

HONORS English Literature and Composition 2: Summer Reading Assignment

The **required** book is ***Beowulf: A New Verse Translation* by Seamus Heaney**. Bring the annotated text to class on the first day of school.

Beowulf : A New Verse Translation

Beowulf Book Annotation Assignment

Although you may purchase a book, full ownership of a book comes when you have made it a part of yourself, and the best way to make it meaningful for you is to interact with the book as you read it. We interact with a book when we use pencils or pens for annotation (adding notes or comments to a text, book, drawing) and that is a key component of close reading. You may feel that annotating the book slows down your reading. Yes, it does. That is the point. If annotating as you read annoys you, read a chapter, then go back and annotate. The assignment for *Beowulf* is to make annotations in the book as you read the text (use the margin space as well).

1. Read “How to Mark a Book” by Mortimer Adler (<https://stevenson.ucsc.edu/academics/stevenson-college-core-courses/how-to-mark-a-book-1.pdf>)
2. Purchase the book and, according to the suggestions from Adler, annotate it as you read. There are 200 pages; you should have at least one annotation on all right-hand pages (modern English translations) to earn an A. (See grading below).

What should you note?

1. Underline names of characters. In the margin, make a note about the personality/traits of the character.
2. Mark the setting- when and where does scene take place?
3. At the top of each page, write important plot events. Not every page will be marked.
4. Underline quotes or lines you think are significant, powerful, or meaningful
5. Underline any symbols.
6. Put a question mark in areas of the text you do not understand.
7. Underline repetitions
8. Topic to theme
Topics throughout Beowulf include, but are not limited to, ideas of courage, envy, revenge, loyalty, identity and reputation, morality, traditions and customs, wealth, religion, strength and skill, good vs. evil, and hospitality and generosity.

*Mark at least 5 instances with “T” and name the topic you identify in the lines that you read.

Grading:

A- I would expect to see markings and written commentary throughout the entire book, at least one mark on each page, including recognition of significant plot points, topics, and ideas. There will probably be something significant noted in nearly every page. Annotations means notes. You cannot merely highlight something and not explain why.

B- The B grade may be lacking in written commentary, but the “highlighted” areas will reflect the significant elements as noted above (numbers 1-8). Markings will be notes on about half of the pages (50). By “highlighted areas,” we mean areas of focus, not the use of a highlighter pen although you can use them.

C- The book markings may be missing some significant elements, but will still be noted throughout some of the book, showing your basic understanding of the characters and plot. You must have notes, commentary, etc. You cannot just highlight a line without explaining why.

Lower grades will reflect a lack of reading, possibly in skipped sections or random highlights of insignificant material.