

Journal Instructions (30% of Total Grade)

The journal will focus on what Mortimer Adler in his classic *How to Read a Book* (1972) calls **inspectional reading** and **demanding reading**. Adler's book is not required for our class, but I highly encourage you to peruse this book. It can be found for cheap on Amazon and might be one of the best purchases you make during your academic career.

Every Journal Entry must have the following two sections:

I. Inspectional Reading

A. Pre-Read

1. Flip through the pages of the reading. Read the editor's introduction and then spend no more than 20 minutes randomly reading section headings, sentences & paragraphs — never read more than 2-3 pages together at once!

2. Journal Task

a) Record one observation about the article/book/author that your pre-read has taught you.

B. Superficial Read (skim read)

1. After taking a break from the text (Lewis Carol suggests 5 minutes), return to the beginning of the text and read it from start to finish in one sitting. If you do not understand something, keep reading! Unfamiliar vocabulary, keep reading! Need to take a bathroom break, keep reading! You need to get through the entire work in one sitting.

2. Journal Task

a) Explain one aspect of the work that you understood after reading it all the way through. Give page numbers to show where the section(s) ranged from which you understood the author.

II. Demanding Reading

A. It is now time to read the work more thoroughly. A good thorough reading is akin to a good conversation between reader and author. It is an exchange of information between two people as to how they think about the world or topic at hand. And, just as with a verbal conversation, questioning becomes the main means of gathering information. A demanding reader is a reader who knows how to question.

B. Journal Task

1. Classify the work: You must define the philosophical problem(s) with which the author is engaging. Identifying the author's problem helps in categorizing the argument as one of the Good, the True, or the Beautiful. In one or two sentences, state the author's thesis.

2. Come to terms with author: Having stated the author's thesis, you now need to reconstruct the path to the thesis. Why does the author believe that his thesis is true? Identify the major sentences (NOT paragraphs) that must be true if the author's thesis is to be true. You are looking for what evidence the author gives in support of his or her thesis. Start at the beginning of the text and record the important sentences providing the sequence or argument of the author. The last sentence should be your thesis statement. NOTE: This exercise should not require more than 5-7 sentences depending on the reading.