

How to create active reading notes



ENGLISH 4U ACTIVE READING NOTES While you read your chosen novels and other relevant material you should be keeping notes. The goal is to jot down ideas and thoughts as you are reading, thus making the process active. You should write something every time you read. Your instinct may be to write your opinion of what you have read. While this is okay to include in reading notes, reserve these comments for your reading log. Your active reading notes should be of more substance in order to formulate an essay-worthy comparison.

The suggestions below should help guide your note writing. Jot other elements you want to investigate on the back of this sheet. Use the margin of your page! Note the date, chapter and/or page numbers, as well as ideas for comparison. Limit what you put in the margin, but use it to help you access information for easy reference and citations. Sample Questions to answer:

- How does the author develop elements of the novel:
- What devices have been used?
- Are foreshadowing and flashback integral in the development of the novel's elements? What is the author's lexicon like and how does this reflect the novel's elements?
- Is the language formal or informal? How does this contribute to the author's style?
- What wording/phrasing is used – what mood is being set?
- Does the author create empathy? Other factors to consider – this information may not be useful to create your comparison essay; however it will help you make other decisions (for example determine which text is better, consider how the book is marketed, etc.
- Front and back cover – impression, style, what's there?
- Shape and size of the book; paper used
- Layout of chapters and information therein
- Font, layout of pages (numbering)
- Reviews – who they are, what

they said, do you agree • Pages outside the story: foreward, author's notes, glossary, acknowledgements Also note: • Interesting or questionable grammar and vocabulary • Historical facts that help a reader understand the story • Information about the author