# Dramatic Literature

Anna Jensen

# Annotation

We will be reading with a pen (or several pens) this term. Annotation is like having a conversation with the text and its author: you are able to ask questions, comment on meaning, and point out special moments in the text as well as passages you want to revisit. The most effective strategy is to read and then re-read: the first time you read for the general sense and of flow of the story. The second reading is when you pick apart the text and make your annotation.

Annotating is a permanent record of your intellectual conversation with the text. As you read this term, imagine new ways of connecting with literature. This annotation exercise helps you read actively and with a new level of depth.

You will be graded on the thoroughness of your annotation. Just underlining or highlighting doesn’t show an engagement with the text. For credit, you must write your own interpretation, research, and thoughts on the page.

Begin with a pencil, a highlighter, blue, and red pens, and yellow stickie notes.

Use the blue pen to underline and label important moments in the play and phrases or passages where the author seems to use language in an especially heightened way.

Important moments include:

* An indication of the setting
* Indications of each character’s motivations, as well as details about their age, status, occupation, family—any information that the author gives about who that person is.
* Climax: the highest point of the action
* Exposition: indications of what the situation is in the world of the play.

Heightened use of language include: irony, allusion, metaphor, suspense, symbolism, understatement, foreshadowing, and theme. [See the next page for definitions of these and other literary devices.].

Use the pencil and yellow stickie notes to write in the margins

* Feel free to draw picture when a visual connection is appropriate. This can be especially helpful when the setting is described at the beginning of each act.
* Relate what you read to examples from real life, from television, from movies, and from other books.
* Summarize the action in your own words at the ending of every scene. Then, and this is important, at the end of each scene, write a few expectations of might happen next.
* If you need more room to write, use yellow stickie notes for your responses.

Use the highlighter for passages that puzzle you and you want to return to later.

Underline new vocabulary with a red pen; then write the definition in pencil in the margins.

\* Allusion – a reference to a mythological, literary, or historical person, place, or thing: e.g., “He met his Waterloo.”

\*Foreshadowing – the use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest future action

\*Hyperbole – a deliberate, extravagant, and often outrageous exaggeration; it may be used for either serious or comic effect: e.g., “The shot heard ‘round the world.”

\*Irony – there are three types; -**verbal irony** – when a speaker or narrator says one thing while meaning the opposite; sarcasm is a form or verbal irony: e.g., “It is easy to stop smoking. I’ve done it many times.” -**situational irony** -- when a situation turns out differently from what one would normally expect; often the twist is oddly appropriate: e.g., a deep sea diver drowning in a bathtub is ironic. -**dramatic irony** – when a character or speaker says or does something that has different meaning from what he or she thinks it means, though the audience and other characters understand the full implications: e.g., Anne Frank looks forward to growing up, but we, as readers, know that it will never be.

\*Metaphor – a comparison of two unlike things not using “like” or “as”: e.g., “Time is money.”

\*Mood – the atmosphere or predominant emotion in a literary work. \*Oxymoron – a form of paradox that combines a pair of opposite terms into a single unusual expression: e.g., “sweet sorrow” or “cold fire.”

\*Suspense – a quality that makes the reader or audience uncertain or tense about the outcome of events.

\*Symbol – any object, person, place, or action that has both a meaning in itself and that stands for something larger than itself, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value: e.g., a tortoise represents slow but steady progress.

\*Theme – the central message of a literary work. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life or human nature. A literary work can have more than one theme, and most themes are not directly stated but are implied: e.g., pride often precedes a fall.

\*Understatement (also known as “meiosis” or “litotes”) – the opposite of hyperbole. It is a kind of irony that deliberately represents something as being much less than it really is: e.g., “I could probably manage to survive on a salary of two million dollars per year.”

*Definitions from: Laying the Foundation*