



**PROVISO**  
MATHEMATICS AND  
SCIENCE ACADEMY

"A CATALYST FOR GREATNESS"

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**IB English Language & Lit  
Diploma Programme Year 1  
Summer 2016 Reading Assignment  
Due Date: August 22, 2016 / 60 points  
(\*Extra Credit option 30 points)**

Welcome to IB English Language and Literature, and internationally-oriented study of modes of communication. I applaud your decision and look forward to working with you. For our first adventure, you are to read ***War with the Newts*** by Czech author Karel Capek, ***translated by Ewald Osers***. This satirical novel written during the rise of fascism imagines a race of intelligent amphibians who have had quite enough of their human overlords. If you wish, you may also read for a like amount of extra credit, ***The God of Small Things*** by Indian author Arundhati Roy. This contemporary novel depicts, in Roy's gorgeous writing style, a family saga that delves into the consequences of love and hate. Both of these novels are readily available in paperback in or through bookstores and libraries and are also available, new and used, through Amazon or other online sellers.

**While reading, you must keep a Dialectical Journal as described below. These journals are worth 100 points and will be collected on the first day of school. Late work will be accepted, but 10 percentage points must be deducted each day it is delinquent. So, don't be that guy.**

**Guidelines for the Dialectical Journal**

Dialectic means the art or practice of arriving at the truth by using conversation involving question and answer. The "dialectic" was the method the ancient Greek philosopher **Socrates** developed to teach his students how to be actively engaged in the struggle to obtain understanding, even if these inquiries led to the questioning of the ruling authorities of the day. So, naturally, those rulers had him killed. However, no such fate awaits you if you are interested *for even more extra credit* in exploring in your Dialectical Journal his ***Dialogues***, including his gripping trial and execution, as transcribed by **Plato**, his most famous student.

A Dialectical Journal is a written conversation with yourself about a text that encourages the habit of reflective questioning. You will use a double-entry form to examine details of a passage and synthesize your understanding of the text.

**There is to be NO collaboration with other students. Any material taken directly from the Internet or secondary sources such as Wikipedia, Amazon, Sparknotes, or Shmoop is not allowed. However, you may use secondary sources to enhance your understanding.**

**Instructions:**

- (1) Obtain a spiral bound notebook or composition book.
- (2) Draw a vertical line down the middle of the page. Number your pages as you write.
- (3) Label the top of each column: left TEXT and right RESPONSE. Write neatly in pen.
- (4) In the TEXT column, cite passages verbatim from the novel, using quotation marks and including page numbers.

a. Choose at least one passage about every 10 pages that may include when you:

- i. See details that seem important
- ii. Experience an epiphany
- iii. Learn something significant about a character
- iv. Recognize a pattern (overlapping images, repetitions of idea, details, possible foreshadowing, etc.)
- v. Agree or disagree with something a character says or does
- vi. Find an interesting or potentially significant quotation
- vii. Notice something interesting, important or relevant about the writer's style
- viii. Notice effective use of literary devices

(5) In the RESPONSE column, reflect upon the passages by:

- a. Raising questions about the beliefs and values implied in the text
- b. Giving your personal reactions to the passage, the characters or the situation
- c. Discussing the words, ideas, or actions of the author or character
- d. Telling what it reminds you of from your own experiences
- e. Comparing the text to other characters or novels
- f. Writing about what it makes you think or feel
- g. Arguing with or speaking to the characters or author
- h. Making connections to any themes that are revealed to you
- i. Making connections among passages or sections of the work
- j. Making predictions about characters' futures
- k. But what ever you do, please DO NOT MERELY SUMMARIZE THE PLOT**

(6) Each RESPONSE must be at least 60 words

(7) Write down your thoughts, questions, insights, and ideas while you read or immediately after reading around 10 pages so the information is fresh in your mind

(8) As you take notes, you should regularly reread your previous pages of notes and comments

(9) First person is acceptable in the RESPONSE column

(10) Remember that quotations do not have to be dialogue

**Grading:**

**A** = On the left side of the Journal page, the student selects meaningful passages, plot developments, and quotes. The reactions on the right side of the Journal include thoughtful interpretation and commentary about the text, featuring comments about literary devices such as theme, narrative voice or point of view, imagery,

conflict, character development, tone, irony, structure, writing style, syntax, diction and how each contributes to the meaning of the text. The student also makes insightful personal connections and asks thought-provoking questions. Coverage of the text is complete and thorough. The Journal is neat, organized and professional-looking, and the student has followed directions in creation of journal.

**B** = These Journals are less detailed, but still include important plot and quote selections on the left side and some intelligent commentary which addresses thematic connections on the right side. These Journals also include some literary devices, but less analysis on how they contribute to the meaning of the work as a whole. These journals include some personal connections, ask pertinent questions and adequately address all parts of reading assignment. These Journals are neat and readable, and the student has followed directions in the organization.

**C** = These Journals contain few good details from the text. Most of the commentary is vague and unsupported or merely a summary of the plot. These Journals include some listing of literary elements but virtually no discussion of meaning. These Journals make limited personal connections and ask few, or obvious questions. These Journals address most of the reading assignment but are not very long or thorough. These Journals are relatively neat but may be difficult to read. The student has not followed all directions for organization.

**D** = These Journals include hardly any good details from the text. All notes are plot summary and include few literary elements and virtually no discussion on meaning. These Journals make limited personal connections and ask no good questions. These Journals are too short and superficial. The student did not follow directions in organization.

**F** = Student did not complete Journal or violated the independent work requirement.

(1) Points must be deducted on the TEXT side for failure to document accurately and completely according the model below.

(2) Points must be deducted on the RESPONSE side for superficial or incomplete responses.

Sample Journal Entry

TEXT	RESPONSE
<p>“The puddle had frozen over, and me and Cathy went stompin in it. The twins from next door, Tyrone and Terry, were swingin so high out of sight we forgot we were waitin our turn on the tire. Cathy jumped up and came down hard on her heels and started tapdancin. And the frozen patch splinterin every which way underneath was kinda spooky. ‘Looks like a plastic spider web,’ she said. ‘A sort of weird spider, I guess, with many mental problems’” (35).</p>	<p>In this first paragraph of the story, Bambara, the author, indirectly characterizes the narrator using rural Southern dialect to let us know that the story is set in the South and our narrator is not necessarily educated. We also learn that the characters are children from the activities the author describes. The imagery of the puddle freezing over lets us know that it is winter. The author uses scary imagery in describing the splintering puddle. By including the “tapdancin,” the writer seems to be establishing a humorous and lighthearted mood at the beginning of the story. I wonder if the mood will stay lighthearted or if something serious or tragic will happen.</p>

These books have been specially selected not only for their literary merit, but also to delight and move you, and this assignment has been designed to enable you to get the most from your efforts. I sincerely hope that will be your experience. Again, welcome to the class, and I can't wait to meet you and learn what you have to say.

If you have any questions about this assignment during the summer, you are encouraged to contact me at [nrutstein@pths209.org](mailto:nrutstein@pths209.org).