English III AP Summer Reading and Annotation Guide:
Annotating Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*

Dear students,

Please annotate your summer reading novel, *In Cold Blood,* as you read. *In Cold Blood* is a singular nonfiction novel as it is a combination of journalism and nonfiction prose. Below is a comprehensive annotation guide for nonfiction texts; please be familiar with this annotation style as we will use it for other texts in our AP class. When we come together as a class in August, I will check your annotations for credit. Each student should have her own, new copy of the book with no prior annotations from other students. I hope you have a relaxing and restful summer, and I look forward to a beautiful school year with you!

Sincerely,
Ms. Cooper

Annotation Guide

On the front cover of the novel: This is by far the most important part of the annotation process. Please take time and answer the questions below to the best of your ability. As you read the novel, make a list of important rhetorical information: identify the context, the author, the audience, the exigence, the author's message/purpose, and the significance of the title. You will return to this list again and again as you read. Be sure to answer the last four questions (about audience, message/purpose, exigence, and the significance of the title) after you finish reading the book. Below is a guide and some guiding questions to help you with this process.

- **Context:** what is the context of the novel, and by context, I mean time, place and occasion. What is the novel about? Where does it take place? Write at least a paragraph, garnering information as you read.
- **The author:** who is the author? What are his/her unique values and beliefs? This will require some outside research, as well as the information you garner about the author as you read the novel.
- **The audience:** who is the intended audience for this novel? Who is the author writing for? How do you know? What are the unique values and beliefs of the audience?
- **The author's message/purpose**: what is the author's goal in writing this book? What message is the author trying to get across about violence in America?
- **Exigence**: what events precipitated the writing of this book?
- **Significance of the title**: write a reflection on the significance of the title as it relates to the author's message/purpose.

Chapters/Subheadings:

- Think of all the names of chapters as subheadings and turn them into questions (for example, the first chapter, or subheading, is entitled "The Last to See them Alive." Turn the chapter title into a question: who was the last to see them alive? After you read the chapter, return to your question and strive to answer it).

On the last, blank pages or back cover of the novel:

- Write a chronological summary (1-2 paragraphs) of the work. Note key moments (climax, epiphanic moments).
- Create a list of literary devices in the story: note themes, allusions, images, and motifs.
- Make a list of unfamiliar vocabulary words you have circled and look up the definitions

In the top margins of pages: use a star or an asterisk to note important moments and turning points you might want to bring up in a class discussion or return to in a paper.

In the bottom margins of pages: Write down any and all questions and remarks that come up as you are reading. Summarize paragraphs, make predictions, and formulate opinions about what you have just read.

Marginalia: notes and symbols to use as you read:

- Highlight key words, phrases, or sentences that are important to understanding the work. Highlight, also, if you see the author's bias, repetition, or rhetorical questions.
- Underline if you see cause and effect or compare and contrast (look up these terms if they are unfamiliar)
- Write questions/comments in the margins as if you were having a conversation with the text.
- [Bracket important ideas or passages, or points that the author is trying to make]
- Connect ideas with lines or arrows
- *Use a star or asterisk in the margin to emphasize the ten or twenty most important lines in the book
- Use ??? for sections or ideas you don't understand.
- Circle words you don't know. Define on the page number (you may also define them in the margins, if easier)
- A check mark means "I understand"
- Use !!! when you come across something new, interesting, or surprising. Return to these moments.