



# NAPERVILLE NORTH HIGH SCHOOL

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Naperville North Communication Arts Department

## Honors English 1

Welcome to Honors English I. Your first assignment for this course will be to closely read and annotate the novel *Boy's Life* by Robert McCammon. You will need to purchase your own copy of the book (ISBN: 978-0-671-74305-5) so you can annotate as you read. Please see the bullet points below and the attached document, "How To Mark Up A Book," for help with annotation. Remember, good readers are *active* readers.

We want you to think about the learning targets for this assignment as we begin our school year together, including the following:

- Learning to read carefully and critically.
- Becoming engaged with the themes of the text – questioning the text, agreeing with it, disagreeing with it, and making connections with other texts, film, and one's life where appropriate.
- Viewing reading and writing as a way of exploring different themes, rather than just a product to be judged.
- Moving from merely summarizing material to analyzing, interpreting, synthesizing, and evaluating material.
- Making meaning for yourself rather than looking to your teacher for the "right answers."
- Becoming a more effective reader and thinker.

**Make sure you bring your annotated text the first day of class.**

We look forward to meeting you in August.

Sincerely,

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# How To Mark Up A Book

One of the most effective ways to get the most out of a book is to mark it up. There is no standard way to mark up a text, but below are a few ways that students have found effective in marking up a book so that one can see the important points quickly, make it more memorable, and make it easy to pick up years later and re-acquaint oneself with the major concepts.

## What Not To Do

- **Don't use a highlighter** – Quality marking isn't done with a fat-tipped highlighter. You can't write, which is an important part of marking the text, with a large marker. Get yourself some fine point colored pens to do the job.
- **Don't mark large volumes of text** – You want important points to stand out. Although we all know that everything can't be important, we often highlight all of the text on the page. You want to find the 20% of the text that is important and mark that.
- **Don't mark the obvious** – Don't waste time marking up things that are already in your knowledge-base or skill set. If you already know it, you don't need to mark it.

## What To Do

- **Mark the text with a pencil, pen, or, even better, colored fine-tipped pens** – Remember, you are not highlighting, you are writing.
- **Use codes** – Flag text with codes (e.g., Question marks to indicate disagreement, Exclamation marks to note agreement or to flag a strong statement, triangles to indicate a change in thinking, or a star for the topic sentence).
- **Write questions in the margin** – When you don't understand something or when you don't understand the author's thought process on a particular topic, write the question in the margin as a reminder to settle the question.
- **Circle new and unfamiliar words** – Look them up as soon as possible.
- **Focus on literary elements/devices** – Characterization, conflict, symbolism, motif, theme, use of figurative language. For your reference regarding these literary terms, you may consult this link (this letter is posted on the NNHS website for easy access to this site):  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SkPXGRdw7Nk5ugUSMvVUTvs38OFCBsKMI0TKIe2dId4/edit?usp=sharing>

*Adapted from Bert Webb,*

[http://hwebbjr.typepad.com/openloops/2006/02/twelve\\_ways\\_to\\_.html](http://hwebbjr.typepad.com/openloops/2006/02/twelve_ways_to_.html)