

Double-Entry Journals

What Is It?

Students can use a double-entry journal to help them study concepts or vocabulary, express opinions, justify an opinion using text, and understand or respond to the text they are reading. The double-entry journal is a two-column journal. In the left column, students write a piece of information from the text, such as a quotation or a concept, which students want to expand upon, understand better, or question. In the right column, students relate to or analyze the information that is written in the left column. For example, the student could title the left column "Quotes" and the right column "Reflections." In this instance, the student would copy quotes from the text in the left column and reflect upon what they mean in the right column.

Example of Double-Entry Journal page for *Walden* by Henry David Thoreau

Quotations	Reflections
"To be awake is to be alive." (from the chapter "Where I Lived and What I Lived For")	I think that you can go though your whole life asleep if you don't stop and think about what you're doing. It's important to make conscious choices, especially when you're my age.
"I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else whom I knew as well. Unfortunately, I am confined to this by the narrowness of my experience." (from the chapter "Economy")	I disagree with what Thoreau says here. I think that you can know another person as well as you know yourself. I know my best friend as well as I know myself. Sometimes, I don't think I know myself well at all.
"Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe." (from the Conclusion)	Sometimes it is difficult to tell the truth because you don't want to hurt a person's feelings or because it's hard for you to admit something. It was hard for me to tell my dad that I didn't want to go to the same college he did, but I was glad that I told him afterwards.

Why Is It Important?

Double-entry journals give students a way to interact personally with the text, by reflecting on and writing about their understanding of the material they are reading. Students can use the text to form an opinion and then use pieces of text to support their opinions. Students process the information and relate to the text, increasing reading comprehension.

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