

## How Do I Annotate a Novel?

When you have selected the novel you intend to study, your first task is to begin reading. Your study of the novel will be quite detailed. Following the reading plan provided will save you a lot of time.

### **What does it mean to annotate a novel?**

Simply put, annotating means to keep brief and relevant short notes as you read, so you can refer to them later when you need information. In **Unit 1** of this course, you have already learned and practiced using important parts of literary texts, and the novel will be no different.

**What exactly do I need to keep track of? Remember, you are short noting, so keep track of the most important information and not everything.**

**Context/Setting of the novel:** Where is it occurring? In which time frame is the story taking place?

**Important characters, such as the protagonist and antagonist, and their transformations:** How do they change throughout the story?

**Conflict:** What are the opposing forces? Who or what side wins out in the end and why is this so?

**Plot Events:** What major things happen? (This type of event could not be removed and allow the story to keep its shape and meaning.)

**Key Symbols:** What symbolic ideas are repeated?

**Theme:** What is the main message about life? The theme is key, as it is the theme that we will take away from a text on a more permanent level. Keep notes on any information that supports or develops the theme. For example, when you reach that "Ahhh Hah!" moment when you realize how the title fits the work and the main idea, this should be noted.

**There are many different ways to annotate a text, and you will need to do what works best for you!**

### **Suggestion 1:**

1. Buy large and small sticky note tabs. Your small tabs should be multicoloured.
2. Summarize: Keep short notes of key information at the end of each chapter on the large sticky tabs. Give page numbers so you know where to return to later for quotes, more specific information, etc. Examples: Mary gives theme quote (p. 109) or Mary changes sadness to determination (p. 215).
3. Choose a certain colour for each of the major categories above and as you read, place an appropriate sticky tab on the page so you know what pages to return to if you need to refer to this information later. **Review** an example of Mohammed's sticky note annotations on the next page.

### **Suggestion 2:**

1. Summarize: Short note major information for each chapter. Give page numbers so you know where to return to later for quotes, more specific information, etc.
2. Create the major categories from above on paper and note important relevant information in each category as you read. **Again, keep important page numbers for reference.**