

AP English Literature and Composition/Language & Composition Block Summer Reading Annotation Guide

“Every Text is a lazy machine asking the reader to do some of its work.”
– Novelist Umberto Eco

The purpose of summer reading assignment is complex:

- To help build confidence and competence as readers of complex texts
- To give you, when you enter the class in the fall, an immediate basis for discussion of literature- elements like theme, narrative, viewpoint, symbolism, plot structure, etc.
- To set up a basis for comparison with other works we will read during the year
- To provide you with the beginnings of a repertoire of works you can write about on the AP Lit exam next spring
- Last but not least to enrich your mind and stimulate your imagination

Summer Reading Booklist:

1. *All the Pretty Horses* by Cormac McCarthy
2. *In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote

Assignment:

When students return to school in the fall, we will begin an in depth discussion and analysis of the required reading, aided by insights from the recommended text. However, to prepare students for the text based tasks they will perform during the first weeks of school, students are required to annotate (take notes in) the text while they read this summer. If a student is unable to purchase a copy of the text and is, instead, using a library copy he or she may complete the following requirements with removable post it notes.

Guide for annotating:

- Use a pen so you can make circles brackets and notes. If you like highlighters use one for key passages, but don't get carried away and don't only highlight.
- Look for patterns and label them (motifs, diction, syntax, symbols, images, and behavior, whatever).
- Mark passages that seem to jump out at you because they suggest an important idea or theme or for any other reason (an arresting figure of speech or image an intriguing sentence pattern, a striking example of foreshadowing, a key moment in the plot, a bit of dialogue that reveals character, clues about the setting etc.).
- Mark phrases, sentences, or passages that puzzle, intrigue please or displease you. Ask questions make comments talk back to the text.
- At the ends of chapters or sections write a bulleted list of key plot events. This not only forces you think about what happened, see the novel as whole, and identify patterns, but you create a convenient record of the whole plot.
- Circle words you want to learn or words that jump out at you for some reason. If you don't want to stop reading, guess then look the word up and jot down the relevant meaning later. You need not write out a full dictionary definition; it is often helpful to put the relevant meaning in your own words. If SAT prep has dampened your enthusiasm, reconsider the joy of adding your “word hoard” as the Beowulf poet calls it.
 - The Harvard College Library has posted an excellent guide to annotation, “Interrogating Texts: Six reading habits to Develop in you First Year at Harvard.”
<http://guides.library.harvard.edu/sixreadinghabits>