

AP Literature and Composition
The GREAT Summer of 2024 Reading Assignment

The Great Gatsby by F. Scott Fitzgerald (recommended ISBN: 9780684801520)

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens (recommended ISBN: 9780142423356)

- 1) **Read/annotate:** Read the two books—both “greats” in many ways!—listed above **before August 7**. Annotate each text carefully using the attached document as a guide; you will use your annotated copy for a number of assignments (including quiz/test grades) once school begins, so be sure that you have made notes and highlighted key passages. (You are not required to have your own copy, but if you do not own your copy, be sure to use sticky notes to annotate.) You must have both annotated copies in class August 7.
- 2) **Journal:** Purchase a single-subject notebook and complete a one-paragraph (minimum 6 sentences with at least one cited quotation) journal after you finish reading each chapter of *The Great Gatsby* and after every five chapters of *Great Expectations* (the last entry will be for Chapters 56-59); label each entry with the book title and the chapter number, and put all entries for one book together (don’t alternate if reading both at the same time). Journal entries may address any topic as long as you are analyzing, not summarizing. Consider conflict, setting, symbols, theme, foreshadowing, flashbacks, protagonist/antagonist, and connections to other texts you have read. **This notebook—with 9 entries for *The Great Gatsby* and 12 entries for *Great Expectations*—will be due at the beginning of class August 7.**
- 3) **Brainstorm:** Although the order in which you read the texts does not matter, you need to consider connections between the texts as part of your preparation for an in-class essay over these two texts during the first three weeks of school.
- 4) **Study:** Learn the attached list of terms and definitions from Unit 1 to be prepared for a test on **Friday, August 9**. (Many are terms we have studied previously.)
- 5) **Read other books of literary merit** (suggested, but not required): The AP Literature & Composition exam includes a free-response question that asks you to analyze a theme or issue in a work that you have read; the more texts you have read by May 2024, the easier this question will be. (*Wuthering Heights* is on my list for this summer, and I recommend it for you, too!). Be sure to annotate so you can go back to refresh your memory before the exam.

Please don’t hesitate to email me at jpalumbo.tja@gmail.com with questions.

-Mrs. Palumbo

An Annotation Guide

Note-Taking vs. Annotation

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 are 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 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.

Criteria for Successful Annotation

Using your annotated copy of the book six weeks after your first reading, you can recall the key information in the book with reasonable thoroughness in a 15- to 30-minute review of your notes and the text. 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.

Tools: Highlighter, Pencil, and Your Own Text

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:

- **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 line, 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 meaning of the page. Markings or notes to tie in with notes on the inside back cover.

Interpretive Notes and Symbols to be used are:

- Underline or highlight key words, 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.

- And other literary devices (see below).

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

- Use an S for Symbols: A symbol is a literal thing that also stands for something else, like a flag, or 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.
- 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 and 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?

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 genre and the reader's purpose, so make your own good plan.

Adapted from "An Annotation Guide: How and Why to Annotate a Book" by Nick Otten

Modified document from

https://www.covcath.org/uploaded/06_Students/Annotation_Guide_AP_Language.pdf

AP Literature & Composition Terms: Unit 1

(from *Literature and Composition*, 3rd edition)

antagonist: character in a story or play who opposes the protagonist; while not necessarily an enemy, the antagonist creates or intensifies a conflict for the protagonist; an evil antagonist is a villain

bildungsroman: a novel that explores the maturation of the protagonist, with the narrative usually moving the main character from childhood into adulthood (a coming-of-age story)

claim: states the argument's main idea or position in an analytical essay; differs from a topic or subject because it has to be arguable

climax: the point in a story when the conflict reaches its highest intensity

conflict: the tension, opposition, or struggle (usually between protagonist and antagonist) that drives a plot; external: opposition or tension between two characters or forces; internal: occurs within a character

denouement: "untying the knot"—a phase of plot in which the conflict has been resolved and balance is restored to the world of the story

characterization: the method by which the author builds, or reveals, a character; it can be direct or indirect.

- **Indirect** characterization means that an author shows rather than tells readers what a character is like through what the character says, does, or thinks, or what others say about the character.
- **Direct** characterization occurs when a narrator tells the reader who a character is by describing the background, motivation, temperament, or appearance of that character

epiphany: A character's transformative moment of realization. James Joyce, often credited with coining this as a literary term, defined it as the "sudden revelation of the *whatness* of a thing," the moment in which "the soul of the commonest object seems to us radiant... a sudden spiritual manifestation [either] in the vulgarity of speech or of a gesture or in a memorable phrase of the mind itself."

evidence: support for claims of an argument; in literary analysis, evidence is drawn from the text of the work of literature

exposition: the contextual and background information told to readers (rather than shown through action) about the characters, plot, setting, and situation

falling action: in a plot diagram, the result (or fallout) of the climax or turning point; in this phase, the conflict is being resolved

flashback: a scene in a narrative that is set in an earlier time than the main action

foreshadowing: a plot device which includes hints at future events

in medias res: Latin for “in the middle of things,” a technique in which the narrative begins in the middle of the action

narrative: a story; narratives may be written in prose or verse, as in narrative poetry

plot: The arrangement of events in a narrative. Almost always, a conflict is central to a plot, and traditionally a plot develops in accordance with the following model: exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, denouement. There can be more than one sequence of events in a work, although typically there is one major sequence along with other minor sequences. These minor sequences are called subplots. The following terms refer to the chronological arrangement of events in a narrative:

- **linear plot:** A plot that is arranged chronologically; it effectively builds tension and suspense and charts the growth of characters in a fairly straightforward way.
- **nonlinear plot:** A plot that presents the events of a narrative either out of chronological order or interrupts that order using techniques such as flashback, foreshadowing, and *in medias res*.

point of view: The position from which a narrator relates the events of a narrative. The most common points of view are:

- **first person:** A narrator who is a character in the story and who refers to him- or herself as "I." First-person narrators are sometimes unreliable narrators.
- **second person:** Though rare, some stories are told using second-person pronouns (you). This casts the reader as a character in the story.
- **third-person limited omniscient:** A narrator who relates the action using third-person pronouns (he, she, it). This narrator is usually privy to the thoughts and actions of only one character.
- **third-person omniscient:** A narrator using third-person pronouns. This narrator is privy to the thoughts and actions of all the characters in the story.

protagonist: the main character in a work; often a hero or heroine but not always

resolution: the working out of a plot's conflicts, following the climax

rising action: the events, marked by increasing tension and conflict, that build up to a story's climax

setting: where and when a story takes place

theme: underlying issues or ideas of a work