

Reading Strategies for English Students

English 11 Honors

1. Research – We saw how researching the historical period in which the work was written as well as the author’s own background greatly illuminates our understanding and appreciation of the work. In a classroom, the teacher will usually provide this information, but if that does not happen, you will be well served to do this on your own.
2. If available, thoroughly review the cover of the novel. Look to title, critiques, summary, first publication date.
3. Preview the text – the length of the novel, the length of the chapters, the name of the chapters. This could be a defining element of rhetoric (think Elie Wiesel’s *Night*).
4. Preview any exercises, questions, or assignments associated with the reading (homework packet, Reader’s Response).
5. Annotate in pen – highlighters do not specifically address or remind you why you marked a specific area. Pen or pencil provides the details of your annotations.
6. Summarize the chapter as you complete it. Provide 3-5 sentences of what literally happened in this chapter so that you may better access the plot.
7. Question the title and names of characters as you read. How can you relate these names to themes?
8. Think of questions as you read, or note questions you have during the reading.
9. Underline the text as you read. Note in particular
 - The names of characters
 - Names or titles of characters
 - Descriptions – especially prolonged (think opening scene of *A Separate Peace* or the half frozen lake in *The Catcher in the Rye*)
 - Dates
 - Places
 - Weather
 - Motifs – (think of the preponderance of things old and decaying in “The Customs House”)
 - Allusions (biblical and mythological)
 - Words you don’t know
 - Connections you make
 - Questions in general
10. Search for the main idea by sections (chapter).

11. Read through difficult sections – do not stop or become mired in the challenge of reading, rather mark it and come back to it.
12. Use graphics, maps or charts to make connection (e.g. chart Holden’s journey, graph the family of Olympians, map the landscape of Gene and Finny’s school)
13. Complete any exercises, questions, or assignments associated with the reading (homework packet, Reader’s Response).
14. Notes on anything unclear
15. Monitor your understanding
16. Talk about literature with others as you read (even read together)
17. Read in chunks – and review.
18. REREAD