

The Double-Entry Journal in the Latin Classroom

by

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As part of an effort to encourage more writing across the curriculum, I have been assigning **double-entry journals** whenever we do a lesson in history or mythology.

The students read the assignment and then prepare the journal entry at home by doing the following:

Divide the paper in half vertically. On the **left side** of the page the student creates a **summary** of the information in the reading. On the **right side** of the page the student writes a **personal response**. The response can be any reaction -- questions, comments, connections. I require that these entries be at least half a page in length and typed.

The next day, the journal entries provide a good basis for discussion. The students in groups of 4 share their entries with each other, and then each group reports to the whole class about their table discussion. I then collect the journals and read quickly through them, occasionally writing a quick comment. The entries are generally worth a homework grade.

This year, I also used the journals in AP Lyric. They had to summarize and respond to each Catullus and Horace poem and turn in the journal about once every two weeks. In this case the journals were longer and were worth more points.

I found that shy students would often share wonderful ideas about the poetry on paper. Some of the quieter students could really express themselves more fully in writing.

I have been very pleased with this addition to my teaching, despite the extra time spent reading the journals, and I strongly recommend it to you.