

In preparation for English 11: American Experiences in Literature and Composition, students should read Celeste Ng's *Everything I Never Told You*, a novel about a multiracial family living in suburban Ohio in the 1970s struggling with the sudden mysterious death of their elder daughter, Lydia.

Annotate your copy (printed copies only), paying close attention to literary elements (language and important details) that reveal

- the “double lives” of the main characters—Lydia, James, and Marilyn, mainly—and the contradictions between the identities that they project outwardly and the identities that they conceal and act out in secret
- the experiences that put pressure on them to act out these “secret” identities
- the root cause of tensions between characters

In addition, annotate for:

- emerging patterns – recurring images, repeated words/phrases, narrative point of view – as well as moments of shift and discontinuity
- moments of confusion
- personal reactions to the text in the margins.
- unfamiliar vocabulary. Be sure to follow up by looking these words up in a reliable dictionary.

Two websites that provide further details about why and how to approach annotation:

[Annotation Guidelines for English I](#) at Loomis Chaffee School

[“Annotating Texts.”](#) *The Learning Center at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.*

Students should be prepared to write in class about the novel during the first cycle of the school year using only their annotated copies of the novel.