

Annotation Guide 2025-2026

Annotation Guide...

What are annotations?

Annotations is adding notes to a text as you read – *not just highlighting*.








You are actively reading and interacting with the ideas in the text.

Note- Annotating the text becomes your *best* notebook.

Annotation Symbols...

Note- important parts of the text are generally the introduction of a character, conflict, or foreshadowing of an event.

Note- unfamiliar words can also be for *usage*.

TEXT SYMBOLS	important	
	key word or detail	
	I understand	
	I don't understand	
	connection	
	I'm surprised	
	unfamiliar word	
	thoughts, themes, imagery, conflicts, etc.	words & comments in margins

What annotations look like...

Four Skinny Trees repetition in this section

isolated
don't fit in
misunderstood

They are the only ones who understand me. I am the only one who understands them. Four skinny trees with skinny necks and pointy elbows like mine. Four who do not belong here but are here. Four raggedy excuses planted by the city. From our room we can hear them, but Nenny just sleeps and doesn't appreciate these things. Why is Nenny mentioned here?

"Four" repeated 3x
The trees are
• skinny
• don't belong where they are
• raggedy excuses put there by someone

fierce
angry
determined

★
Their strength is secret. They send ferocious roots beneath the ground. They grow up and they grow down and grab the earth between their hairy toes and bite the sky with violent teeth and never quit their anger. This is how they keep. ★

Very visual!
First and last sentence are simple and direct.
Strong adjectives and verbs.

simile

Let one forget his reason for being, they'd all droop like tulips in a glass, each with their arms around the other. Keep, keep, keep, trees say when I sleep. They teach. — Pow!

each keeps the others strong
repetition & rhyme

Here's the "so what"
I can picture that wall!

When I am too sad and too skinny to keep keeping, when I am a tiny thing against so many bricks, then it is I look at trees. When there is nothing left to look at on this street. Four who grew to despise concrete. Four who reach and do not forget to reach. Four whose only reason is to be and be.

"Four" repeated 3x
The trees
• grow to despise concrete
• reach
• know their reason

Excerpt taken from *The House on Mango Street* (1983)

concrete = barriers, limits, all the things that box us in

The trees are a symbol to the author.

Annotation Guide cont...

- Identify components of the text that you understand & make notes on your interpretation
- Look for: symbolism, images, themes, literary devices, plot, setting, or other key points
- Summarize in the margins
- Identify any confusing elements
- Look up any unfamiliar words & note a synonym
- Make connections to art, music, or other literature
- Note dates, important people & important places
- Draw arrows to show related ideas