

How to Annotate

Notice and comment upon a literary device – simile, metaphor, alliteration, repetition, irony, symbolism, etc. What effect does it create for you?

Discuss a part that is confusing to you.

Ask the author a question about a passage.

Join down any connections to other texts, movies, or historic/current events that you notice. Is the author alluding to something else? If so, discuss this.

Explain the moments of emotional impact: How are you feeling? Is this what the author hoped you would feel? How did the author create this feeling in you?

Why did the author phrase a passage in a particular way? What is the effect of that word choice?

Do you agree or disagree with an idea being presented? Why?

When you encounter a word that you don't know, look it up in the dictionary and write down its definition.

Discuss your changing feelings toward specific characters. What's caused this shift?

Describe what's missing in the text: What do you wish the author had included?

Use your inference skills. Is the author using a passage or relationship to try to tell you something deeper than what is being said directly?

Or write about anything else that comes to mind as you're reading...

It's important to annotate, or interact with a text, as you read. As you naturally have ideas, feelings, questions, or make mental connections to other things in your world based on the bit of text you just read, you need to pause and jot down those thoughts. An easy way to do this is with sticky notes. Just write your thought and stick it on the page next to the bit of relevant text. (If you own the book you're reading, feel free to write directly on the page.) Each annotation needs to include at least two well-developed sentences that help me understand what you're experiencing as you read.

Check out these models of what to do – and what **not** to do:

Do this

Thunder cracks outside as Vivian walks into the room, which gives me a small knot in my stomach. I think the author is using that weather effect to make readers fear this new character. Will Vivian be the ultimate villain of this story or is the author just trying to trick me?

The author keeps taking us back to this post office. This is the third time we've been here, so I'm wondering what's significant about this. I think it might be symbolically important, but I don't get it. Author, what's with your post office obsession?

Not this

*I LOVE this!
I'm so happy
right now.*

*Wait, what?
I don't understand.*

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