



Wayne Country Day School Annotation Guide

What is an Annotation?

An annotation is a critical or explanatory note (or body of notes) added to a text. Essentially, annotations are an ongoing conversation between the reader and the text, so the reader can achieve a deeper understanding of what they are reading.

Annotation Basics

How can I mark the text?

- Highlight
- Underline
- Circle or box words or phrases
- Brackets or parentheses
- Use idea-appropriate symbols
- Draw connecting arrows
- Use punctuation to reflect your reaction (exclamation marks, question marks, etc.)
- Put a sticky note on it
- Write your commentary about what you marked in the margins

When annotating, here are a few things you can do to deepen your understanding, which apply to most kinds of texts:

- Circle unknown words and define them in the margins
- Underline/highlight important lines or phrases.
- Underline/highlight repeated ideas, phrases, or situations.
- Draw connecting lines between ideas that are related.
- Write questions you have about the reading in the margins.
- In a difficult text, mark entire sections and put them in your own words.
- Summarize the entire section or text on a sticky note and put it at the beginning of the section.
- Write a small note in the margin about an outside connection or real-life example that comes to mind when you are reading.
- Specifically look for themes, topics, or information which would contribute to a class discussion (i.e. If your history class has been going over the causes of the French Revolution, mark any evidence which would provide more insight into that event.)

Methods

There are many methods one might use for annotating a text, and what strategy you use depends on the type of text, and even the class or context for which you are annotating. Below are several suggested manners in which to annotate a text.

Traditional Annotation Method

Students who use the traditional annotation method have an advantage on the AP literature and composition test over students who use another method since this method most directly translates to annotating passage on the test. Books with larger margins, usually not the mass-market paperbacks, work best for this method. Students mark directly in their books or on the text. They chose a margin area in the book near the highlighted section, and write out the significance directly on the page.

Color Coding Method

In this method, assign certain colors to certain features you are noting in a text. For example, in a literature class, it is important to look for literary elements such as (but not limited to) symbolism, characterization, figurative language, and rhetorical devices. So, any time you see symbolism, you may decide to mark that part pink (and so on).

Next to the highlighting, name the device or what you are marking and, in a few words, state its significance. It is likely you will not have room for sentences, so make it brief and meaningful to you.

There are picture examples of this method listed at the end of this document.

Suggestions for Success

- Use highlighters, colored pens, and colored sticky notes for this method. Markers and pencils will often bleed through or fade.
- As you annotate, remember not mark too much. If you mark everything, nothing will stand out!
- Use context clues (or a dictionary) to figure out any unfamiliar words; write the definitions right in the text.

Examples

(Annotation Guide for the novel *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson)

<p><u>Theme:</u> Green</p> <p>Coming of Age Communication vs Silence Family and Friendship Memory and Trauma Isolation and Loneliness, and Depression Appearance vs Reality</p>	<p><u>Characterization (CH):</u> Yellow</p> <p>Melinda Sordino Heather David Petrakis Andy Evans Melinda's mother Melinda's father Mr. Freeman Rachel Bruin Ivy Nicole The Marthas Greta-Ingrid Mr. Neck</p>		
<p><u>Symbolism:</u> Pink</p> <p>Trees, Plants, Seeds, and Forests Birds Melinda's Closet Melinda's Bedroom Warmth/Sunlight Water/Ice/Melting Mirror Mouth Poster of Maya Angelou</p>			
<p><u>Language and Literary Devices:</u> Blue</p> <p>Figurative Language (simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, allusion, irony, etc.) Point of View (POV) first-person, third-person limited, third-person omniscient Tone (the attitude of the author toward the subject such as humorous, serious, grave, didactic, etc.)</p> <table border="0"><tr><td data-bbox="151 1249 885 1554"><p><u>Plot:</u> Purple</p><p>Exposition (EXP) Turning Point (TP) Conflict (CF) Rising Action (RA) Climax (CX) Falling Action (FA) Resolution (RES)</p></td><td data-bbox="893 1249 1463 1554"><p>Rhetorical Devices</p><p>Ethos Logos Pathos</p></td></tr></table> <p><u>Comparisons & Contrasts (CC):</u> Orange</p> <p>Popular vs Nerdy Loves School/Hates School Conformity vs Non-conformity</p>		<p><u>Plot:</u> Purple</p> <p>Exposition (EXP) Turning Point (TP) Conflict (CF) Rising Action (RA) Climax (CX) Falling Action (FA) Resolution (RES)</p>	<p>Rhetorical Devices</p> <p>Ethos Logos Pathos</p>
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Suggestion for Success

It is important to remember that when annotating, **you are not restating what has already been said**. You are explaining why a particular phrase, sentence, paragraph, etc. is important to understanding the text beyond the literal (what is written) to what can be **interpreted** (what is **implied**) or can **be applied** (how it relates to other texts/current events/real life situations).

Post-it Note Method

Students who use the post-it note method still highlight (and sometimes number) annotations in the book. Then they either use full adhesive post-it notes directly on the page or they use page markers or tabs at the edge of the pages to write out their label and significance.

Annotation Sheet method

Students who use an annotation sheet still highlight in the book, but instead of writing their annotations in the margins, they number them. Then, they have a sheet of handwritten or typed labels and commentary (significance) that are numbered to correspond with the highlighted sections.

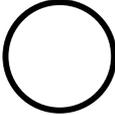
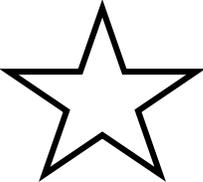
This method allows for quick access to all of your notes in one place, instead of searching through the book.

Suggestions for Success

- Usually, students complete an annotation sheet *after* they have read through and combed through several times to find items to annotate so their annotations stay in numerical order.
- Some students find it beneficial to put their annotations in Cornell-style notes so they can include page numbers, specific quotes and explanations on their annotation sheet.

Symbol Method

Annotate your text with easy-to-see symbols.

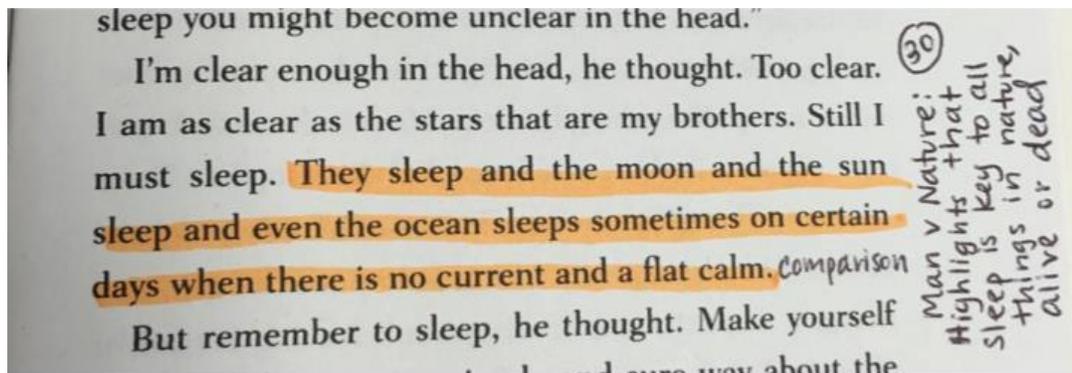
<p>I Don't Understand</p> <p style="text-align: center;">?</p>	<p>Unknown Word</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Look up the definition and then write it in the margin.</i></p>	<p>Make a Prediction</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p>Write your prediction in the margin.</p>
<p>I'm Surprised</p> <p style="text-align: center;">!</p>	<p>Your Feelings About a Section</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>Circle Info About the Setting</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>
<p>Major Events of the Plot</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>Underline Important Details</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>Write Numbers Next to...</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1, 2, 3, 4, 5...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Important events in the plot ● Recurring images, symbols, etc.
<p>I Made a Connection</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>Suggestions for Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read with a pencil in your hand. ● Number your annotations. ● Be consistent with your symbols. 	

Picture Examples

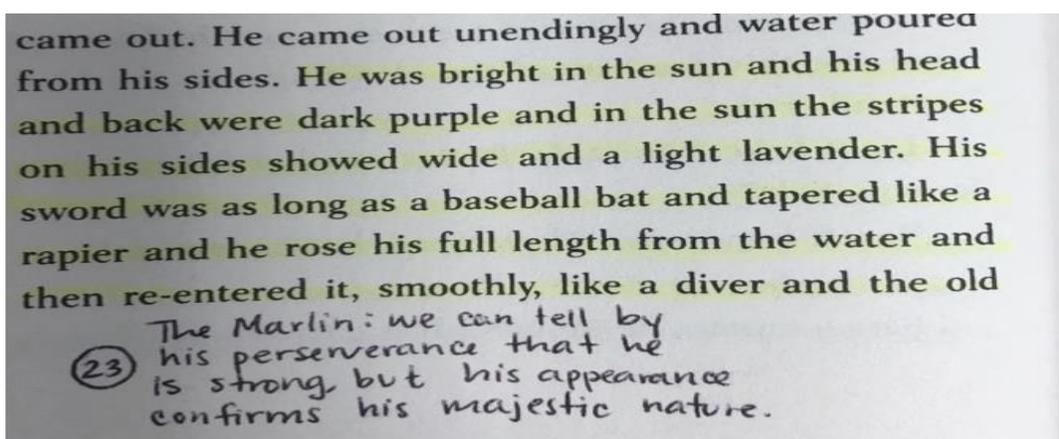
This section will provide examples of the different rhetorical devices and show you a few annotation examples from students.

Rhetorical Devices Definitions and Examples (from *Old Man and the Sea*)

Comparison and Contrasts: Pertaining to a written exercise about the similarities and differences between two or more people, places, or things.



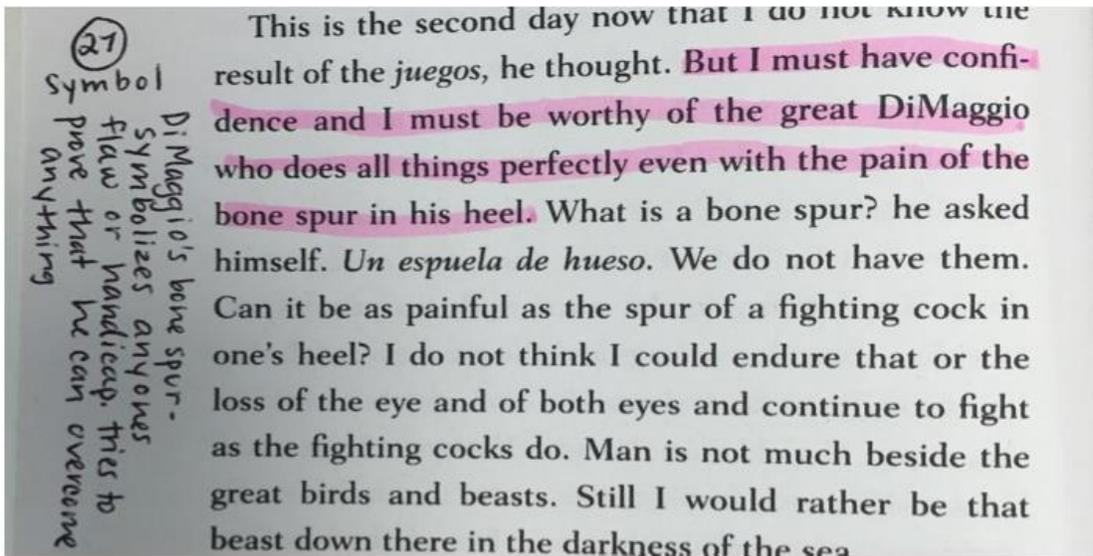
Characterization: The process by which the writer reveals the personality of a character. Characterization is revealed through direct characterization and indirect characterization. Direct Characterization tells the audience what the personality of the character is. Remember our discussion of the S.T.E.A.L. wheel for indirect characterization. Note your ideas about the characters right in the text (personality, motivations, fears, dreams, etc.).



Symbolism: means to imbue objects with a certain meaning that is different from their original meaning or function

Last Updated: August 2017

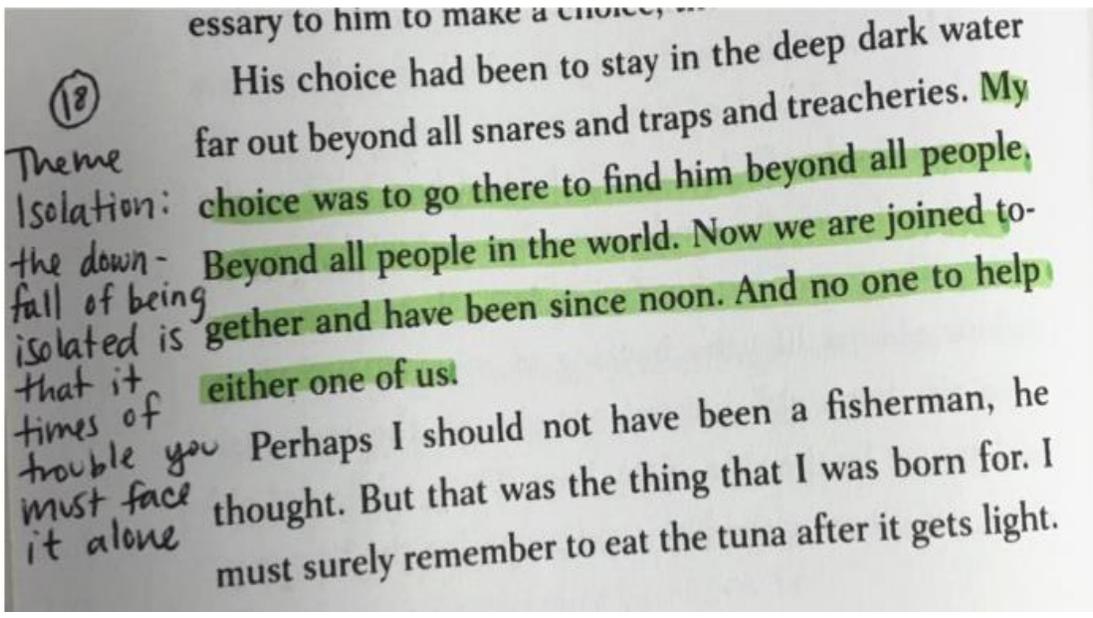
Contributors: Jessica Butts, Connie Whaley, Linda Seymour



Finding Topics to Develop/Support Theme

Topic: a subject about which the author has written

Theme: a main idea or an underlying meaning of a literary work that may be stated directly or indirectly



Language Devices/Imagery: the typical structures used by writers in their works to convey his or her messages in a simple manner to the readers. When employed properly, the different literary devices help readers to appreciate, interpret and analyze a literary work

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① metaphor: implies how powerful the marlin is and how deadly he may turn out to be.

THE OLD MAN AND THE SEA 63

man saw the great scythe-blade of his tail go under and the line commenced to race out.

Additional Resources

<http://faculty.catawba.edu/jmbitzer/War/TextAnnotation.pdf>

<https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-techniques-building-reading-skills-susan-barber>

<https://web.hypothes.is/blog/back-to-school-with-annotation-10-ways-to-annotate-with-students/>

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