

Dear AP Language and Composition Student:

Welcome to AP! I'm looking forward to taking the journey with you this upcoming school year. You have probably noted, by now, that you have three books to read by the start of the year. Your commitment to AP is in large part a) a commitment to read the texts assigned, and b) participation in class discussions. My commitment to you is that everything will be discussed; I will not waste your time. Remember, however, that these three books are due, annotated, on the first full day of school. You cannot turn them in late for a partial grade. If not turned in **Wednesday, August 10**, your grade is an EF (Epic Fail, or zero). Here is your Summer Reading Assignment:

Annotating Steinbeck: *East of Eden*; Twain: *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; Capote: *In Cold Blood*

(Adapted from *How to Read a Book* (Mortimer Adler & Charles Van Doren). Original adaptation by a fellow AP ListServ subscriber)

- If you have the habit of asking a book questions as you read, you are a better reader than if you do not. However...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. 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 (i.e. marking, underlining, etc.) your reactions down helps you to remember the thoughts of the author.

For these reasons, among others, you will be asked to annotate the three novels, in varying degrees (see page 2). Your annotations will be graded at the beginning of the school year. I am NOT asking you to annotate every page; I think you will know when something is important, or when something grabs your attention, or when something is well-written, etc. Relax. ☺

Front Cover Blank Pages: Character list with small space for character summary and for page references for key scenes, moments of character development, appearance, personality, history, revelations on what other characters think about them, etc. Include page numbers!

Back Cover Pages: Themes, allusions, images, motifs, key scenes, plot line, epiphanies, etc. List and add page references and/or notes as you read. You might choose a way to highlight or mark each time they're mentioned—i.e. highlight, underline, draw a symbol, etc.

Top, Bottom, and Side Page Margins: Interpretive notes, questions, and/or remarks that refer to the meaning of the page. Markings or notes to tie in with information on the inside back cover.

Grading: Annotation grades will be based on thoroughness, clarity, neatness, and effort. **DID YOU READ THE BOOKS? DID YOU ACTIVELY READ THE BOOKS? This is a college course!** Remember, I've printed every SparkNotes, Pink Money, Books Rags, Cliffs Notes, etc. I will know if you've read or if you're electively illiterate (EI)... ☺

Note: If you find annotating while you read to be annoying and awkward, do it **after** you read. Go back after a chapter or section and then mark it carefully. Many times you will pick up on things you didn't notice during the first read through.

What I'm looking for in EACH BOOK:



Things to Think About in *East of Eden*:

- Biblical Allusions
- America as Eden
- Genesis and the Story of Creation
- Characters: all the “C” characters and “A” characters. Is there a pattern?
- Cain and Abel
- Good vs. Evil
- “Thou mayest”...What do YOU think?



Things to Think About in *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*:

- The journey metaphor
- America as Eden
- Real religion vs. hypocrisy
- Huck's and Jim's relationship
- The raft vs. the shore

PLEASE NOTE: You only need to annotate through Ch. 31 and the final two chapters. ☺



Things to Think About in *In Cold Blood*:

- America as Eden
- Capote's use of fictional elements (e.g. foreshadowing, description, character, description, etc.) to draw the reader into a non-fiction account
- Capote as reporter: is he a reliable narrator?
- The non-obvious characters (e.g. Holcomb as a character, the house, etc.)
- The differences between Perry and Dick

See you soon!

Mrs. Collier