

English 12 Summer Reading Assignment

Book: *A Thousand Splendid Suns* By: Khaled Hosseini

Annotation

Annotating a text, or marking the pages with notes, is a way to help you make the most out of reading for both your high school and future college courses. When you annotate a text, you make it easier to go back and study for a test, write an essay, or even just prove a point in discussion. Annotations also help to keep you organized and focused. I have included an annotation guide for you to read in order to help you focus your annotations.

When annotating a text, you must be an active reader and be engaged in the text that you are reading.

A well-annotated text will accomplish all of the following:

- clearly identify where in the text important ideas and information are located
- express the main ideas of a text
- trace the development of ideas/arguments throughout a text
- note your thoughts and reactions and define unfamiliar words

Assignment: Read the novel, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* by Khaled Hosseini and annotate your book as you read. On the **first** day of school, please bring your copy of the novel to class (make sure your name is in it) and **I will collect** it to see that you have marked your book (you can use Post-it notes, notes in the margins, highlighting plus commentary, etc.) – this will count as your first grade for the year and will be out of 40 points. The focus for your annotations should be to show the development of **two themes** that are listed below. You should be marking passages that you feel help to develop the theme that you chose, and they should be marked in such a way that you or anyone else (me) can tell which theme they go with. You should also annotate for major plot development, characterization, symbolism, etc.

When I look at your annotated book, I will be looking for two things: that your annotations are **throughout the entire novel**, and that you have some commentary – simply highlighting every few chapters is not thorough enough – why did you highlight something? Does the quote help illustrate a theme? In other words, I need more than just a marking- I need a brief commentary.

Choose *two* of the following themes and annotate the novel for them:

- Man's inhumanity to man
- Systematic victimization of women by patriarchal institutions
- Resistance to victimization
- Power of education
- Corrupting influence of absolute power

****Rubric on the following page****

Rubric for assignment

- Annotations are spread throughout the entire book, obvious effort shown _____/10
- Annotations show analysis and commentary (It is shown that you were actively involved with the text – you did not simply highlight every few pages. It is also clear you were conscious of the specific focus/ theme for the annotations) _____/30

There will be a reading quiz on one of the first days back and we will start our writing process with this novel, so it is very important that you are familiar with the text.

Happy Summer and I look forward to seeing you in the fall!!

An Annotation Guide

Note-Taking vs. Annotation

Adapted from “An Annotation Guide: How and Why to Annotate a Book” by Nick Otten

Most serious readers take notes of some kind when they are carefully considering a text, but many readers are too casual about their note-taking. Later they realize they have taken notes that are incomplete or too random, and then they laboriously start over, re-notating an earlier reading. Students can easily improve the depth of their reading and extend their understanding over long periods of time by developing a systematic form of annotating.

First, what is the difference between annotating and “taking notes”? For some people, the difference is nonexistent or negligible, but in this instance I am referring to a way of making notes directly onto a text such as a book, a handout, or another type of publication. The advantage of having one annotated text instead of a set of note papers plus a text should be clear enough: all the information is together and inseparable, with notes very close to the text for easier understanding, and with fewer pieces to keep organized. **Think of annotations as “showing your work” while you read just as you sometimes show your work in a math problem.** You are showing what you are thinking while you read and analyze—and thinking is a word-based activity, not just a nebulous puff of energy. This, of course, requires ACTIVE participation with the text, engaging your mind while you read, not skimming the page. **Listening to your iPod or the TV can split your focus so that you don’t have as much of a connection with the text.** Marking important sections can also be helpful in locating them quickly in discussions. What the reader gets from annotating is a deeper initial reading and an understanding of the text that lasts.

Use the following format:

- Top margins: provide plot notes—a quick few words or phrases that summarize what happens here. Go back after a chapter, scene, or assignment and then mark it carefully.
- Interpretive Notes and Symbols to be used are:
 - Underline or highlight key words, phrases, or sentences that are important to understanding the work.
 - Write questions or comments in the margins—your thoughts or “conversation” with the text.
 - Bracket important ideas or passages.
 - Use Vertical lines at the margin: to emphasize a statement already underlined or bracketed
 - Connect ideas with lines or arrows.
 - Use numbers in the margin: to indicate the sequence of points the author makes in developing a single argument.
 - Use a star, asterisk, or other doo-dad at the margin (use a consistent symbol): to be used sparingly, to emphasize the ten or twenty most important statements in the book.

- Use ??? for sections or ideas you don't understand.
- Circle words you don't know. Define them in the margins.
- A check mark means "I understand".
- Use !!! when you come across something new, interesting, or surprising.
- And other literary devices (see below). Some of the things you may want to mark as you notice them are:
 - Use an S for Symbols: A symbol is a literal thing that also stands for something else, like a flag, or a cross, or fire. Symbols help to discover new layers of meaning.
 - Use an I for Imagery: Imagery includes words that appeal to one or more of the five senses. Close attention to imagery is important in understanding an author's message and attitude toward a subject.
 - Use an F for Figurative Language: Figurative language includes things like similes, metaphors, and personification. Figurative language often reveals deeper layers of meaning.
 - Use a T for Tone: Tone is the overall mood of a piece of literature. Tone can carry as much meaning to the story as the plot does.
 - Use a Th – Theme: In literature, a theme is a broad idea in a story, or a message or lesson conveyed by a work. This message is usually about life, society or human nature. Themes explore timeless and universal ideas. Most themes are implied rather than explicitly stated.
 - Plot elements (setting, mood, conflict, etc.)
 - Diction (effective or unusual word choice)

As you mark, you begin to notice patterns the author has or where he or she deviates from a pattern and much of the work of a critical or analytical reader is noticing these patterns and variations. **Notice that annotations are meant to be more than a "scavenger hunt" for literary techniques and rhetorical devices.** Along with marking these you should comment on the effectiveness or significance of the device. **It's great if you can detect alliteration in a passage, but that in and of itself is useless unless you can tell that this alliteration demonstrates the mental breakdown of the character;** for example, it's amazing if you recognize the hubris of a character, but how does this instance differ from those occurring previously in the novel?

On the next page is a photocopy of annotations from the book *Lord of the Flies*. You can see that the reader hasn't gone crazy with highlighting or underlining—if every line is marked up, you'll have a hard time making sense of your notes.

"You're hindering Ralph. You're not letting him get to the most important thing."

He paused effectively.

"Who knows we're here? Eh?"

"They knew at the airport."

"The man with a trumpet-thing."

"My dad."

Piggy put on his glasses.

"Nobody knows where we are," said Piggy. He was paler than before and breathless. "Perhaps they knew where we was going to; and perhaps not. But they don't know where we are 'cos we never got there." He gaped at them for a moment, then swayed and sat down. Ralph took the conch from his hands.

"That's what I was going to say," he went on, "when you all, all..." He gazed at their intent faces. "The plane was shot down in flames. Nobody knows where we are. We may be here a long time."

The silence was so complete that they could hear the unevenness of Piggy's breathing. The sun slanted in and lay

literally: the boys cannot see
is well through their thick,
matted, ~~hair~~ growing hair

figuratively: they are losing
vision of what they really
~~what~~ need to be doing.

"Coral Island—"

Ralph waved the conch

"This is our island. It's

come to fetch us we'll be

Jack held out his hand

"There's pigs," he

water in that little str

Didn't anyone find any

He handed the con

parently no one had f

The older boys fir

There was a group c

he did not want to g

years old, and one

mulberry-colored b

of the perpendicula

bored into the coa

ing and about to c

The other littl

him toward Ralph

"All right," sai

The small boy

"Speak up!"

The small bo

assembly shout

his hands and

"Let him h

have it!"

At last Ralph

the blow of

Piggy knelt

and interpre

"He wan

snake-thing

Ralph la

The small

"Tell us

"Now

"Beast

"A sn