

English I Summer Reading Annotation Guide

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Summer Reading Assignment: Read and annotate *Code Name Verity* by Elizabeth Wein. This is the only assignment that must be completed by the start of classes.

This document includes:

1. An overview of annotation practices
2. Options and suggestions for how to annotate your text
3. A list of topics specific to your novel that you should make note of as you read
4. Notes on what activities you will be asked to do in relation to the summer reading novel when school begins

Annotation Guide:

Please note that this is a general guide that can be adapted to suit your own needs or the specific text that you are reading. You should start with the suggestions on this guide, then you can adapt your annotation style as you see fit.

1. **Annotating a text:** Annotation refers to marking up your text by physically writing on it, using sticky notes or other markers, and/or taking notes as you read. Annotation is a key skill to learn as you develop into a sophisticated critical reader, writer, and thinker; it is also an important skill that will help you succeed in college classes. **The purpose of annotation is to keep a record of your thoughts and questions as you read.** This is especially useful to you as you complete your summer reading, as you will read the novel outside of class and will need to retain your knowledge of the text into the first quarter of the academic year. The following is a suggested annotation guide for each method listed above.

- a. **Marking up the text: This is the recommended method for annotating.** If you use this method, you will physically write in and on your book as you read. Differentiate your annotations as follows:

1. Underline key lines and/or passages. An alternative annotation would be to place a star in the margin next to key lines/passages. The purpose of underlining or marking key passages with a star is to

help you remember where to find the most significant portions of the text. Passages may be significant because they highlight key plot events, point out important qualities of the main characters, or emphasize central themes or motifs of the work, which are essential to analyzing the text's meaning. In addition to underlining or marking with a star, it is best to **record your thoughts in the margins or in a separate journal** so that you can remember what you thought was important about the passages.

2. Write a question mark in the margin next to passages or lines that you find confusing or that you have questions about. It is best to **write out your question in the margins** or in a separate journal so that you can remember what confused you about the passage.

3. Circle unknown words; look up the new words as you read so that you can both better understand the text and build your vocabulary. **Write the definition in your book or in a separate journal.** Even if you are slightly unsure of a word's meaning, it's a good idea to look up the word to clarify the meaning.

4. Develop a system of annotations specifically related to your text to help you keep track of specific issues/characters/themes as you read. For example, if the protagonist is named Joe, you might write a "J" next to the passages in the text that describe his character or tell us something important about his character. See more specific suggestions for these types of annotations below, in the annotation guidelines for *Code Name Verity*.

5. To reiterate point 1, **make sure that you go beyond simply highlighting or underlining;** you want to be able to remember WHY you marked these lines when you go back into the text to write your essay or participate in class discussions and activities. Please note that when I give you grades for annotating a text, those that only underline/highlight without making additional notes will earn only partial credit.

b. **Sticky note annotation:** If you prefer not to write on your text or you are using a borrowed copy of a text, you may wish to use a set of sticky notes to annotate your text. For example, you might use the Post-It brand flags (usually four or five different colors). You can decide what color to assign to each detail you want to annotate. You can also write very small, short notes on these skinny sticky note flags, or you may use bigger sticky notes that have more room for your writing. See the more detailed instructions for annotations above.

1. Place a blue sticky note next to key passages.

2. Place an orange sticky note and write a question mark on the notes when you come across a passage that is confusing or about which you have questions. You could also write more detailed versions of your questions in a separate journal. Again, it's very important that you record your thoughts and ideas so you can remember why you are noting these lines or passages.

3. Place a yellow sticky note near unknown or unfamiliar words. Write the definition on the sticky note or in a separate journal.

4. Use the remaining colors to annotate other details about the text (characters, themes, etc.). You might want to assign a different color to each theme or character, or you may want to use the same color but write a short annotation

Code Name Verity, Elizabeth Wein

Ideas to Notice:

When we return to class, we will focus on a few key features of this text. Be sure to consider these as you read, while you annotate, and after you complete the novel:

1. Characterization – pay close attention to the ways Wein builds the characters of Maddie and Verity. Think about how they are similar (in terms of personality, upbringing, development, etc.) and how they are different. Consider whether they are ultimately more similar or different. What kind of relationship do the women have with one another? How does their relationship cause each individual woman to change and grow?
2. Friendship is a central theme of *Code Name Verity*. How does Wein develop this theme throughout the novel? How does Verity and Maddie’s relationship develop and grow? What are the characteristics that mark a good friendship within the novel?
3. Is Verity (the narrator) a trustworthy person? Explain the ways in which she is and is not trustworthy. How does trustworthiness help us determine if someone is a “good” person or a “bad” person? Do you have to be trustworthy to be good?
4. Fear is another important theme to the novel, as Maddie and Queenie openly speak about their greatest fears to one another. What are their fears? How/why do they come about these fears?
5. Why does Captain von Linden keep the narrator alive and give her so much time to complete her confession? Is this element of the story believable? Why or why not? Think about von Linden as a character in order to fully explain your thoughts.

Required Activities (all of these will be completed once school begins and are NOT due on the first day of class):

1. Class discussions of characters, contexts, plot, themes, and writing style
2. Class discussion of how the novel represents the connections and overlap of personal lives and political events
3. Group discussions of an assigned character and her primary traits, as well as her relationship with other characters, namely the other protagonist
4. Group “body biography” project, which will be a visual and linguistic representation of your assigned character (this assignment will be a progression from the group activity mentioned in the previous point)
5. Novel Page Poem
6. A writing assignment in which you develop a thesis, locate support, and write one body paragraph on one of the annotating topics above.