into analysis of how the piece is crafted. The purpose is to help you engage in the reading in a way to prepare you for rhetorical analysis, argument, and synthesis.

Your submission should include 2-3 dialectical journal entries PER CATEGORY (Categories include - Reader Response, Speaker, Occasion, Audience, Purpose, Subject, Devices and Argument Structures). These entries should aim to span the entire book; they should not only be from the first 100 pages.

**Format:** Typed PDF, using the table format below (see student example). Please feel free to make a copy of [this google doc template](#).

**Due Date:** The summer reading assignment will be due the first day of school, and I will create an assignment on Schoology where you can upload your submission as a PDF.

**Example Journal Entries:** See last two pages of this document!

## Guidelines for Dialectical Journal Entries

Use the following list to help direct your notations as you read. Under each category you will find possible focus areas for your journal entries.

**1. Reader Response:** Be able to trace your reactions and to remind yourself when you find answers to earlier questions. This should help you to note the writer's effectiveness. MAKE NOTE OF:

- Your reactions/emotional responses (humor, surprise, sadness, anger, frustration, disappointment, tension/suspense, disgust, criticism, disagreement, confusion)
- Your questions or lack of understanding or doubts (ask "Why?")
- Your revelations: when "things" become clear to you, when you make links
- Similarities to other works: "Reminds me of..."
- Wonderful writing- passages that strike you artistically/aesthetically and why

**2. Speaker:** Think about who the writer is and what he/she knows is communicated. This should help you decide the author's credibility. MAKE NOTE OF:

- Introductory facts: author backgrounds and relationship to the topic, bias, etc.
- Ethos- how the author establishes credibility and character on the given topic
- Note words and language that indicate the author's attitude or tone and where it shifts or changes and why When the author directly or indirectly states how he/she feels
- Note key lines that stand out as crucial to the author's argument

**3. Occasion:** Think about what caused the author to write about this topic and whether or not it is a valid reason. MAKE NOTE OF:

- The author's reasons for writing- what is the motivation?
- Historical, political, social issues surrounding the topic
- The author's personal reasons as well as the greater world/national reasons for the piece
- Evidence of - views characteristic of the time period and culture surrounding the work
- Descriptions of class judgments, racism, gender biases, stereotypes, etc.

**4. Audience:** Think about what kind of person or people the author intended as the audience and whether the author is able to connect with that audience effectively. MAKE NOTE OF:

- Evidence of whom (and it can be more than one) the author is trying to reach.
- Where the author directly or indirectly addresses a specific audience
- Any "Call to Action" that the author is issuing to the reader
- Pathos- where the author appeals to your sense of emotion through anecdotes and figurative language

**5. Purpose:** Think about the author's purpose in writing this book and whether or not they are effective in that purpose. MAKE NOTE OF:

- Specific reasons for writing: informing, persuading, arguing, refuting, exemplifying- but make sure you note specifics
- Logos: the author's appeal to reason. Examine how he/she makes the reader believe in that purpose

**6. Subject:** Think about what the book is discussing and whether or not the author shows why this subject is important. MAKE NOTE OF:

- Elements related to the problem and issue
- How the author develops or deepens the aspects of the problem/issue
- How the author shows the complications related to the subject and the implication of it to you, the nation, the world, etc.

**7. Authorial Devices and Structures in the Argument:** Think about the author's techniques in delivery and how effective the author's methods are for rhetorical purposes - the use of subtleties, patterns, style, structure, etc. MAKE NOTE OF:

- Changes in point of view/emphasis
- Crucial language/vocabulary- not just a word that you don't understand, but one that seems crucial to understanding the argument- look these up in the dictionary.
- Stylistic techniques: irony, satire, humor, exaggeration, repetition/patterns, possible symbols, significant metaphors and other notable literary and rhetorical devices
- How the author's structure of the argument/book influence the reader and relate to the subject, audience and purpose

## Student Example Entries

Pg	Passage	Response
49	<p>Money makes parenting easier until a certain point--when it stops making much of a difference. What is the point? The scholars who research happiness suggest that more money stops making people happier at a family income of around seventy-five thousand dollars a year. After that, what economists call "diminishing marginal returns" sets in. If your family makes seventy-five thousand and your neighbor makes a hundred thousand, that extra twenty-five thousand a year means that your neighbor can drive a nicer car and go out to eat slightly more often. But it doesn't make your neighbor happier than you, or better equipped to do the thousands of small and large things that make for being a good parent.</p>	<p>I wasn't too sure about the "diminishing marginal returns" so I looked it up. Apparently, that little bit of money makes everything stay the same. So, the phrase "money doesn't buy happiness" really does mean just that. As the article mentioned, you might be able to eat out more but nothing else will really change!</p>
77	<p>If you were to rank all the students in the world taking organic chemistry, Sacks would probably be in the 99<sup>th</sup> percentile.</p> <p>But the problem was, Sacks wasn't comparing herself to all students in the world taking Organic Chemistry. She was comparing herself to her fellow students at Brown. She was a Little Fish in one of the deepest and most competitive ponds in the country--and the experience of comparing herself to all the other brilliant fish shattered her confidence. It made her feel stupid, even though she isn't stupid at all.</p>	<p>Why is organic chemistry capitalized in one paragraph, but not the other?</p> <p>In this section, Gladwell argues that even if you get accepted into an Ivy League school, that might not be the best option for some kids. If the school is more competitive than supportive, some kids, like Caroline Sacks, won't thrive there.</p> <p>Sacks' personal story is interesting, Gladwell also offers graphs later that show how many top scientists who publish their work went to state schools.</p>
123-124	<p>But Cohn? He was selling aluminum siding. His mother thought that he would be lucky to end up a truck driver. He had been kicked out of schools and dismissed as an idiot, and even as an adult, it took him six hours to read twenty-two pages because he had to work his way word by word to make sure he understood what he was reading. He had nothing to lose.</p> <p>"My upbringing allowed me to be comfortable with failure."</p> <p>"Dyslexia--in the best of cases--forces you to develop skills that might otherwise have lain dormant...And Gary Cohn? It runs out he was a really good trader, and it turns out learning how to deal with the possibility of failure is really good preparation for a career in the business world. Today he is the president of Goldman Sachs."</p>	<p>In this section of the book Gladwell uses several stories to support his claim that in some cases people may benefit from struggling with dyslexia. It makes them develop other skills that make them successful. Gladwell relies on the personal stories of several men--David Boies, the Hollywood producer Brian Grazer, and Gary Cohn--all who grew up with dyslexia.</p> <p>Even though Gladwell quotes scientists too in this section, the personal stories are the most memorable. Especially when he uses the men's own words.</p>