

Guides to Annotating a Text

T.A.P.S. - General literary analysis

Topic: What is the topic of the text?

Audience: To whom is the message directed?

Purpose: What is the writer's goal?

Speaker: What can be inferred about the speaker's attitude toward the topic or the audience?

S.O.A.P.S.Tone - Analyzing point of view

Speaker:

- Is there someone identified as the speaker?
- Can you make some assumptions about this person?
- What class does the author come from? What political bias can be inferred?
- What gender?

Occasion:

- What may have prompted the author to write this piece?
- What event led to its publication or development?

Audience:

- Does the speaker identify an audience?
- What assumptions can you make about the audience? Is it a mix in terms of: race, politics, gender, social class, religion, etc.? Who was the document created for? Does the speaker use language that is specific for a unique audience?
- Does the speaker evoke: Nation? Liberty? God? History?
- Does the speaker allude to any particular time in history such as: Ancient Times? Industrial Revolution? World Wars? Vietnam?

Purpose:

- What is the speaker's purpose?
- In what ways does the author convey this message?
- What seems to be the emotional state of the speaker?
- How is the speaker trying to spark a reaction in the audience?
- What words or phrases show the speaker's tone?
- How is this document supposed to make you feel?

Subject:

- What is the subject of the piece?
- How do you know this?
- How has the subject been selected and presented by the author?

Tone:

- What is the author's attitude toward the subject?
- How is the writer's attitude revealed?

S.M.E.L.L. – Evaluating argumentation and persuasion (with rhetorical appeals)

Sender/receiver relationship:

- Who is the speaker?
- Who is the audience?
- What is the tone directed from one to the other?

Message:

- What is the content and/or claim?

Evidence:

- What kind of evidence is given and to what extent?

Logic:

- What is the quality of the reasoning?
- What types of appeals are being used?

Language:

- What stylistic and rhetorical devices are being employed?