

## ANNOTATION GUIDE

**Inside Front Cover:** List major characters and character summary; add page numbers as you read.

**Inside Back Cover:** List themes, allusions, images, motifs, key scenes, plot line, etc.; add page numbers as you read.

**Beginning of Each Chapter:** Write a quick summary; write your own chapter title.

**Top Margins:** Provide plot notes – a few quick words or phrases that summarize what happens

**Bottom and Side Margins:** Add interpretive notes, questions, and remarks.

**Interpretative Notes and Symbols to be used are the following:**

- **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 doodle** 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.

**Some of the things you’ll 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 for 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)

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