

# *How to Annotate*

Annotating is the act of taking notes within the text (marginal or post it notes) as you read. It involves marking the text with substantive commentary regarding the author's content and/or style.

When completing an annotation, there needs to be a clear purpose to the annotations reflective of the goals of the reading. For instance, students tracing motifs need not be responsible for setting or characterization. Annotation should not be limited to identifying an element; annotation should explain the significance of the technique or element and its contribution to the unit's focus.

## **Suggested areas of focus:**

- Characterization
- Thematic development
- Literary devices such as symbolism, motifs, foreshadowing
- Genre conventions such as those for comedy, epic, novel, short story
- Critical perspectives such as historical, psychoanalytic, feminist, post-colonial
- At AP level: diction, detail, syntax, point of view, organization of selected passages
- How the ending appropriately concludes the work

## **Methods:**

All methods must be consistent and contain written explanations of annotated areas.

Students may use any of the following methods:

- Brackets
- Highlighting
- Underlining
- Post its

Students should avoid summaries, generalities at the end of chapters or marginal notes not anchored in a specific passage. Students should make a reasonable number of annotations: every page is too many; one every 100 pages is too few.

## **Assessment:**

Provide written instructions at the beginning of the assignment and link to a follow up lesson or assignment.

- Has the student followed instructions?
- Are annotations throughout text or "clumped"?

Annotation assignments should be one of many teaching strategies used for instruction in literature and not used for every assignment.