

Guidelines for Summer Reading Notes

Tips for Fiction and Non-fiction Books

Taking notes as you read is important for developing analytical reading skills. As you read your **fiction** (all grades) and **non-fiction** (only for honors, AP, and DE grades 11 and 12) summer reading book(s), take notes on the following things such as:

- Setting (including time period, significance to the literary world, and impact on society),
- Characterization,
- Plot (exposition, rising action, turning point, falling action, resolution),
- Symbolism, and
- Literary Elements (similes, metaphors, personification, theme, etc.).
- **For non-fiction choice**, analyze author's style including diction, detail, imagery, syntax, and tone. Also note any "wise" or striking statements made by the author.

You will write these notes in a **T-chart** (see example on next page). Be sure to head your paper and write the title of the novel and the name of the novel's author. **You will be responsible for four notes per chapter (both for fiction and nonfiction)**. On the left side of the chart, you will have the quote from the book, the chapter, and page number. On the right side, you will write why the note is important to you or write any questions the quote suggests.

Tips for collecting successful notes on the **LEFT side** of the T-chart:

1. Write down important quotes as you read.
2. Quote directly or paraphrase. This means that you can write down the quote exactly (using quotation marks) or you can put the quote in your own words. It is okay to use part of a quote if it is long (see example on the next page).
3. Record the chapter and page number(s) for each quote.
- 4.
5. If possible, write down what the quote shows (setting, time period, major character, or part of the plot).

Tips for collecting successful notes on the **RIGHT side** of the T-chart:

1. Write down your thoughts about the quote before you continue reading.
 - a. Consider these types of responses—
 - i. Questions you might want to ask the teacher
 - ii. Thoughts about real-world connections
 - iii. Things that remind you of another story, movie, or TV show
 - iv. Connections to your personal experiences
 - v. Thoughts about character motivations, author's writing style, etc.

****Your notetaking guide will be due within the first two weeks of the semester you take your English class. Your teacher will give you further instruction as to how you will use these notes for your summer reading test. Be sure to have your notes when the class begins.**

****Your notes can help you participate in class discussions and if you must write anything on your book. When using quotes, you always must have an explanation of the quote, so do your best to have clear responses to help you be successful in your class.**

Sample T-Chart for Notes

This sample **is not** for a book you are required to read. This simply provides a visual example of the directions on the previous page.

Summer Reading Notes for *Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry* by Mildred D. Taylor

| Quote from the Work | Questions/Connections |
|---|--|
| "...attempting to keep the rusty Mississippi dust from swelling with each step..." [setting] chapter 1, page 1 | This quote might be where the story is taking place. Also, it seems like the characters live in a rural area of Mississippi. |
| "Now it was 1933, and Papa was again in Louisiana laying track." [time period] chapter 1, page 7 | There were other dates mentioned, but I think this is the time period of the story. Do I need to research the 1930's for more information? |
| Cassie [major character] | This character appears to be the narrator of the story. I don't have a chapter or page number written because she speaks from the first line of chapter one, but I realized her name much later. I'm not sure yet of how old she is. |

Continue working on the T-chart being sure to include the necessary terms that are listed on the previous page. If you are unsure what a word means, reference the list below. Also, if you find other examples of literary elements you know, it is okay to note those and make connections to them as best as you can.

Setting – the place or type of surroundings where an event takes place which includes the exact year, season, month, etc. when events in a story takes place (several time periods can take place in a story)

Characterization – a description of the distinctive nature and features of a character in a work.

Plot – the order of events in a story; the events may not be chronological (note if plot seems to consist of flashbacks or foreshadowing)

Symbolism – the use of objects to represent ideas or qualities

Literary Elements – devices used to highlight aspects of a story such as simile, metaphor, personification, tone, theme, etc.; these reflect *how* the writer creates style for their work

Style Analysis – devices that the author used to craft the story. These include diction, detail, syntax, etc.