ANNOTATING

WHAT IS ANNOTATING?
Annotating is a writing-to-learn strategy for use while reading or rereading. Annotating helps readers reach a deeper level of engagement and promotes active reading.

HOW DO YOU ANNOTATE?
Annotating is marking up a text while you are reading. Some people use a pencil or highlighter and underline words, phrases, passages or they write notes in the margins of the story. Some people use small sticky notes and attach them to sections and pages where there is significant material. Some people use a separate notebook and jot down questions or ideas as they read the text.

WHAT DO YOU ANNOTATE?
Typically, readers generate six or seven ways of responding to the material that they read: readers make predictions (I think this will happen next because of what this character is like or what this character just said); ask questions; state opinions (I don’t think Lyman should have let Henry die); analyze the author’s craft (the author didn’t develop a certain character well enough, the narrator was reliable or unreliable, the author uses strong imagery); make connections (this story reminded me of another story we read or another story read years ago; this story reminded me of something in my life; this story reminded me of something that has happened around me in the world; this story reminded me of a television show or a movie that I saw); reflection (what impact did this story have on you? What did the story mean? What can you take away with you?).

STEPS TO ANNOTATING
Before reading: Examine the title and any subtitles; read any blurbs about the author; make notes on anything that comes to mind.
During reading: Pay attention to the characters, how they are described, how they behave. Note the setting, both time and place and how this is significant. Note the vocabulary that is used and important information that is given. In the margins, summarize passages that you think are important; make predictions about what you think will happen based on reason; formulate opinions; make connections; ask questions; write reactions; look for patterns: words, symbols, images that keep repeating themselves.
After reading: reread your annotations and draw some conclusions; reread the introduction and the conclusions and see if you can come up with anything new; examine any patterns/repetitions and determine possible meanings; determine what the title means.

HOW WILL ANNOTATING HELP YOU?
Annotating slows down your reading and therefore helps you to uncover ideas that might not have emerged otherwise. This strategy helps you to read more carefully and to comprehend the text in many different ways. Annotating also helps to improve your writing by providing you with stronger ideas for essays and supporting evidence. Learning how to annotate a text will help you all through your life. No matter what you read – school texts, legal documents, employment contracts – you will always benefit from being able to know how to read a text closely, ask questions, make connections, and understand the context better.

You will be using the skills of annotating in the class during our time together and you will be asked periodically to share these annotations.