

# Color marking

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** a copy of the passage you intend to read closely, eight colors of highlighters or colored pencils, and a black pen



**A WAY IN:** Color Marking is a strategy to analyze literature

1. Read the passage or poem.

2. Look for predominate features. Here are possible literary devices/techniques to look for and mark.

\***Particular diction** (religious, directional, mathematical, morose, joyful etc.)

\***Images.** One or more words that appeal to one of the 5 senses (visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile , gustatory). Visual is always the strongest.

\***Image pattern.** Occurs when there is a repetition of 3 (the magic number!) images that occur close together.

\***Motif.** This is a reoccurring symbol, feature or expression that occurs throughout a work or works. For example, the "powerful sword " in many medieval stories is a motif. But, one can also refer to a reoccurring motif within a work of literature, such as the idea of survival in *Life of Pi* sometimes represented by the color orange.

\***Literary devices.** For example, metaphor, simile, personification, allusion, analogy, paradox, etc.

\***Syntax.** Sentence structures may present a particular effect.

\***Punctuation.** Punctuation may be used to create an effect, especially if it's unusual.

\***Repetition.** Deliberate repetition of words, phrases, even structures are there for a reason.

3. Using different colors of highlighter or color pencils, make a legend, or a key, on the page labeling what color will denote what literary feature. For example: Yellow = images of the sun Green = nature images

4. After marking, look at what is going on in the passage or poem. Ask these questions:

\*Is one color predominant? Why?

\*Is there some kind of progression that can be noted? It may be logical or illogical. Why?

\*How do the features marked reinforce or illustrate the content of the passage or poem? Think about the emphasis given, how the writer makes an idea fresh or perhaps the writer is trying to add irony (contradict the content or describe in terms of opposite qualities). Here's where your interpretation takes over.

\*Is there a specific **tone** (attitude of the writer) or **mood** (the way a reader feels) created by the marked material?

5. Based on answers to these questions and other observations made from the passage, you can make inferences about the author's intentions when writing the passage. AND you can make assertions bringing in your own interpretations.

When color marking: NNE Notice>Name>Explain

(Information from Jan Adkins, IB instructor, Florida)

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO HEAR about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth. In the first place, that stuff bores me, and in the second place, my parents would have about two hemorrhages apiece if I told anything pretty personal about them. They're quite touchy about anything like that, especially my father. They're nice and all—I'm not saying that—but they're also touchy as hell. Besides, I'm not going to tell you my whole goddam autobiography or anything. I'll just tell you about this madman stuff that happened to me around last Christmas just before I got pretty run-down and had to come out here and take it easy. I mean that's all I told D.B. about, and he's my *brother* and all. He's in Hollywood. That isn't too far from this crumbly place, and he comes over and visits me practically every week end. He's going to drive me home when I go home next

month maybe. He just got a Jaguar. One of those little English jobs that can do around two hundred miles an hour. It cost him damn near four thousand bucks. He's got a lot of dough, now. He didn't *use* to. He used to be just a regular writer, when he was home. He wrote this terrific book of short stories, *The Secret Goldfish*, in case you never heard of him. The best one in it was "The Secret Goldfish." It was about this little kid that wouldn't let anybody look at his goldfish because he'd bought it with his own money. It killed me. Now he's out in Hollywood, D.B., being a prostitute. If there's one thing I hate, it's the movies. Don't even mention them to me.

Where I want to start telling is the day I left Pencey Prep. Pencey Prep is this school that's in Agerstown, Pennsylvania. You probably heard of it. You've probably seen the ads, anyway. They advertise in about a thousand magazines, always showing some hot-shot guy on a horse jumping over a fence. Like as if all you ever did at Pencey was play polo all the time. I never even once saw a horse anywhere *near* the place. And underneath the guy on the horse's picture, it always says: "Since 1888 we have been molding boys into splendid, clear-thinking young men." Strictly for the birds. They don't do any damn more *molding* at Pencey than they do at any other school. And I didn't know anybody there that was splendid and clear-thinking and all. Maybe two guys. If that many. And they probably *came* to Pencey that way.

Anyway, it was the Saturday of the football game with Saxon Hall. The game with Saxon Hall was supposed to

# The Catcher in the Rye Opening Colormarking

- A. Review the colormarking handout. Please remember that you should mark words and phrases, not multiple sentences at a time. Additionally, marking visual imagery as a category by itself is generally unhelpful; instead, characterize this imagery (e.g. light and dark imagery).
- B. Read the passage aloud, pausing with the punctuation. Then, mark the passage on your own – aim for at least six categories.
- C. Share your colormarking with other students near you; add any categories or ideas you may have missed.
- D. **Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Use text support to back up your ideas.**
  1. What do we understand about Holden’s background based on this passage? How does he feel about the following categories? Offer text support to back up your ideas.
    - a. his childhood?
    - b. his parents?
    - c. his brother?
    - d. his socioeconomic status?
  2. Consider the first sentence of the passage. It begins with “If you really want to hear about it” and ends with “I don’t feel like going into it if you want to know the truth” (3). Why does Salinger introduce Holden with these phrases? What does his help us understand about Holden’s personality? Include text support in your response.

3. What do you understand about Holden's personality? What language features help you understand this?

4. Holden's voice resembles a speech. What features of the text create this impression? What elements of syntax?