

## Annotation Tips

*Some students may ask, "What exactly am I marking in the text when I am annotating?" Please keep this list of the top 10 things to annotate handy as you begin reading, and remember to mark as you go...do not go back and mark it later! You will get faster with practice.*

1. unfamiliar vocabulary (and 2-3 word definition)
2. text connections -self, text, world
3. I wonder.....statements, questions, observations
4. literary devices- foreshadowing, motifs, hyperbole, etc...
5. character comments- "so selfish," "that's mean," "shows courage" .....
6. predictions
7. favorite passages, well written, strong feelings or response, etc ...
8. identify virtue, character flaws, moral strength, etc..
9. draw pictures or make up your own symbols
10. **SIFTT** through your book

Sifting a book is used to pick out specific evidence from the text in order to discover and support the author's overall message.

- The **S** in SIFTT stands for symbols. A symbol is a literal real thing that also stands for something else, like a flag, or a cross, or fire. Most anything might be a symbol and finding these symbols help to discover a whole new layer of meaning the author included into the book.
- The **I** in *SIFTT* stands for *imagery*. *Imagery includes any words the author adds that appeal to one or more of the five senses. Of course, if a place were described in such vivid description that every single imagery detail was covered, you would have a very long book. Authors carefully choose which images to include when writing a book. Close attention to imagery is important in understanding an authors message and attitude toward a subject.*
- The **F** in SIFTT stands for figurative language and works closely with the imagery. Figurative language includes things like similes, metaphors, and personification. Figurative language can be used to compare things to other things which, like imagery, can reveal an authors attitude toward a subject.
- The **T** in SIFTT stands for tone. Tone is composed of imagery and figurative language along with diction and other elements. Tone is the overall mood of a piece of literature. Tone can carry as much meaning to the story as the plot does.
- The second **T** in SIFTT stands for theme. In literature, a theme is a broad idea in a story, or a message or lesson conveyed by a work. This message is usually about life, society or human nature. Themes explore timeless and universal ideas. Most themes are implied rather than explicitly stated. Deep thematic content is not required in literature; however, some readers hold that all stories inherently project some kind of outlook on life that can be taken as a theme, regardless of whether or not this is the intent of the author. Themes arise from the interplay of plot, setting, character, conflict.