



THE KNOX SCHOOL  
Always Toward the Light

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**Summer Assignment**  
English IV

*The Road*, Cormac McCarthy

**Part One: Dialectical Reader-Response Journal**

As you read, complete a dialectical response journal for each text. See attached tips. There should be AT LEAST 40 entries per novel and they should cover important details about the text. Generally, each response to a quotation should be 2-5 sentences and should include your analysis of the literary and rhetorical techniques present in the quotations, the author's attitude, purpose or tone, and relation to personal experience.

**Part Two: Essay**

**Question:** *The Road* takes the form of a classic journey story—a form that dates back to Homer's *The Odyssey*. To what destination are the man and the boy journeying? In what sense are they "pilgrims"? What, if any, is the symbolic significance of their journey?

**Guidelines:**

1. Proper MLA Format
2. 12 pt. Times New Roman, 1-inch margins
3. Avoid using the words "I" and "You"
4. Include a strong thesis
5. Incorporate textual evidence to support your thesis
6. Avoid simply summarizing the book

**Due Date:** A paper copy of your assignment will be due on the **first** day of your English IV class, and will be given an essay grade. All late assignments will be subject to grade deductions and penalties.

Have a great summer: Happy Reading!

## Tips on How to Annotate a Book

- INTERACT with the book. Imagine you are talking to it!
  - Mark up your book
    - Use a “?” if you are unsure of what is going on or how that part is affecting the story.
    - Use an “!” if it is something you really agree with, really exciting, or just a great point.
    - Create other marks to emphasize your feelings and thoughts.
    - Color code- literary devices, words you don’t know, words with unusual meanings in context, etc.
  - Writing in your book
    - Comment on what is happening.
      - Do you agree? Disagree?
      - Is this a change in characterization?
      - Is this a big event? A small event?
    - Question the text
      - Why is this event happening?
      - Why did the author include this?
      - Why is this character behaving this way?
    - CONNECT to the book. What is happening in the book that you can relate to? How? Why?
    - ASSOCIATE the book with ANOTHER book.
      - Allusions?
      - Similar details/storyline/character?
- LEARN from the book
  - Underline, highlight, or circle key words and phrases and then define/explain them in the margins
  - Connect that word/phrase to another part of the text (if applicable)
- REFLECT on the book
  - What was the author’s writing style?
  - What were some patterns in his/her writing? Did it remind you of another writer?
  - What was the topic? How was it discussed in the novel?
  - Refer to your personal connections and your associations to other texts- summarize how they affected the book and your understanding of the book.

## Sample Dialectical Notebook Set-Up

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Text: \_\_\_\_\_

Author: \_\_\_\_\_

Quotes	Page #	Response
<i>Copy the excerpt from the text in this area of your notebook. If the excerpt is very long, copy the first full sentence, use an ellipsis (...) and write the last full sentence in the section you are referring to.</i>	List the page number you are taking the quote from	RESPOND to the text. What is this part saying? What is the character doing? Why is this important? How does it connect to the reader? How does it enhance the story? What does it make you predict for the rest of the text?  In LATER responses, you can and SHOULD refer to earlier responses from this notebook. Your notes should come full-circle as you read.

Your quotes should exemplify major events in the text or be an example of a literary element. Consider: Plot development, shifts in tone, shifts in point of view, character development, theme, structure, diction, imagery, figurative language, etc.