

ap literature summer assignment instructions

Objective: to build your foundational literary analysis skills in preparation for your AP Literature course

Task: carefully and intentionally annotate and reflect on two short stories. You will use your annotations in order to complete several assignments in the first weeks of school.

Necessary resources: at least two colors of highlighter and a pen or pencil

Step 1: **Print both** of the linked short stories in order to annotate them thoroughly over the summer! If you'd like the stories printed for you, you can see Ms. Unterreiner in room D116 before the end of finals week.

- [The Scarlet Ibis](#) by James Hurst
- [The Thing Around Your Neck](#) by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Step 2: Use the instructions and example below to annotate the short stories! For each story, as you read:

1. Highlight *all* the **strongly connotative words** (words that evoke a significant feeling or association) that stand out to you; this should be roughly 7-10 words per *paragraph* of the story.
2. Highlight *all* the **linguistic and stylistic choices** made by the author that stand out to you. This means noticing places that the **way the story is written** adds meaning to the **content itself**-- it might mean a strong image, a resonant phrase, meaningful syntax, etc! This should be roughly 2-3 phrases or quotations per *paragraph*.
3. For each paragraph of the short story, select *two* of your highlights, and annotate in the margins, attempting to answer the following question:
 - a. What is the *impact* of the author's word or style choice on the *meaning* of the sentence or section it's in? This should not be a restatement of the quotation, but rather an analysis of the way it's written.

Your hand-written annotations are due on the Monday/Tuesday after school begins (**August 19/20**).

Example annotations [one paragraph]:

clove: the term clove is often used to describe the full split of something; as it's used in this context, it's being used to illustrate the dramatic shift of the seasons from summer to autumn. However, its deeply negative connotation creates an unsettling feeling within the reader, foreshadowing that a significant change will likely take place within the story, possibly one that involves division or breaking apart.

It was in the clove of seasons, summer was dead but autumn had not yet been born, that the ibis lit in the bleeding tree. The flower garden was strained with rotting brown magnolia petals and ironweeds grew rank amid the purple phlox. The five o'clocks by the chimney still marked time, but the oriole nest in the elm was untenanted and rocked back and forth like an empty cradle. The last graveyard flowers were blooming, and their smell drifted across the cotton field and through every room of our house, speaking softly the names of our dead.

the oriole nest... rocked back and forth like an empty cradle: comparing a bird's nest to an empty cradle establishes a tone of a great loss at the outset of the story; additionally, it creates a sense that what is being lost is innocent or young, and that the loss permeates or lingers (the cradle, though empty, continues to rock)