

**2014-2015 PRE-REQUISITE READING FOR HONORS ENGLISH IV
DUE FIRST DAY OF ENGLISH CLASS**

Part One

***How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster (revised edition published in 2014)**

Thomas Foster knows how to “read literature like a professor” because he is indeed a professor of English at the University of Michigan. In this text, Foster explains how to read literary works more deeply. Focusing on theme, symbolism, allusions, intertextuality, and other literary devices, Foster will give you tips on how to be a more analytical reader, an important skill in any English class. His book will be an excellent reference for us in class throughout the year.

You will need to purchase your own copy of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*. You can find the book in bookstores in the area, and ordering from sites such as amazon.com, booksense.com, and other online booksellers is a possibility.

Assignment - Read and annotate chapters 1, 10, 14, 19, 21, 24, and 25. Follow the annotation guide that is included at the end of this assignment.

Part Two

Assignment - Read and annotate *The Thirteenth Tale* by Diane Setterfield. Follow the same provided annotation guide. Again, you will need to purchase your own copy of the novel from a local bookstore or order online from sites such as amazon.com, booksense.com, or other online booksellers.

Part Three

Synthesize Parts One and Two - Relating *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas Foster to *The Thirteenth Tale* by Diane Setterfield

Directions: Respond to the all of the writing prompts below. Each response should be a well-written discussion (i.e. two - three paragraphs) that includes quotations from both texts and specific examples from *The Thirteenth Tale*.

Chapter 1 -- Every Trip Is a Quest (Except When It's Not)

List the five aspects of the QUEST and then apply them to Margaret's quest in *The Thirteenth Tale*.

Chapter 10 -- It's More Than Just Rain or Snow

Choose a scene from *The Thirteenth Tale* where the weather or the environment is more than what it seems and explain the significance.

Chapter 14 -- Yes, She's a Christ Figure, Too

Apply the criteria on pages 128-129 to Margaret in *The Thirteenth Tale*.

Chapter 19 -- Geography Matters...

Pay special attention to the geography in *The Thirteenth Tale* and explain its importance in the story, the characters, and the message the author is sending to his or her readers.

Chapter 21 -- Marked for Greatness

Analyze the physical imperfection of Vida Winter and its implications for characterization.

Chapter 24 -- ...And Rarely Just Illness

In *The Thirteenth Tale*, what are the symbolic and metaphorical possibilities of the illness in which Vida Winter is inflicted?

Chapter 25 -- Don't Read with Your Eyes

Choose a quote from *The Thirteenth Tale* that reflects the overall meaning of the work. What did you learn from this reading experience?

(Annotation guide and grading rubrics are on the following pages.)

ANNOTATION GUIDE

Annotate – v. To furnish (a literary work) with critical commentary or explanatory notes [*<LATIN ad near + nota a mark, note*]

The Process:

There are a number of procedural expectations that make annotation practical and effective. First, implement a consistent system. Use the same abbreviations and symbols every time you annotate. Second, have a pencil close at hand (I usually tuck one behind my ear). Yes, use a pencil. Why? You may change your mind or get it wrong the first time; someone else may say it better or more succinctly; more recent discoveries may prompt a reevaluation of earlier findings, etc. Third, be disciplined.

Annotation Strategies:

Tracking nouns -- important people, places, things, and ideas: Put a box around the name of [1] a character the first time you encounter the character, [2] a place (or other aspect of the setting) whenever it seems important or relevant, and [3] an object when it seems crucial to the story. “Re-box” a character/setting/object whenever he/she/it returns to the text after a long absence. Track important people, places, things, and ideas by supplying page numbers whenever possible that point to previous encounters. Cross reference all of this tracking/tracing by also writing page numbers at the spot of the earlier instances of people, places, things, and ideas. Write brief comments whenever possible to make these connections clear and to note any evolution or development. On the inside cover of the book, keep a list of the characters you encounter, the page on which they first appear, and a very brief description of each. You may need to add to or modify these descriptions as the story unfolds. In this way, you will develop a comprehensive list of characters. Keep track of important aspects of the setting and important objects in a similar manner. Do the same for ideas. Keep track of themes (motifs) by noting them as they are perceived and by tracing their development.

Underlining: Within the text of the book, underline or otherwise note anything that strikes you as important, significant, memorable, etc. If possible and profitable, write brief comments within the side margins that indicate your motivation in underlining. Focus on the essential elements of literature (plot, setting, characterization, point of view and theme). You need not underline every word. Often, I underline isolated words and phrases.

Vocabulary/unusual diction: Within the text of the book, circle words that are unfamiliar to you or whose use strikes you as unusual or inventive. Look up words in a dictionary that seem essential to an understanding of the meaning or the sense of the author. If it helps to do so, jot a brief definition or synonym nearby.

Questioning: Actively engage the text and further/confirm your understanding of each chapter by writing at least two open-ended questions for each. Short essay questions are most useful.

Shifts: Note all shifts in point of view. Note all shifts in time. Note all shifts in diction and syntax.

Final Thoughts on Annotation:

Your teachers expect you to think critically about what you are reading. While the amount of annotation may vary widely from page to page, any notes you add to a text will help you to read more critically – any attempt to annotate your book will help you to understand the reading as you read – and, as I hope this handout has made clear, will help you return to the reading with confidence later. Annotation is a discrete skill, and like any skill, it takes significant practice to hone your ability to the point of acquiring expertise. So push the pencil! Push the pencil! Push the pencil!

***This annotation handout was in part inspired by “How to Mark a Book,” an essay by Mortimer J. Adler, Ph. D, and modified by Sandra Effinger.**

Grading for Parts One and Two – Each book will receive a separate annotation grade, and each annotation grade will count as a test grade (3 times).

Annotation Rubric

(A) Excellent:

- Text has been thoroughly annotated with questions, observations, and reflections of the content as well as the writing; variety of topics marked for discussion; variety of stylistic devices marked.
- Comments demonstrate analysis and interpretation – thinking beyond the surface level of the text. Thoughtful connections made to other texts, life experiences, or other events throughout the text.
- Comments accomplish a great variety of purposes.
- Consistent markings throughout text (not bunched).
- Each chapter has several annotations.

(B) Proficient:

- Text has been annotated reasonably well with questions, observations, and/or reflections of the content as well as the writing style.
- Comments demonstrate some analysis and interpretation – thinking somewhat beyond the surface level of the text. Attempts have been made to make connections.
- Comments accomplish a variety of purposes.
- Some lapses in entries exist or entries may be bunched.
- Each chapter has at least two annotations.

(C) Adequate:

- Text has been briefly annotated with questions, comments, observations, and/or reflections of the content or writing style.
- Commentary remains mostly at the surface level. The commentary suggests thought in specific sections of the text rather than throughout.
- Entries may be sporadic.
- Each chapter has at least one annotation.

(D-F) Inadequate:

- Text has been briefly annotated.
- Commentary is thoughtless. There is little or no attempt to make connections.
- Not all chapters are annotated.

Part Three - Synthesis of Parts One and Two

Each prompt is worth 12 points. This part of the assignment will count as two test grades (6 times).

- Response contains specific examples from *The Thirteenth Tale* (4 points)
- Response contains at least one quotation from *The Thirteenth Tale* and at least one quotation from the specified chapter of *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* (2 points)
- Response fully answers prompt (4 points)
- Response is at least two-three paragraphs in length (2 points)