The term "dialectic" originates from ancient Greek philosophy and refers to the process of logical argumentation or discussion. It involves examining opposing ideas or perspectives for a more profound understanding of truth. The dialectic method often employs a back-and-forth exchange of questions and answers to investigate and challenge assumptions.

Socrates is an ancient Greek philosopher famous for using the dialectic method as a teaching tool. He would engage his students in dialogue, asking probing questions and encouraging critical thinking to guide them toward discovering their knowledge and understanding.

## Definition of A dialectical journal

A dialectical journal, on the other hand, is a writing technique used to actively engage with a text, such as a piece of literature. It involves creating a conversation with yourself through written entries that explore and analyze different aspects of the text. A standard format for a dialectical journal is the double-entry format, where you record quotes or passages from the text on one side of the page and your reflections, questions, or analysis on the other.

By employing a dialectical journal, you can cultivate the habit of reflective questioning, deepen your understanding of the literature, and explore the themes, characters, and ideas presented in the text. It allows you to actively interact with the material, critically analyze it, and synthesize your thoughts and insights.

For instance, in "The Picture of Dorian Gray" by Oscar Wilde, a dialectical journal could be a valuable tool to delve into the novel's complex themes, such as beauty, morality, and the pursuit of pleasure. Through the journal, you can explore specific passages, analyze Wilde's use of language, and reflect on the implications and messages conveyed in the text.



### A dialectical journal in The Picture of Dorian Gray

Here are examples of entries you could include in a dialectical journal for "The Picture of Dorian Gray" by Oscar Wilde:

1. Passage: "The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it." (Chapter 1) Reflection: Wilde suggests that indulging in temptation might be the only way to overcome it. This challenges traditional notions of resisting temptation.
2. Passage: "There is only one thing in the world worse than being talked about, and that is not being talked about." (Chapter 1) Reflection: Dorian believes that any kind of attention, even hostile, is preferable to being ignored. This highlights his desire for fame and validation.
3. Passage: "Behind every exquisite thing that existed, there was something tragic." (Chapter 2) Reflection: Wilde implies that beauty often has a hidden dark side. This raises questions about the nature of beauty and its relationship to suffering.
4. Passage: "I am too fond of reading books to care to write them." (Chapter 2) Reflection: Lord Henry prefers consuming literature rather than producing it. This contrasts with Basil's artistic drive.
5. Passage: "The books that the world calls immoral are books that show the world its shame." (Chapter 2) Reflection: Wilde argues that books labeled immoral merely reflect society's hidden faults. He suggests that literature can act as a mirror for humanity.
6. Passage: "One can always be kind to people about whom one cares nothing." (Chapter 3) Reflection: Lord Henry suggests that kindness can be insincere when not rooted in genuine care. This prompts questions about the authenticity of human interactions.
7. Passage: "Conscience and cowardice are the same things." (Chapter 4) Reflection: Wilde challenges the idea that conscience is virtuous, implying that it can sometimes result from fear or weakness.
8. Passage: "There is something fatal about a portrait. It has a life of its own." (Chapter 4) Reflection: Basil suggests a portrait can possess an eerie vitality separate from the subject it depicts. This foreshadows the supernatural element of the story.
9. Passage: "Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man's face. It cannot be concealed." (Chapter 7) Reflection: Lord Henry claims that sin leaves visible marks on a person. This raises questions about the relationship between moral character and physical appearance.
10. Passage: "Every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist, not of the sitter." (Chapter 7) Reflection: Basil argues that the artist's emotions and perspective shape the portrait more than the subject's true likeness. This highlights the subjectivity of art.
11. Passage: "Those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things are corrupt without being charming." (Chapter 8) Reflection: Dorian believes people who interpret beauty negatively lack morality and charisma. This reveals his shallow judgment of others.
12. Passage: "I choose my friends for their good looks, my acquaintances for their good characters, and my enemies for their good intellects." (Chapter 9) Reflection: Lord Henry humorously describes his approach to choosing relationships. This highlights his preference for surface-level qualities over deeper connections.
13. Passage: "The only difference between a caprice and a lifelong passion is that the caprice lasts a little longer." (Chapter 9) Reflection: Lord Henry suggests that the line between temporary whims and lasting passions is often blurred. This implies fluidity and impermanence in human desires.
14. Passage: "There is no such thing as a good influence, Mr. Gray. All influence is immoral—immoral from the scientific point of view." (Chapter 11) Reflection: Lord Henry argues that all influence, regardless of intention, is inherently unethical. This challenges the traditional notion of positive influence.
15. Passage: "In the common world of fact, the wicked were not punished, nor the good rewarded." (Chapter 13) Reflection: Wilde implies that the conventional moral order doesn't hold in reality. This suggests a disparity between moral justice and the actual outcomes of life.
16. Passage: "Nowadays most people die of a sort of creeping common sense, and discover when it is too late that the only things one never regrets are one's mistakes." (Chapter 14) Reflection: Lord Henry criticizes the conformity and lack of risk-taking prevalent in society. He suggests that mistakes, rather than safe choices, bring true fulfillment.
17. Passage: "The only horrible thing in the world is ennui." (Chapter 15) Reflection: Lord Henry claims that boredom is the most dreadful aspect of life. This reveals his preference for excitement and novelty.
18. Passage: "Behind every exquisite thing, there was an element of destruction." (Chapter 16) Reflection: Wilde suggests that beauty often carries within it a destructive force. This echoes the theme of the portrait's corruption.
19. Passage: "We are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars." (Chapter 19) Reflection: Wilde highlights the dichotomy between the lowly nature of humanity and the capacity for noble aspirations. This presents a contrast between pessimism and hope.
20. Passage: "The only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it." (Chapter 20) Reflection: This statement is repeated, emphasizing the struggle between temptation and resistance. It challenges conventional wisdom about overcoming vices.

**References:**

1. Book: "The Picture of Dorian Gray" by Oscar Wilde
   * Wilde, O. (1890). The Picture of Dorian Gray. Retrieved from Project Gutenberg: <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/174>

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