

Naperville Central High School

Communication Arts Department



Honors English 1- Required Pre-Course Reading

In Honors English 1, students will confront deeper thematic ideas that allow for complex thinking, which is appropriate for the accelerated level. In addition, the pre-course reading assignments are required:

1. To provide a common experience for all incoming Honors English 1 Students (from different schools)
2. To provide a foundation for the literary and rhetorical objectives of the Common Core and Pre-AP/Honors Curriculum.
3. To establish course expectations for critical reading: students will engage in active reading, make inferences, and draw conclusions.
4. To introduce course expectations for writing assessments, including establishing a clear claim/argument, supporting the claim/ argument with textual evidence, and writing with a sophisticated style.

Select ONE of the following texts to read and annotate:

Boy's Life by Robert McCammon

<https://www.andersonsbookshop.com/book/9781416577782>

The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time by Mark Haddon

<https://www.andersonsbookshop.com/book/9781400032716>

Vaclav & Lena by Haley Tanner

<https://www.andersonsbookshop.com/book/9780812981636>

Annotating Your Text

Students should pay particular attention to and annotate for the themes and character development. Though content drives the number of annotations per page, it is SUGGESTED that annotations are evenly spread over the course of the novel, to demonstrate an active and engaged reading. *Additional annotations are optional.*

Students should annotate in their copy of the book by writing notes in the margins or by placing post-it notes in the copy of the book marking the specific passage. Use the attached excerpt from Mortimer Adler's *How to Read a Book* as a guide to annotating as well as the student example based on *The Book Thief* by Markus Zusak.

Bring your annotated copy on the first day of school.

Expectations for Unit 1

In Unit 1, students will use their annotations for initial assignments in the first few weeks of the course. These assignments include a Forced Choice Reading Test, covering both comprehension and text-based questions.

Teachers will use a variety of reading, writing, and speaking and listening strategies following the Grade 9 Common Core ELA Standards. In this unit, students can expect to work in small groups and participate in whole class discussions about the pre-course reading text. In addition, students will be introduced to the foundations of literary analysis: claim statement, topic sentences, principles of organization, use of evidence, and MLA documentation format.

Unit 1 Standards

RL.9-10.2 Determine a theme of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text.

RL.9-10.1 Cites strong and thorough textual evidence of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.

We look forward to meeting you and beginning our Honors English 1 journey together.

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HOW AND WHY TO ANNOTATE A TEXT

In his work *How to Mark a Book*, Mortimer J. Adler asserts that while you should learn to read between the lines to understand a work, you must also learn **to write between the lines** in order to read effectively and truly understand and interact with a book.

Annotating a book benefits the reader in a number of ways:

1. It keeps you awake and alert. Have you ever been reading for some time when you suddenly realize you have no idea what the last few paragraphs (or pages or chapters) had to say? We all have. Reading with a pencil or highlighter in your hand and marking your book as you go keeps you more engaged in what you are reading.
2. It causes you to read actively. When you are reading a book of light fiction for pleasure, you may not need to interact with that work at a deeper level (or the book might not lend itself to such a reading). However, great works of literature are complex and multi-layered, addressing larger questions of human experience and existence. To read, appreciate, and understand a great work, you must actively engage with what the author is doing. You cannot do this passively. You must actively engage in the author's purpose, looking for how he or she is accomplishing it.
3. It facilitates a conversation between you and the text. The act of writing or marking your responses in a text brings you into an active exchange with the ideas presented in the work. You can question, respond, disagree, and comment on what is being said and how it is revealed. While there is a certain level of humility that is encouraged when approaching a great work, that does not mean the reader should be a passive receptacle for the author's ideas. Just as you interact with a teacher, actively conversing with a book allows you to more fully interact with the ideas presented in it.

HOW TO ANNOTATE

Since you will be annotating texts all year, you should come up with a system that works for you.

Effective annotating is both economical and consistent. You may use any of the following **SUGGESTED** methods when marking or annotating a text:

- Make brief comments in the margins or any blank space available (between the lines, inside the front cover, random blank pages, etc.)
- Ask questions in the margins when something strikes you as curious
- Circle or put boxes, triangles, or clouds around important words or phrases
- Use abbreviation symbols to note your response to certain passages (brackets, stars, exclamation points, question marks, etc.)
- Connect words/phrases/ideas with lines or arrows
- Put other page number references in the margin when you see a theme or symbol repeated or expanded upon
- Underline, but use this method sparingly- underline only a few words at a time and never do so without a comment in the margin. If you want to draw attention to an entire passage, instead use a bracket to enclose the section and comment in the margin.
- Color code a work- you may choose to use different colors when marking passages that refer to important symbols or reveal development in main characters
- Use Post-It notes when you cannot write in the book

WHAT TO ANNOTATE

While some of what you should mark has been commented on above, here are some **suggestions** of what to watch for or mark:

- Character development- Is something important revealed about the character? Does the character change? Why? How?
- Setting- Is this key in the work? When does the work take place? Does the author use time and/or place in a significant way?
- Point of view- What is the effect? Is there a narrator? How reliable is he or she?
- Tone and mood
- Imagery
- Themes
- Symbols
- Key events- summarize in the margins or at the beginning or end of chapters
- Powerful, important, meaningful, or significant lines or quotations (with a note in the margin)
- How the author uses language and how it is significant- the effects of word choice (diction) and sentence structure (syntax)

Mortimer J. Adler and Charles Van Doren. *How to Read a Book*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1972

THE FLAG

The last time I saw her was red. The sky was like soup, boiling and stirring. In some places, it was burned. There were black crumbs, and pepper, streaked across the redness.

Earlier, kids had been playing hopscotch there, on the street that looked like oil-stained pages. When I arrived, I could still hear the echoes. The feet tapping the road. The children-voices laughing, and the smiles like salt, but decaying fast. Then, bombs.

This time, everything was too late. The sirens. The cuckoo shrieks in the radio. All too late.

Within minutes, mounds of concrete and earth were stacked and piled. The streets were ruptured veins. Blood streamed till it was dried on the road, and the bodies were stuck there, like driftwood after the flood.

They were glued down, every last one of them. A packet of souls. Was it fate?

red = passion?
love?
anger?

Simile: makes
sky seem
ominous &
scary

Simile

auditory
imagery... sounds
scary

Powerful
imagery
&
metaphor
streets =
veins

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Misfortune?

Is that what glued them down like that?

Of course not.

Let's not be stupid.

It probably had more to do with the hurried bombs, thrown down by humans hiding in the clouds.

Yes, the sky was now a devastating, home-cooked red. The small German town had been flung apart one more time. Snowflakes of ash fell so lovelily you were tempted to stretch out your tongue to catch them, taste them. Only, they would have scorched your lips. They would have cooked your mouth.

Clearly, I see it.

I was just about to leave when I found her kneeling there.

A mountain range of rubble was written, designed, erected around her. She was clutching at a book.

Apart from everything else, the book thief wanted desperately to go back to the basement, to write, or to read through her story one last time. In hindsight, I see it so obviously on her face. She was dying for it—the safety of it, the home of it—but she could not move. Also, the basement didn't even exist anymore. It was part of the mangled landscape.

Please, again, I ask you to believe me.

I wanted to stop. To crouch down

I wanted to say:

"I'm sorry, child."

But that is not allowed.

I did not crouch down. I did not speak.

Instead, I watched her awhile. When she was able to move, I followed her.

Color again

Not
snowflakes?
ashes?

who is she?

narrator
does not think
people will believe
in his kindness

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PLEASE NOTE: The above sample is an exemplar of annotating; however, NOT EVERY PAGE NEEDS TO LOOK LIKE THIS!