

Annotating Things Fall Apart

Adapted from "How to Read a Book" (Mortimer Adler & Charles Van Doren) Original adaptation by a fellow AP teacher

If you have the habit of asking a book questions as you read, you are a better reader than if you do not. But . . . merely asking questions is not enough. You have to try to answer them. And although that could be done, theoretically, in your mind only, it is easier to do it with a pencil in your hand. The pencil then becomes the sign of your alertness while you read.

Full ownership of a book only comes when you have made it a part of yourself, and the best way to make yourself a part of it -- which comes to the same thing -- is by writing in it. If you are borrowing the book, you will be asked instead of marking in it to write your responses on paper.

Why is marking a book [questioning and responding as you read] indispensable to reading it?

- First, it keeps you awake -- not merely conscious, but wide awake.
- Second, reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The person who says he knows what he thinks but cannot express it usually does not know what he thinks.
- Third, writing your reactions down helps you to remember the thoughts of the author.

For this and for these reasons among others, you will be asked to annotate Things Fall Apart.

Note: Reading assignments should be read and annotated before class. It is perfectly okay to add to your markings (in fact I encourage you to do so) while we discuss in class or after you finish the book and are working on an essay, but the bulk of the job should be done in conjunction with your reading for class preparation.

Note: If you find annotating while you read to be annoying and awkward, do it after you read. Go back after a chapter or assignment and then mark it carefully. You should be reading assignments twice anyway, so this isn't any less efficient than marking as you read and then rereading the material.

As you will not be marking the book, unless you purchase your own, you will need to format each page of your notebook as if there is in fact text on it. A sheet of 8X 11 paper can hold two pages. For the sake of standardization of annotating for class and for grading purposes, your notes should follow this format:

- Bottom and Side Page Margins: Interpretive notes, questions, and/or remarks that refer to meaning of the page. Markings or notes to tie in with information on the inside back cover. Margins: Plot notes -- a quick few words or phrases which summarize what happens here (useful for quick location of passages in discussion and for writing assignments).
- Underlining: done while or after reading to help locate passages for discussion, essays, or questions.
- Brackets: done while or after reading to highlight key speeches, descriptions, etc. that are too long to underline easily.

Grading:

Since everyone's notes will be similar in format, book grades will be based on percentage of annotations, quality, "spread outness", variety of rhetorical devices, and apparent effort ("apparent effort" because I will obviously not read all the notes on every page of everyone's book).

Things Fall Apart Annotation Guide

You MUST use the color codes below to annotate your novel. Find rhetorical devices and then highlight them using the color beside the devices listed below. Use highlighters rather than markers so that the color is less likely to bleed through the page. Next to the highlighting, name the device and in a few words state its significance. You won't have room for sentences here. Ex: Highlight some imagery in blue. Next to it write: *Imagery: carries out danger/security theme* or *Symbol: color - blackness of despair*

Rhetorical Devices

Comparisons & Contrasts: Orange

Tradition & Change
Fate & Free Will

Man & The Natural World
Africa & the West

Characterization: Yellow

Ok = Okonkwo

Un = Unoka

Nw = Nwoye

Uc = Uchendu

Ez = Ezinma

Ob = Obierika

I = Ikemefuna

Ek - Ekweki

B = Mr. Brown

Nw = Nwakibie

R = Reverend James Smith

K = Mr. Kiaga

DC = the District Commissioner

OU = Okagbue Uyanwa

En = Enoch

M = Maduka

OE = Ogbuefi Ezeudu

Obi = Obiageli

C = Chielo

Oj - Ojiugo

A = Akunna

Symbolism/Motifs: Pink

Locusts

Fire

Folktales

Yams

Ash

Egwugwu

The Mother of the Spirits

Theme Ideas: Green

Masculinity

Family

Religion

Memory

Language

Reputation

Sin

Justice

Gender

Fear

Igbo Society

Ambition

Language Devices/Imagery: Blue

Syntax (sentence Structure)

Figurative Language (simile, metaphor, hyperbole, personification, allusion, irony, etc)

Diction (Choice of words, speech: colloquial, formal, etc)

Point of view (first-person, third-person, etc)

Tone (the attitude of the author toward the subject such as humorous, serious, grave, didactic, etc.)

At the end of each chapter, use bullet points to summarize the main plot events of the chapter.

Student name _____

Annotations Rubric

Points for Percentage of Annotations

| | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 100% = 60 points | 65-69% = 39 points | 30-34% = 18 points |
| 95-99% = 57 points | 60-64% = 36 points | 25-29% = 15 points |
| 90-94% = 54 points | 55-59% = 33 points | 20-24% = 12 points |
| 85-89% = 51 points | 50-54% = 30 points | 15-19% = 9 points |
| 80-84% = 48 points | 45-49% = 27 points | 10-14% = 6 points |
| 75-79% = 45 points | 40-44% = 24 points | 5-9% = 3 points |
| 70-74% = 42 points | 35-39% = 21 points | >5% = 0 points |

Quality of Annotations

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Excellent = 20 points | Below average = 5 points |
| Above average = 15 points | Unsatisfactory = 0 points |
| Satisfactory = 10 points | |

"Spread-outness" of Annotations

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Excellent = 10 points | Satisfactory = 5 points | Unsatisfactory = 0 points |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|

Variety of Rhetorical Devices

| | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Excellent = 10 points | Satisfactory = 5 points | Unsatisfactory = 0 points |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|

_____ Points for Percentage of Annotations

_____ Quality of Annotations

_____ "Spread-outness" of Annotations

_____ Variety of Rhetorical Devices

_____ Final Grade