

Annotation Tips

1. Make brief notes at the top of the page or on sticky notes to mark important plot events.
2. If you are having difficulty understanding, stop and read again. Sometimes it is helpful to break a difficult passage or even sentence down into parts and try to understand it a little at a time. It is okay to do this. Good readers do it all the time. You may want to use a sticky note or the margin to write down your interpretation of the difficult text.
3. Use check marks, asterisks, arrows, stars, etc. to mark important items or details. If you highlight, use different colors for different things and create a key for your color codes.
4. Circle or highlight words that are unfamiliar or unusual. Try to figure out what the words mean through the way they are used; supplement your guesses by consulting a dictionary.
5. Highlight phrases that describe important characters.
6. Highlight words, images, and details that seem to form a pattern throughout the text. These patterns usually will lead the close reader to discover a thematic idea.
7. Mark passages that you think might be symbolic.
8. Highlight the use of figurative language. Look specifically for the common ones (simile, metaphor, allusion) and consider the author's purpose for using that element in the story. It would be a good idea to take some notes in the margin so you will remember what you were thinking.
9. If you get an idea, write it down! It may never occur to you again.
10. Don't mark everything!! If you mark too much, nothing will stand out and you will have defeated the purpose of annotating.