

AP Literature: Summer Assignment 2023

1. Read the following article: <https://zenhabits.net/why-read/>

Assignment: Write about your relationship with reading. Share an honest assessment of the role that it plays in your life. Think about how you would conceptualize and categorize reading's impact on you. For this assignment, honesty is valued more than flattery. The truth in your reflection is more important than whether you enjoy reading or only read when you are asked to.

Your writing should be about 1 double-spaced page and submitted through Google Classroom before August 31, 2023. Your classroom will be open prior to the start of the school 23-24 year.

This is the first step in helping your teacher get to know you as a reader. I want to read about why you feel the way that you do.

2. Choose **one** book from the following list to read over the summer. You may check out a copy from the GHS library until June 7th or purchase a copy for yourself.

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain

The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe

Assignment: As you read, annotate essential literary elements that aid in your understanding of the text and will help prepare you for a comprehension-based test and essay during the first week of school.

If you purchase your book you can annotate directly on the pages. If you borrow a book from the library, you will need to utilize sticky notes to annotate. Annotations will be checked on the first day of school, August 31, 2023.

How do I annotate? *Please read thoroughly* and use the guide on the following pages to familiarize yourself with novel annotations.

Reading is the cornerstone of success in AP Literature. Furthermore, beyond reading a text, analyzing through annotations will help deepen your understanding and prepare you for the work we will do throughout the school year.

Note-Taking vs. Annotation

Most serious readers take notes of some kind when they are carefully considering a text, but many readers are too casual about their note-taking. Later they realize they have taken notes that are incomplete or too random, and then they laboriously start over, re-notating an earlier reading. Others take notes only when cramming for a test, which is often merely "better than nothing." Students can easily improve the depth of their reading and extend their understanding over long periods of time by developing a systematic form of annotating. Such a system is not necessarily difficult and can be completely personal and exceptionally useful.

First, what is the difference between annotating and "taking notes"? For some people, the difference is nonexistent or negligible, but in this instance, I am referring to a way of making notes directly onto a text such as a book, a handout, or another type of publication. The advantage of having one annotated text instead of a set of note papers plus a text should be clear enough: all the information is together and inseparable, with notes very close to the text for easier understanding, and with fewer pieces to keep organized.

Think of annotations as "showing your work" while you read just as you sometimes show your work in a math problem. You are showing what you are thinking while you read and analyze—and thinking is a word-based activity, not just a nebulous puff of energy. If you can't articulate your thoughts, then you have to question if you know what you're thinking. Thinking is how you connect to the text. This, of course, requires ACTIVE participation with the text, engaging your mind while you read, not skimming the page. Listening to music or the TV can split your focus so that you don't have as much of a connection with the text. Marking important sections can also be helpful in locating them quickly in discussions.

What the reader gets from annotating is a deeper initial reading and an understanding of the text that lasts. You can deliberately engage the author in conversation and questions, maybe stopping to argue, pay a compliment, or clarify an important issue—much like having a teacher or storyteller with you in the room. If and when you come back to the book, that initial interchange is recorded for you, making an excellent and entirely personal study tool.

Why Annotate?

Annotate any text that you must know well, in detail, and from which you might need to produce evidence that supports your knowledge or reading, such as a book on which you will be tested. Don't assume that you must annotate when you read for pleasure; if you're relaxing with a book, well, relax. Still, some people—let's call them "not-abnormal"—actually annotate for pleasure.

Don't annotate other people's property, which is almost always selfish, often destructive, rude, and possibly illegal. For a book that doesn't belong to you, use adhesive notes for your comments, removing them before you return the text.

Tools: Highlighter, Pencil, sticky notes, and your chosen text.

If you purchase your own book you are welcome to write directly on the pages. If you borrow a book from the library you will need to use sticky notes to annotate and potentially notebook paper to make lists or on-going thoughts.

1. Yellow Highlighter

A yellow highlighter allows you to mark exactly what you are interested in. Equally important, the yellow line emphasizes without interfering. Some people underline, but underlining is laborious and often distracting. Highlighters in blue and pink and fluorescent colors are even more distracting. The idea is to see the important text more clearly, not give your eyes a psychedelic exercise. While you read, highlight whatever seems to be key information. At first, you will probably highlight too little or too much; with experience, you will choose more effectively which material to highlight.

2. Pencil

A pencil is better than a pen because you can make changes. Even geniuses make mistakes, temporary comments, and incomplete notes. While you read, use marginalia—marginal notes—to mark key material. Marginalia can include check marks, question marks, stars, arrows, brackets, and written words and phrases. Use the following system:

3. Your Text

Inside the front cover of your book, keep an orderly, legible list of "key information" with page references. Key information in a novel might include themes; passages that relate to the book's title; characters' names; salient quotes; important scenes, passages, and chapters; and maybe key definitions or vocabulary. Remember that key information will vary according to the genre and the reader's purpose, so make your own good plan.

Use the following format:

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

Inside Back Cover: Build a list of themes, allusions, images, motifs, key scenes, plot lines, epiphanies, etc. as you read. Add page references and/or notes as well as you read. Make a list of vocabulary words on a back page or the inside back cover, if there's still room. Possible ideas for lists include the author's special jargon and new, unknown, or otherwise interesting words.

Beginning of Each Chapter: Provide a quick summary of what happens in the chapter. Title each chapter or section as soon as you finish it, especially if the text does not provide headings for chapters or sections.

Top margins: provide plot notes—a quick few words or phrases that summarize what happens here. Go back after a chapter, scene, or assignment, and then mark it carefully. (Useful for quick location of passages in discussion and for writing assignments).

Bottom and Side Page Margins: Interpretive notes (see list below), questions, and/or remarks that refer to the meaning of the page. Markings or notes to tie in with notes on the inside back cover.

Interpretive Notes and Symbols to Use while Annotating:

- **Underline** or **highlight** keywords, phrases, or sentences that are important to understanding the work.
- Write **questions** or **comments** in the margins—your thoughts or “conversation” with the text.
- **Bracket** important ideas or passages.
- Use **vertical lines** at the margin: to emphasize a statement already underlined or bracketed
- Connect ideas with **lines** or **arrows**.
- Use **numbers** in the margin: to indicate the sequence of points the author makes in developing a single argument.
- Use a **star, asterisk, or other doo-dad** at the margin (use a consistent symbol): to be used sparingly, to emphasize the ten or twenty most important statements in the book.
- Use **???** for sections or ideas you don’t understand.
- **Circle** words you don’t know. Define them in the margins.
- A check mark means “I understand”.
- Use **!!!** when you come across something new, interesting, or surprising.

Some of the things you may want to mark as you notice them:

- Use an **S for Symbols**: A symbol is a literal thing that also stands for something else, like a flag, a cross, or fire. Symbols help to discover new layers of meaning.
- Use an **I for Imagery**: Imagery includes words that appeal to one or more of the five senses. Close attention to imagery is important in understanding an author’s message and attitude toward a subject.
- Use an **F for Figurative Language**: Figurative language includes things like similes, metaphors, and personification. Figurative language often reveals deeper layers of meaning.
- Use a **T for Tone**: Tone is the overall mood of a piece of literature. Tone can carry as much meaning to the story as the plot does.
- Use a **Th – Theme**: In literature, a theme is a broad idea in a story or a message or lesson conveyed by a work. This message is usually about life, society, or human nature. Themes explore timeless and universal ideas. Most themes are implied rather than explicitly stated.
- Use an **NV for Narrative Voice**: The narrative voice illuminates the point of view, perspective, reliability, and function.
- Use an **IR for Irony**: Irony is a situation in which there is a contrast between expectation and reality; irony can be dramatic, situational, or verbal.
- Use a **C for Characterization**: Characterization encompasses perspective, motives, character change, foils, relationships, and complexities.
- Plot elements (setting, mood, conflict, etc.)
- Diction (effective or unusual word choice)

As you mark, you begin to notice patterns the author has or where he or she deviates from a pattern. Much of the work of a critical or analytical reader is noticing these patterns and variations. Notice that annotations are meant to be more than a "scavenger hunt" for literary techniques and rhetorical devices. Along with marking these, you should comment on the effectiveness or significance of the device. It's great if you can detect alliteration in a passage, but that in and of itself is useless unless you can tell that this alliteration demonstrates the mental breakdown of the character, for example. It's amazing if you recognize the hubris of a character, but how does this instance differ from those occurring previously in the novel?

SAMPLE ANNOTATION FOR *Lord of the Flies*

You can see that I haven't gone crazy with highlighting or underlining—if every line is marked up, you'll have a hard time making sense of your notes. Instead, I've noted key phrases and emphasized sections that seem to relate to themes or greater meanings.

