

# WCS Summer Reading Annotated Journaling

All English Classes 9th - 12th – Revised 5/09

*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... is by writing [about it]. Why is [responding to] a book 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.*

From *How to Read a Book* (Mortimer Adler & Charles Van Doren)

For these reasons, among others, you will **annotate** your summer reading assignments. Reading becomes more personal when you get involved in the plot. Journaling is a way to do just that. In this summer reading journal, you will read and jot down your thoughts and opinions as you read.

**\*NOTE: DO NOT summarize plot. [\*If you just restate plot, you will receive a low grade *because* this is not an elementary school book report.]**

Pay attention to the characters - what they say and do. Some you will like; some dislike. At times you will agree with the main character's actions; other times you may wonder why he or she didn't make a better choice or speak up. Predict what will happen. See if you are right. Many times, the twists that great writers include will amaze you.

Along the way, keep looking for messages or themes that the author is sending about life in general. You may agree with these ideas or not. Your journal will become your way of *talking back* to the author or characters. You will discover insights and *grow* as you explore new lands, cultures, and time periods.

In many classes, your notebooks will be used for class discussions about the novels or plays. Enjoy the journey ☺

## HOW TO BEGIN

1. Obtain a copy of the assigned novel or play.
2. Purchase a *SMALL* spiral notebook or composition book. Be sure this notebook will be able to handle the number of books you are required to annotate for your course

[Ex. Choose a 2-subject notebook if you are annotating 2 books, or put tabs to indicate where each book starts in a one-subject notebook.]

3. Get a pen (**NOT pencil**) and keep it with your notebook. [You may also type your journal if you choose.]

## WHAT TO WRITE IN YOUR JOURNAL

**1<sup>st</sup> Page** -Your Name, Title of the Novel (underlined or italicized if typed) and Author

**Reaction Pages:** Your reactions to the novel as you read.

How *much* should you write? What kind of "notes" do we expect?

Respond after every 3rd chapter (this would require one-half page of insightful commentary) OR a few sentences *after every chapter* (if you prefer).

We will leave the response method up to you; however, *do not allow more than 3 chapters to lapse before reacting in your journal - and indicate which chapters you are covering.* **WE WANT YOU TO ENJOY YOUR READING** 😊

### Sample Entries of Both Types:

**A 3-chapter entry (about 1/2 page hand written, though you may choose to type):**

**Chapters #1-3:** *The author really shows a bond between Jym and Jorel in these chapters. I can see that the author is using Jorel as a kind of kindly father-figure to push Jym from being clueless and into the hero he is destined to become someday. I think I have lots of Jym's qualities – laziness, shyness, and a fear of anything with tentacles!*

*It was also scary seeing how ruthless Grim is. What makes him especially dangerous is how he appears so caring, when beneath the surface is pure evil. Those are the worst villains! Why doesn't Jym see the signs? I would have at least noticed...*

[This entry could go on for another paragraph to cover a minimum of one-half page.]

**An entry after *each* chapter (several sentences - enough for a paragraph):**

**Chapt. #2:** *I cannot believe Jorel left Jym to face Grim alone! That reminds me of the time my dad sent me back outside after I had just got beaten up by a neighborhood bully. Just like Jym, I wondered if I'd make it back alive . . .* (This entry would add another few sentences to make a complete paragraph.)

Use a dark pen – NOT pencil (as pencil's smudge). Begin each entry with the chapter #'s to which you are referring. **Save paper - do not use a separate page per entry** - just separate entries with chapter #'s in an orderly, neat fashion. **If you make a mistake, careful erasors-cross outs are fine, but sloppiness or illegibility will result in a lower grade.**

Be honest and open about what you have just read. Your reactions can be negative, positive, or both. You can offer your opinion on what has happened and/or what you would have done differently. Try to get into the mind of the main character and offer an explanation for his or her behavior.

## ***\*Required for "Honors" Classes only -***

### ***3 ADDITIONAL PAGES***

(\*Regular English Classes: these are EXTRA-CREDIT and may boost overall grade)

#### **CHARACTER PAGE**

On separate page, list **main** and **significant minor characters**. Put a brief description next to each one, *including* adjectives and/or significant facts about them. Add to this page as you read along.

#### **THEMES**

On separate page, record at least **3 themes** of the book or play - written as sentences. Remember, themes are written as universal statements about life that the author is making through this piece of literature. [Example: for *Beauty and the Beast*, a theme could be stated as – “One must never judge a person by his or her outward looks, but get to know his or her character.”]

#### **MEMORABLE QUOTES**

On separate page, record at least **5 memorable quotes** from the book/play as you read. In parentheses state why you liked the quote.

[NOTE: **NO COPYING**. It is difficult to believe that another classmate would share the *same* responses to a reading that you do. Keep up with the reading assignments *because these are not notes that can be copied without risk of a failing grade to you and the person with whom you shared notes.*]

#### **GRADING**

The journal with annotations for **all required books/plays** will be collected **on the first day of school** and **counted as 2 TEST GRADES**.

Since everyone's notes will be similar in format yet *different* in content (there is obviously no one correct comment to have about page 112 of *Lord of the Flies*, for example). Grades will be based on **completeness, clarity, and \*depth of insight, neatness [readability], and apparent effort**. [\*"Depth of insight" means more than "Wow! Neat chapter!"]

**Remember - merely summarizing plot will result in a very low grade. Respond to the text.**

The following is the scale we will use to grade your summer reading [grades multiplied x 2]:

**100 A+**

**Wow! Superior Job!**

- (*Honors*) went above requirements with additional pages
- more than required annotations
- interacted with the text on a highly significant level
- provided well-written, insightful answers
- neatly presented and readable

**95 A**

**Excellent Job!**

- (*Honors*) included all additional pages – thoroughly done
- complete – and thorough required annotations
- interacted with the text on personal level
- provided well-written, insightful answers
- neatly presented and readable

**88 B**

**Good Job!**

- (*Honors*) additional pages provided
- complete -all required annotations
- provided annotations, but not involved with text
- neatly presented and readable

**78 C**

**Average Job**

- sparse and/or missing additional pages
- minimum required annotations for each text
- annotations do not demonstrate sufficient depth
- work presented in careless manner

**70 D**

**Minimum Effort**

- no additional pages
- annotations are mostly plot summary
- work presented in careless or unreadable manner

**50-60 F**

**Incomplete or All Plot Summary**

