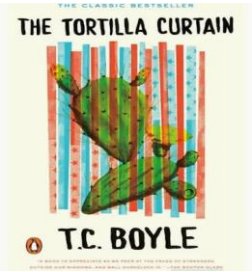
2026 AP Literature Summer Assignment
Make Notes for
Tortilla Curtain, by TC Boyle



- Read the description of the following signposts, which will give you some good annotation ideas. Read the novel ***Tortilla Curtain*** (You CAN find it online if you don't want to check it out or buy a hard copy. But that makes note-taking more challenging).
- Use post-it notes to mark, label and comment on what you find as you read the book, so that you will be able to find these when school begins, as we do several assignments on your summer read. Leaving post-its in the novel will help you easily find and reconnect with your thoughts once we start.
- Think about WHY things happen and how the author is manipulating the characters and story for effect and meaning. Avoid looking at any 'Spark Notes' or help type material because that will hinder your OWN thinking about the book, which is what you will need to do to be successful. Will will do all work with this novel IN CLASS so none of that will be helpful to you anyway. I do NOT use computers.
- Email me with any questions, anytime: tamara.schoen@browardschools.com
- Start those college application essays. You can email me your drafts…I'm happy to help!

1. Contrasts and Contradictions:
When a character does something that contrasts with what you'd expect or contradicts his earlier acts or statements, STOP and ask, "Why is that character doing that?" The answer will help you make predictions and draw inferences about the plot of conflict.

2. Words of the Wiser:
When a character (sometimes older and wiser) takes the main character aside and offers serious advice, STOP and ask, "What's the life lesson trying to be conveyed here and how might it affect the character?" Is this one of the developing themes of the story?

3. Aha! Moment:
When a character realizes, understands, or finally figures out something, STOP and ask yourself, "How might this change things?" If it is about a problem, it tells you something about conflict; if it is a life lesson, it tells you something about theme.

4. Again and Again:
When you notice a word, phrase, or situation mentioned repeatedly, STOP and ask yourself, "Why does this keep happening again and again?" The answer will tell you more about theme and conflict, or perhaps foreshadow what might happen later in the story. Which is it?

5. Memory Moment:
When the author/narrator interrupts the action to tell you about a memory or moment from the past, STOP and ask yourself, "Why might this memory/moment by important?" The answer may lead you to consider developing theme(s), conflict, character development or foreshadowing.

6. Tough Questions:
When a character asks himself/or another character a very difficult question, STOP and ask yourself, "What does this question make me think about?" The answer may tell you about conflict, character development, and even something about 'societal' expectations