

# 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 )

They may brood over it for weeks or years. But as time goes on they begin to realize that even if the child could be released, it would not get much good of its freedom: a little vague pleasure of warmth and food, no doubt, but little more. It is too degraded and imbecile to know any real joy. It has been afraid too long ever to be free of fear. Its habits are too uncouth for it to respond to humane treatment. Indeed, after so long it would probably be wretched without walls about it to protect it, and darkness for its eyes, and its own excrement to sit in. Their tears at the bitter injustice dry when they begin to perceive the terrible justice of reality, and to accept it. Yet it is their tears and anger, the trying of their generosity and the acceptance of their helplessness, which are perhaps the true source of the splendor of their lives. Theirs is no vapid, irresponsible happiness. They know that they, like the child, are not free. They know compassion. It is the existence of the child, and their knowledge of its existence, that makes possible the nobility of their architecture, the poignancy of their music, the profundity of their science. It is because of the child that they are so gentle with children. They know that if the wretched one were not there sniveling in the dark, the other one, the flute-player, could make no joyful music as the young riders line up in their beauty for the race in the sunlight of the first morning of summer.

They were not simple folk, you see, though they were happy. But we do not say the words of cheer much anymore. All smiles have become archaic. Given a description such as this one tends to make certain assumptions. Given a description such as this one tends to look next for the King, mounted on a splendid stallion and surrounded by his noble knights, or perhaps in a golden litter borne by great-muscled slaves. But there was no king. They did not use swords or keep slaves. They were not barbarians. I do not know the rules and laws of their society, but I suspect that they were singularly few. As they did without monarchy and slavery, so they also got on without the stock exchange, the advertisement, the secret police, and the bomb. Yet I repeat that these were not simple folk, not dulcet shepherds, noble savages, bland utopians. They were not less complex than us. The trouble is that we have a bad habit, encouraged by pedants and sophisticates, of considering happiness as something rather stupid. Only pain is intellectual, only evil interesting. This is the treason of the artist: a refusal to admit the banality of evil and the terrible boredom of pain. If you can't lick 'em, join 'em. If it hurts, repeat it. But to praise despair is to condemn delight, to embrace violence is to lose hold of everything else. We have almost lost hold; we can no longer describe a happy man, nor make any celebration of joy.

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Period: \_\_\_\_\_

### COLORMARKING #3

It has one locked door, and no window. A little light seeps in dustily between cracks in the boards, secondhand from a cobwebbed window somewhere across the cellar. In one corner of the little room a couple of mops, with stiff, clotted, foul-smelling heads, stand near a rusty bucket. The floor is dirt, a little damp to the touch, as cellar dirt usually is. The room is about three paces long and two wide: a mere broom closet or disused tool room. In the room a child is sitting. It could be a boy or a girl. It looks about six, but actually is nearly ten. It is feeble-minded. Perhaps it was born defective or perhaps it has become imbecile through fear, malnutrition, and neglect. It picks its nose and occasionally fumbles vaguely with its toes or genitals, as it sits haunched in the corner farthest from the bucket and the two mops. It is afraid of the mops. It finds them horrible. It shuts its eyes, but it knows the mops are still standing there; and the door is locked; and nobody will come. The door is always locked; and nobody ever comes, except that sometimes – the child has no understanding of time or interval – sometimes the door rattles terribly and opens, and a person, or several people, are there. One of them may come and kick the child to make it stand up. The others never come close, but peer in at it with frightened, disgusted eyes. The food bowl and the water jug are hastily filled, the door is locked, the eyes disappear.