



## AP English Literature and Composition

The purpose of summer reading is to encourage students to develop a life-long habit of reading, echo the students' classroom learning experiences, and provide opportunities for students to read classics and other texts that expand their perspectives and stimulate interest in the world around them. The texts that we will be reading throughout the summer (as well as the school year) will help to prepare you for college and consist of varying text types and complexities.

### 1. Read and Annotate ALL of the Following Literary Texts: (Bring on the first day of class)

*How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas Foster (336 pages)

*Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte (18<sup>th</sup> Century Fiction-383 pages )

*The Bell Jar* by Sylvia Plath (Fiction – Mental Illness Awareness-244 pages)

*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* by Thomas Foster (Fiction - Autism Awareness-266 pages)

Students should annotate their actual copies (paperback or hardback) of their text using the “**Annotation Guide**” provided below. The texts will be ‘checked’ during the first week of school and students will only be allowed to use their annotated texts on the tests the first week of school.

### 2. Write a Literary Analysis Essay: (Must be submitted on the first day of class)

A literary analysis is not a summary of a literary work. The purpose of a literary analysis is to demonstrate why the author used specific ideas, word choices, or writing structures the author uses within the work to convey his or her message. For more information on how to write a literary analysis, go to the site below:

[https://www.bucks.edu/media/bcccmedialibrary/pdf/HOWTOWRITEALITERARYANALYSISSESSAY\\_10.15.07\\_001.pdf](https://www.bucks.edu/media/bcccmedialibrary/pdf/HOWTOWRITEALITERARYANALYSISSESSAY_10.15.07_001.pdf)

Using one of the prompts provided below, students should have a printed, typed, MLA formatted essay of 400-500 words analyzing one of the literary texts above.

Please choose one of the two prompts below for your literary analysis essay:

- a. Novels and plays often depict characters caught between colliding cultures --national, regional, ethnic, religious, institutional. Such collisions can call a character's sense of identity into question. Select one of the two literary texts in which a character responds to such a cultural collision. Then write a well-organized essay in which you describe the character's response and explain its relevance to the work as a whole.

- b. One of the strongest human drives seems to be a desire for power. Write an essay in which you discuss how a character in one of the literary texts struggles to free himself or herself from the power of others or seeks to gain power over others. Be sure to demonstrate in your essay how the author uses this power struggle to enhance the meaning of the work.

DO NOT SUMMARIZE !!!

I understand that this may be your first attempt at a literary analysis. I ask you to try your best and know that we will continue to learn and improve on our literary analysis skills as the year progresses.

**3. College Essay: (Must be submitted the first day of class)**

The college essay must be printed, typed and MLA formatted. Students may choose their prompt from the options provided. The response should be 400-500 words.

Write an original 400-500 word essay using the prompt of your choice below. Include the prompt at the start of your essay. Your essay must be typed in 12-point font, double-spaced, and printed. It is due the first full day of the school year. Please look at what schools you are applying to and choose an essay prompt from either the Common or Coalition choices based on where you will be applying. If you are applying to schools where you will need to complete both the Common and Coalition applications, look at the prompts for both applications, and see if there is one essay prompt that would “fit” for both applications. There is overlap!

Coalition Application Essay Prompts:

1. Tell a story from your life, describing an experience that either demonstrates your character or helped to shape it.
2. Describe a time when you made a meaningful contribution to others in which the greater good was your focus. Discuss the challenges and rewards of making your contribution.
3. Has there been a time when you've had a long-cherished or accepted belief challenged? How did you respond? How did the challenge affect your beliefs?
4. What is the hardest part of being a student now? What's the best part? What advice would you give a younger sibling or friend (assuming they would listen to you)?

Common Application Essay Prompts:

1. Some students have a background, identity, interest, or talent that is so meaningful they believe their application would be incomplete without it. If this sounds like you, then please share your story.
2. The lessons we take from obstacles we encounter can be fundamental to later success. Recount a time when you faced a challenge, setback, or failure. How did it affect you, and what did you learn from the experience?
3. Reflect on a time when you questioned or challenged a belief or idea. What prompted your thinking? What was the outcome?
4. Describe a problem you've solved or a problem you'd like to solve. It can be an intellectual challenge, a research query, an ethical dilemma - anything that is of personal importance, no matter the scale. Explain its significance to you and what steps you took could be taken to identify a solution.

5. Discuss an accomplishment, event, or realization that sparked a period of personal growth and a new understanding of yourself or others.
6. Describe a topic, idea or concept you find so engaging that it makes you lose all track of time. Why does it captivate you? What or who do you turn to when you want to learn more

### **Annotation Guide**

For each of the literary texts that you have been assigned to read during the summer, please make sure that you are annotating the text. Texts should be brought to class the first day that you return to school. During the first two weeks of class, you will be taking tests regarding the "Summer Reading" and the only resource you will be allowed to use is the corresponding text(s).

#### 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 your 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.

#### Criteria for Successful Annotation:

Studies show that 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.

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 (tests will occur during the first two weeks of class). 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. Don't annotate your own

book if it has intrinsic value as an art object or a rarity. Consider doing what teachers do: buy an inexpensive/used copy of the text (thriftbooks.com) for class.

### 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, abbreviations, and phrases.

### 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 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)