

Welcome to AP Literature Summer Assignment 2023

Dear Students,

Your summer reading assignment is to read the book, *The Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver. You will need to purchase a copy so that you may annotate as you read because it will help you interact with the story and complete your dialectical journal. You will be required to have a paper copy of your book on the first day of school.

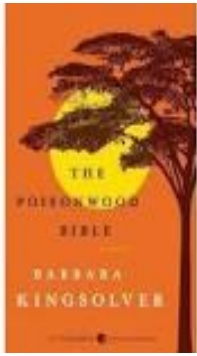
This is a college-level class, so the texts that we will be reading are of a mature nature. In *Poisonwood Bible*, there are topics in the book that are culturally sensitive to race. Due to the nature of the class, I am requiring that you complete a Google form and sign your name. This is a fantastic book and I don't want you to miss the opportunity of enjoying it.

Please complete this form first: [AP Literature and Composition Contract](#)

The Poisonwood Bible by Barbara Kingsolver

The story is told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist preacher who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. They carry with them everything they believe they will need from home, but soon find that all of it--from garden seeds to Scripture--is calamitously transformed on African soil. What follows is a suspenseful epic of one family's tragic undoing and remarkable reconstruction over the course of three decades in postcolonial Africa.

The novel is set against one of the most dramatic political chronicles of the twentieth century: the Congo's fight for independence from Belgium, the murder of its first elected prime minister, the CIA coup to install his replacement, and the insidious progress of a world economic order that robs the fledgling African nation of its autonomy. Against this backdrop, Orleana Price reconstructs the story of her evangelist husband's part in Western assault on Africa, a tale indelibly darkened by her own losses and



unanswerable questions about her own culpability. Also narrating the story, by turns, are her four daughters--the self-centered, teenaged Rachel; shrewd adolescent twins Leah and Adah; and Ruth May, a prescient five-year-old. These sharply observant girls, who arrive in the Congo with racial preconceptions forged in 1950s Georgia, will be marked in surprisingly different ways by their father's intractable mission, and by Africa itself. Ultimately each must strike her own separate path to salvation. Their passionately intertwined stories become a compelling exploration of moral risk and personal responsibility.

[Amazon](#)

You will also need to do some research on the Belgian Congo in Africa. Read the following research article and be familiar with the history and the map of the Congo.

[Ultimate History Project](#) [Belgian Congo Britannica](#)

Dialectical Journal

Start and maintain a Dialectical Journal for *The Poisonwood Bible*. “Dialectical” means “conversational.” Hence, a dialectical journal is a conversation between you and the text.

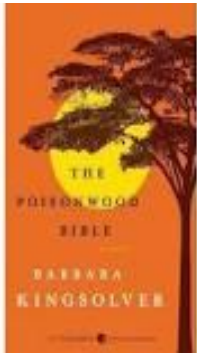
The dialectical journal has two key components:

1. The passage (this usually includes direct textual evidence but may also include summarization).
2. Your commentary on the passage.

The following are in-depth directions on how to do the dialectical journal.

Dialectical Journal Directions

The term “Dialectic” means “The art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer.” Think of your dialectical journal as a series of conversations with the text. The process is meant to help you develop a better understanding of the texts you read.



Procedure for submitting your work:

- Place this journal inside a paper binder. (25 cents at Walmart, etc)
- Write your full name in marker on the front of your paper folder.
- Your responses must be hand-written. I will not accept a word-processed document.
- Your journal is due on the first day of class.



Procedure for writing dialectical journal entries:

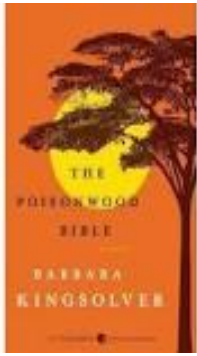
- Create a two-column chart on lined notebook paper.
- Include your full name at the top of the first page.
- As you read, choose passages that stand out to you and record them in the left-hand column of the chart.
- Always include page numbers after your quote.
- In the right-hand column, write your response to the text. You may use the response stems that are included in these directions, or you may respond using your own ideas.
- Vary the types of responses you record on the right-hand side of the page. They shouldn't all be "These details show..." responses.
- The responses on the right should be *thoughtful* and average between 25-50 words each.
- Each time you end an entry, draw a horizontal line across the page to separate your entries.
- **There are 7 books in the novel. You will write 50 entries, so you should have 7-8 entries per book and 5 entries for books 6 and 7 (2 for 6, 3 for 7).** [Book One-p5-83; Book Two-p.87-136; Book Three-p. 191-311; Book Four-p. 317-375; Book Five-p. 381-506; Book Six-p. 511-533; Book Seven-p. 537-543]
- Your entries should span the entire book, not just the beginning.
- Number each entry.

Instructions for the Journal:

Choose passages from the text (left-hand column):

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

- Effective and/or creative uses of language
- Passages that connect to something in your life
- Passages that connect to something else in the world around you
- Passages that remind you of other stories, characters, movies, TV shows, etc.
- Passages that contain confusing ideas or vocabulary (Look up and explain words in the context of the story.)
- Events you find surprising/interesting

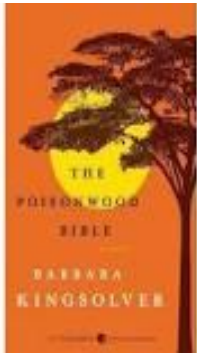


- Passages that help define a particular character or setting
- Examples of patterns: recurring images, ideas, colors, motifs
- Passages that make you realize something you did not know before
- Passages of important shifts in the story

Respond to the text (right-hand column):

You can respond to the text in a variety of ways. The most important thing to remember is that your observations should be specific and detailed (25-50 words on average). These sentence starters are just ideas. Vary the beginnings and the structure of your sentences.

- This reminds me of another specific event in my life...
- This reminds me of another character...
- I infer _____ because _____...
- Based on these lines, I predict _____...
- This passage reveals _____ about the character because ...
- This passage reinforces the theme (author's message) about _____ because...
- The author's tone is _____ here because ...
- This passage creates a _____ mood because...
- These details show/reveal _____ because...
- The author's use of imagery here creates...
- The repetition of _____ reveals...
- I wonder what this means... (cite a page and explain what the passage seems to be about, then offer a possible explanation or two)
- I really don't understand... (refer to page and summarize the content before explaining what you don't understand)
- This setting seems important because...
- I really like/dislike the idea that ... because...
- This is very realistic/unrealistic because...
- This is like another story/movie (name it) because...
- I like/dislike this style of writing because...
- I think the relationship between _____ and _____ is interesting (or any adjective) because...
- I like/dislike the character _____ because...
- If I could rewrite this section, I would change _____ because...
- If I could make a movie of this section, I would cast _____ as _____ because...
- I predict that _____ will happen later because...
- I think the message here is _____ because...
- I agree/disagree with the author's point here because...
- If I could step into the story right now I would...



Example

Quotes/Page Numbers	Responses
#33 “In the swamp, we ran past people who were stuck in the mud, past handicapped people who couldn’t be helped, for anyone who stopped to do so was risking his own life” (227).	I think the message here is that in times of desperation, those who cannot survive on their own are, unfortunately, expendable. The human instinct to protect one's own life will generally outweigh the desire to protect or save others. Exceptions to this could be mothers dying in order to save their young.