

North Forsyth High School Honors 9 English Summer 2013 Reading

Directions: As a future Honors 9 English student, your summer reading assignment is *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. You are required to read and annotate this novel prior to school beginning on August 8, 2013. Annotations must be completed in your book, so you will need to purchase this novel. Below are your instructions on how to annotate. Happy reading and see you in August.

Instructions for Annotating a Text

Annotate – v. To furnish (a literary work) with critical commentary or explanatory notes

For the sake of standardization of annotating for class and for grading purposes, your annotations should follow this format:

Inside Front Cover: Character list with small space for character summary and for page references for key scenes, moments of character development, etc.

Inside Back Cover: Themes, allusions, images, motifs, key scenes, plot line, epiphanies, etc. List and add page references and/or notes as you read.

Additional Markings:

Chapter summaries/titles: At the end of each chapter, write a brief summary of the plot at it occurred in that chapter. This does not have to be long or greatly detailed, but should include all relevant incidents whenever possible in your summary. Supply an instructive title for each chapter of the book. This may prove useful for books in which chapters are already titled. This practice will help you solidify your understanding of a chapter in just a few of your own words.

Underline: Within the text of the book, and **as you read**, underline or otherwise note anything that strikes you as important, significant, or memorable. If possible and profitable, write brief comments within the side margins that indicate your motivation in underlining. Focus on essential stylistic devices (diction, syntax, imagery, literary devices, tone) and elements of literature (plot, setting, characterization, point of view and theme). Often, I underline isolated words and phrases. Occasionally, I connect such underlinings with a line, in essence creating a new sentence, a distillation of ideas or meaning.

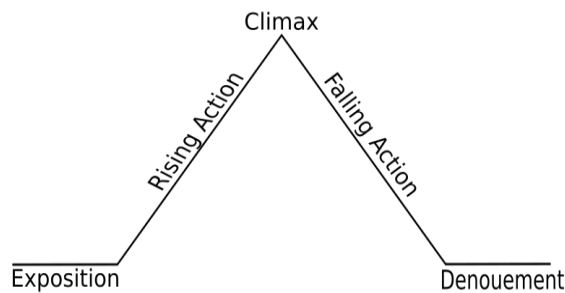
Brackets: Use brackets, **as you read**, together with abbreviations and symbols to indicate passages (too long to underline) that contain important themes, wonderfully nuanced descriptions, especially delightful phrasing and/or syntax, provocative assertions, and figurative language. And, of course, write comments and analytical snippets to clarify your thinking.

Vocabulary/unusual diction: Within the text of the book, circle words that are unfamiliar to you or whose use strikes you as unusual or inventive. Look up words in a dictionary that seem essential to an understanding of the meaning or the sense of the author. If it helps to do so, jot a brief definition or synonym nearby.

Questions: Actively engage the text and further/confirm your understanding of each chapter by writing at least two open-ended questions for each. Short essay questions are most useful. If you have time, you may profit, however, from writing multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching, and true/false questions as well.

Shifts: Note all shifts in point of view. Note all shifts in time. Note all shifts in diction and syntax.

Freytag's Pyramid: Gustav Freytag was a nineteenth century German novelist who saw common patterns in the plots of stories and novels and developed a diagram to analyze them. He diagrammed a story's plot using a pyramid like the one shown. At the end of your novel, draw and label Freytag's pyramid and provide examples of the five plot points.



Final Thoughts on Annotating: Think critically about what you are reading. While the amount of annotation may vary widely from page to page, any notes you add to a text will help you to read more critically – any attempt to annotate your book will help you to understand the reading as you read – and, as I hope these instructions made clear, will help you return to the reading with confidence later.

These Annotation Instructions have been adapted from Chris Rokous's excellent guide to annotating which, in turn, was in part inspired and informed by "How to Mark a Book," an essay by Mortimer J. Adler, Ph. D.

Example of an Annotated Page:

