

Advanced Placement English Literature and Composition
Summer Reading Assignment
2025-2026

Task: You are to carefully read and annotate *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (Thomas C. Foster) and *Medea** (Euripides). I strongly recommend that the first text you read is *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*.

*A note on the texts – Inexpensive copies of *Medea* can be found on Amazon.com and at Barnes and Noble.

Below are the guidelines for annotating. **You must bring your annotated texts to class during the first week of class and you will be assessed on these texts using an AP exam style prompt or alternative assessment.**

Guidelines for Annotating Text

What should you annotate? Here is a list of things you should be annotating your text for as you read. *Highlighting and underlining alone do not make for annotations.* Your annotations must demonstrate your engagement with the text and must include comments. Use the margins of the book, the blank pages, and Post-It Notes.

- ✓ Ask questions (essential to active reading).
- ✓ Comment on the actions or development of a character. Does the character change? Why? How? The result? Look for archetypes, foils, etc.
- ✓ Identify and comment on lines/quotations you think are especially significant, powerful, or meaningful.
- ✓ Express agreement or disagreement.
- ✓ Connect ideas to each other or to other texts.
- ✓ Note if you experience an epiphany.
- ✓ Write a bulleted synopsis of each chapter either on the first or last page of the chapter or act.
- ✓ Note how the author uses language. Note the significance if you can:
 - ❖ effects of word choice (diction) or sentence structure or type (syntax)
 - ❖ point of view / effect
 - ❖ repetition of words, phrases, actions, events, patterns
 - ❖ narrative pace / time / order of sequence of events
 - ❖ irony
 - ❖ contrasts / contradictions / juxtapositions / shifts
 - ❖ allusions
 - ❖ any other figure of speech or literary device
 - ❖ reliability of narrator
 - ❖ motifs or cluster ideas
 - ❖ tone / mood
 - ❖ imagery
 - ❖ themes
 - ❖ setting / historical period
 - ❖ symbols

The most common complaint about annotating is that it slows down your reading. Yes, it does. That's the point. If annotating as you read annoys you, read a chapter, then go back and annotate. Reading a text a second time is preferable anyway. Approach the works with an open mind. Let them inspire you and stretch your imagination. Please note that simply using SparkNotes, CliffsNotes, Shmoop, LitCharts, etc. will in no way replace a thorough reading of these texts. In fact, if turning to these types of sources is what you have in mind, you may want to reconsider taking this college level course. We simply do not cut corners in an Advanced Placement course.