



FOR STUDENTS TAKING AP AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES

Assignment: Read *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe. You can purchase a copy or grab one from the English office before you leave for break (limited copies available). As you read, annotate the text (guidelines on annotation below). Annotating directly in the text is recommended (but if you have a borrowed copy, you may use post-it notes or take notes with page numbers of relevant passages).

Your annotations will be checked on the first day of class and there will be a test on the text within the first week of school.

You will also have received a packet from Mr. Draughn to read prior to the beginning of school.

Annotation Guidelines:

- Highlight or underline important passages, words, or descriptions. Pay attention to words or phrases that seem unique or deliberate
- Mark connecting ideas with lines or arrows
- Bracket any literary elements you note: figurative language, diction (word choice), interesting syntax (order of words), theme, foreshadowing, etc.
- Write notes in the margins--your reactions, predictions, questions
- Circle words you don't know and look up definitions or define using context clues
- Use a few bullet points at the end of each chapter to summarize what happened.

More information on annotation:

Annotating a text, or marking the pages with notes, is an excellent, if not essential, way to make the most out of the reading process. It is also the mark of the adept, skilled, mature reader. Annotations make it easy to find important information quickly when you look back and review a text. They help you familiarize yourself with both the content and organization of what you read. They provide a way to begin engaging ideas and issues directly through comments, questions, associations, or other reactions that occur to you as you read. In all these ways, annotating a text makes the reading process an active one, not just background for writing

assignments, but an integral first step in the writing process. A well-annotated text will accomplish all of the following:

- clearly identify where in the text important ideas and information are located
- express the main ideas of a text
- trace the development of ideas/arguments throughout a text
- introduce a few of the reader's thoughts and reactions

Highlighting and Underlining

Highlighting or underlining key words and phrases or major ideas is the most common form of annotating texts. Many people use this method to make it easier to review material, especially for exams. Highlighting is also a good way of picking out specific language within a text that you may want to cite or quote in a piece of writing. However, over-reliance on highlighting is unwise for two reasons.

First, there is a tendency to highlight more information than necessary, especially when done on a first reading.

Second, highlighting is the least active form of annotating. Instead of being a way to begin thinking and interacting with ideas in texts, highlighting can become a postponement of that process.

On the other hand, highlighting is a useful way of marking parts of a text that you want to make notes about. And it's a good idea to highlight the words or phrases of a text that are referred to by your other annotations.

Paraphrasing and Summarizing

Going beyond locating important ideas to being able to capture their meaning through paraphrase is a way of solidifying your understanding of these ideas. It's also excellent preparation for any writing you may have to do based on your reading. A series of brief notes in the margins beside important ideas gives you a handy summary right on the pages of the text itself, and if you can take the substance of a sentence or paragraph and condense it into a few words, you should have little trouble clearly demonstrating your understanding of the ideas in question in your own writing.

Outlining

A descriptive outline shows the organization of a piece of writing, breaking it down to show where ideas are introduced, where they are developed, and where any turns in the development occur. A descriptive outline allows you to see not only where the main ideas are but also where the details, facts, explanations, and other kinds of support for those ideas are located. It will focus on the function of individual paragraphs or sections within a text. These functions might include any of the following:

- summarizing a topic/argument giving examples
- dismissing a contrary view introducing an idea
- providing factual evidence
- transitioning
- adding explanation
- expanding or limiting an idea
- concluding addressing an opposing view

This list is hardly exhaustive, and it's important to recognize that several of these functions may be repeated within a text, particularly ones that contain more than one major idea. Making a descriptive outline allows you to follow the construction of the writer's argument and/or the process of his/her thinking. It helps identify which parts of the text work together and how they do so.

Responding and Commenting

You can use annotation to go beyond understanding a text's meaning and organization by noting your reactions: agreement/disagreement, questions, related personal experience, connection to ideas from other texts, class discussions, etc. This is an excellent way to begin formulating your own ideas for writing assignments based on the text or on any of the ideas it contains.

Annotation Rubric

5	The text is extensively highlighted and/or underlined with many margin notes in addition to short-hand annotations. The annotations demonstrate that the student has carefully read and considered the text's meaning and art. The margin notes mostly serve as an outline of the text and the reader's thoughts about it. This work exceeds expectations.
4	The text is extensively highlighted and/or underlined with fewer margin notes compared to the most carefully considered readings. In addition, short-hand notations are present. The annotations which are there demonstrate that the student has read and thought about the text's meaning and art. The margin notes identify important details in the text and illuminate what the reader thinks about them. This work meets expectations.

3	<p>The text is less extensively highlighted and/or underlined with some margin notes and short-hand notations. The annotations demonstrate a less-than-thorough reading of the work than do the top ratings. Parts of the text's meaning and art appear unexamined. It is harder to know what the reader thinks about the text. This work is below expectations.</p>
2	<p>The text shows some highlighting and/or underlining, and the reader uses some short-hand notations. There are virtually no margin notes; consequently, it is impossible to determine how thorough the reading of the text has been. This work is significantly below expectations.</p>
1	<p>Perhaps only highlighting/and or underlinings are present with the occasional margin note or short-hand notation. Ultimately there are so few marks that the text appears not to have been read completely.</p> <p>This work has minimal value.</p>
0	<p>The text is unmarked.</p>