

Things Fall Apart, Ch. 8-13 Annotation Task

So, what's the difference between annotating and "taking notes"? For some people, the difference is nonexistent or negligible, but (for the purpose of this class) I am referring to a way of making notes directly onto a novel's pages. The advantage of having one annotated text instead of a set of note papers separate from the text should be clear enough: all the information is together and inseparable, with notes very close to the text for easier understanding, and with fewer pieces to keep organized.

Think of literary annotations as "showing your work" while you read just as you might show your work in a math problem. You are showing what you are thinking while you read and analyze; thinking is a word-based activity, not just a nebulous puff of energy. If you can't articulate your thoughts, then you must question if you really know what you're thinking.

What you'll gain from annotating is a deeper initial reading and an understanding of the text that lasts. You can deliberately engage the author in conversation and questions — much like having the narrator or author there with you in the room. When you come back to the novel, that initial interchange is recorded for you, making an excellent and entirely personal study tool.

Two key components of all legitimate annotation are:

- *strategically circling, underlining, starring, or minimally highlighting specific elements of the text.*
- *writing notes in the margins to make interpretive connections between elements of the text or to respond to or summarize the text's meaning*

For Ch. 8-13 of Things Fall Apart, please annotate *at least one* chapter of your choice with these goals in mind:

Note Key Ideas & their Details

- What is the theme or central idea?
- How is the theme or central idea developed? What is the strongest evidence for both explicitly stated and implied ideas?
- How does the theme or central idea emerge? Is it refined or modified as the text unfolds?
- How do complex characters (e.g. those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of the text?
- How do complex characters interact with other characters, advance the plot, or develop themes?
- Consider mapping the text or providing an objective summary.

Analyze the Craft & Structure

- Word Choice
 - Note or highlight key words and phrases.
 - Determine the meaning of unknown words or phrases that are key to understanding the text.
 - Do any key words/phrases have figurative meaning? Important connotative meaning?
 - What is the cumulative impact of word choices on meaning and tone?
- Structure
 - How do the author's choices in structuring the text, ordering events within it (e.g. parallel plots), and manipulating time (e.g. pacing, flashbacks), create effects such as mystery, tension, or surprise?
- Point of View
 - What is the cultural experience or point of view reflected in this text?

