Annotation Reference Sheet
AP Lit – Terich / Pfister

What is the difference between annotating and "taking notes"?

What the reader gets from annotating is a deeper initial reading and an understanding of the text that lasts. You can deliberately ***engage the author in conversation and questions***, maybe stopping to argue, pay a compliment, or clarify an important issue—much like having a teacher or storyteller with you in the room. If and when you come back to the book, that initial interchange is recorded for you, making an excellent and entirely personal study tool.

What should you do when you annotate?

1. **Highlight Key Information**: This includes important characters, ideas, events, and/or terms. Use a highlighter color that is not too distracting or dark so that the text is still legible.

2. **Use brackets to single out important paragraphs/sections**: If the text is too long to highlight, bracketing it will help you determine which parts are worth going back and re-reading.

3. **Write notes in the margins**. If you chose to highlight or bracket a section, be sure to use a pen or pencil to write the significance of the text in the margins so that you can quickly remember why you highlighted a particular section without having to re-read the entire chapter or section.

4. **Look up words you don't know**. Have a dictionary on-hand to look up words or terms that you don't understand. You may want to write the definition into the margins so that you don't forget them when you go back and re-read.

5. **Summarize the end of each chapter or section (optional)**. To keep your memory fresh, consider writing a short summary at the very end of each chapter that sums up the important events, ideas and concepts that were discussed in the chapter.

What should you write in the margins?

1. Record connections to other texts and personal experiences.

2. Record Opinions

3. Record Questions

4. Record your response. What emotions does the work evoke? What can you infer about the author's intent from your response?

5. Record anything you notice about the author's craft (style, tone, diction, etc). What meaning might the author be trying to convey?