

Annotation – Why and How

WHY?

To trace your reading

- Setting a purpose – for yourself with the specific kind of text
- Asking questions – about the structure or content of the text as you go
- Connecting – material within the text, and to your own experience and the world
- Summarizing – important information in your own words per page
- Inferring – what is important and what the author isn't directly saying

To be an *active* reader

- It keeps you wide awake, not merely conscious
- Active reading is thinking, and thinking and thinking uses language for expression.
 - If you know what you think but can't express you don't usually know what you think
- Writing is another way to engage your brain and help you remember the material for later




To develop your understanding of analysis

- Literary: character and plot (who, what?), figurative (why, how?), thematic (messages, ideas)
- Argumentative: premises and evidence, counterpoints, evaluations and conclusions

To make review, writing, or studying easier

- Centralized notes
- Questions AND answers together

Some Abbreviations/Symbols

b/c = because
& = and
W/ = with
W/O = without
b/t = between
e.g. = for example
ex = example
info = information
b4 = before
EV = evidence for an argument
 = increase, improvement, rising
 = decrease, decline, falling
* = important
** = very important
 = utmost importance, crucial to understanding
→ = use arrows to point to exact locations
{ or [= use to make notes on a larger section

PLOT = plot item & use one of the following:

EXP = exposition or explanation

TP = turning point

CF = conflict

RA = rising action

CX = climax

FA = falling action

RES = resolution

CH = characterization

S = setting

POV = point of view, mention type:

1st person, limited omniscient, etc.

TH or MI = theme or main idea

LT = literary term, identify type:

irony, tone, foreshadowing, metaphor, symbolism, personification, etc.


HOW?

1. Pre-Read

Skim quickly. In a non-literary work, this can involve highlighting (not too much!) or underlining obviously important things like section titles, conclusions, inset information. This should include title and subtitles, illustrations or diagrams, format, type of text, inside front and back covers.

2. Read for Writing , start with “Marginalia”

(notes in the margins) – use pencil or >1 color ink to illustrate changes in your thinking these symbols can be whatever works for you; here are some simple ideas to start with:

?		+	-	MI	EV	“”	↔
unclear	key idea	positive point/tone	negative point/tone	main idea	evidence	quote of note	connections

When things are unclear, either write a question, or pause to make inferences/hypothesize
Unfamiliar words should be defined in text, or keep a list at the end of the book
Connections should be explained in brief your own words
Text – Text, Text – Self, Text – World

3. Summarize

- Looking over each paragraph, page, or section, summarize the main idea or main point(s) in your own words at the top of the page or between paragraphs. You can do this as you go or in a re-read after marginalia.
- Keep a list in the front of the book or chapter of “key information” with page # references. Title each chapter or section as soon as you finish it, if not done by the author.

4. Re-Read or Review

This is good to do in another color, or in pen. Finish answering any questions, go back over your connections and strengthen or clarify them, add any information that you have come to later.

Things to Note in a Close Reading of a Literary Work

Good annotation will have a balance of written ideas of your own thoughts, connections, and ideas with your understanding of the author’s ideas and intentions.

Language: diction, word choice, repetition, emphasis

Narrative: who is telling the story and how is it told

Syntax: the order in which the words appear

Context: historical context and author’s background

Example: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=adXdTXEzmqE&feature=related>