

How to Annotate a Book

Writing in your book is a skill that helps you become a stronger reader. When you annotate, you create a dialogue with the text that indicates a deeper reading and at the same time, you create a study tool. Often, students are afraid to complete a summer reading assignment in June because they worry they will forget the story; however, good annotating serves as your memory.

To annotate effectively, keep it simple. The more colors you use, the more complicated taking notes becomes, and you want this process to be relatively easy so that you annotate everything you read, not just summer reading. You do not need to write pages of notes; rather, your words should be precise so that you can glance at a page or chapter and quickly recall what you have read.

NOTE: All annotations must be HANDWRITTEN in the book OR on post-it notes.

Recommended Tools:

- a. A contrasting ink pen is ideal because it is a different color than the black ink on the page. Blue works best, but other colors work as well (stay away from fluorescent inks--these are too hard to read).
- b. Use your book jacket or the back few pages of a book. These are good places to make character lists, lists of major events or places, and/or vocabulary lists.
- c. A paperback dictionary by your side as you are reading gives you a chance to look up a word you don't know the meaning of and jot it down quickly.

Recommended Tips:

1. Try to make about 3-5 notes per chapter. Your teachers do not expect you to copy the book or have a note on every page.
2. Use the jacket covers for important information such as characters, setting, or vocabulary terms.
3. Use the margin of the pages to jot down important events in each chapter.
4. At the end of each chapter, briefly summarize (bullet points are okay) the material.
5. Circle unknown vocabulary words and define all words.
6. Underline important quotes or passages, paying close attention to those that indicate a theme, conflict, symbol, or motifs. If you underline a passage, write down a few words to remind yourself later *why* you underlined the information. Underlining without words is almost pointless.

Annotating is an art form rather than a science. Eventually, you should develop your own system that works best for you. A book that is well-annotated is a great study tool and an invaluable resource on a test, especially an open book test (hint, hint).