

## How to Annotate Literature

annotate: *Verb* [-tating, -tated] to add critical or explanatory notes to a written work [Latin *nota* mark]

### Decide on Your Method

- **Write in the margins** if you own the book.
- If you don't own the book, **sticky notes** are good and can also easily be removed.
- Finally, you can **write on a separate sheet of paper**. Be sure to note the page number and passage you are referring to.

### Passive vs. Active Annotations

- **Passive Annotations** do not involve much thought or comprehension. Avoid excessive underlining and highlighting.
- **Active Annotations** are written connections, questions, and observations. They require readers to think and express their ideas,

### SIFTT Annotating

**S – 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.

**I – 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.

**F – Figurative Language:** Figurative language includes things like similes, metaphors, and personification. Figurative language often reveals deeper layers of meaning.

**T – Tone:** Tone is the overall mood of a piece of literature. Tone can carry as much meaning to the story as the plot does.

**T – 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.

### Types of Annotation

- Questions and Answers
- Summary of Main Ideas
- Character Descriptions
- Possible Test Questions
- Patterns / Motifs
- Personal Connections to Text
- Explanations of Text
- Marking Important Passages