

Summer Reading Assignment — AP English Language & Comp 2017

This summer, read *Childhood's End* by Arthur C. Clarke, a science fiction novel about the arrival of alien spacecraft on earth and the ambassador's one command that the human race maintain peace. The novel's mystery concerns why this technologically superior alien civilization is interested in preventing the human race's self-destruction. As you read the novel, annotate the text to follow the development of ideas and themes. You will be evaluated on the quality of your annotations and you will be able to use your annotations for an in class essay assignment. It is not necessary to annotate every page. Annotate when you recognize passages relevant to the themes. See the attached rubric, guidelines, and examples for more details on how annotations will be assessed.

Guidelines for Annotating

Annotating is a strategy that helps a reader slow down, dig deeper, and analyze a text, often in preparation for an academic discussion or writing assignment. Annotations are idiosyncratic and personal, so each person's annotations for a given text will be different, but here are a few general guidelines:

- **Targeted underlining/highlighting.** Underlining loses its impact when there is too much of it, or when there is too little commentary accompanying the underlining. Be selective.
- **Symbols and/or color-coding** (include a key if you choose to do this) can help you annotate more efficiently by creating a shorthand system. (You might use one symbol or color to mark passages that trace a particular theme, for example.)
- **A variety of notes.** Are your notes one-dimensional? All summary? Aim for a variety.
 - Some summary, if you find it helpful
 - Analytical/interpretive commentary
 - Questions — especially interpretive/analytical questions
 - Connections — to other texts, courses, cultural touchstones, experiences, etc.
 - Conversational/personal responses
 - Definitions of unfamiliar words — especially words that don't have enough context clues to help you make an educated guess about the word's meaning. It's not enough to circle words you don't know — look them up and add a brief definition that makes sense in the context of the sentence.
 - Emerging themes/patterns that unify the work — identify & track them.
 - Connections within the book: echoes, repetitions, motifs.
 - If you note a figure of speech or other literary or rhetorical element, push yourself to theorize about the author's purpose for using that element.
 - Avoid "empty" comments such as "great imagery" or vague/generic/filler comments

How much should I annotate? There is no rigid rule for how much to annotate. Think about what will be useful for you in an academic discussion or while writing an essay. Underlining and annotating every paragraph in the book would not be helpful. Be thorough but selective. Your annotations should help you locate and analyze key passages more efficiently during an academic task such as a class discussion or analysis essay. If there are large gaps in your annotations, however, that will negatively affect your grade — see rubric for details.