

# How to Annotate at A-Level

LO: To annotate for ideas and exploration rather than feature spotting

A year 12 student fresh out of GCSE once said that he was afraid to write down annotations in his book because he “didn’t want to get his annotations wrong”.

**What do you think is wrong with this?** (Answer on next slide)

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It is **impossible** to get annotations wrong!

Annotating a text is about actively reading a text. Good readers annotate texts because it focuses the reading and ensures that you are taking the information in, pausing to considering it, and making some meaning out of it.

All considerations and meanings are valid!

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At GCSE, you tend to read most everything together in class and so ultimately wind up annotating together as a class. This does not happen at A-Level. You read almost nothing in class. You are responsible for reading **and annotating** on your own. Often, a homework will be just that: to read and annotate. You might find yourself being sent out of class if you don't have any annotations to show your teacher! So a key skill at A-Level is ensuring you know how to annotate.

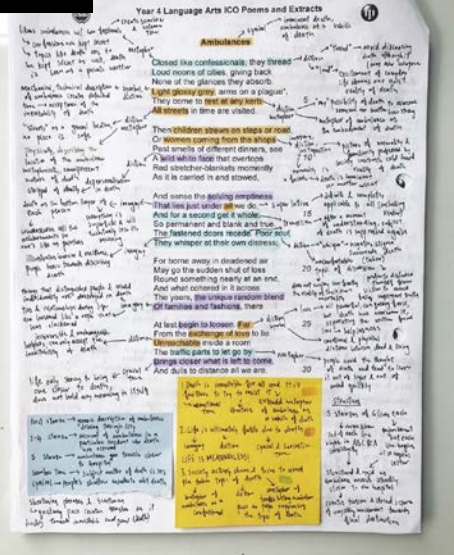


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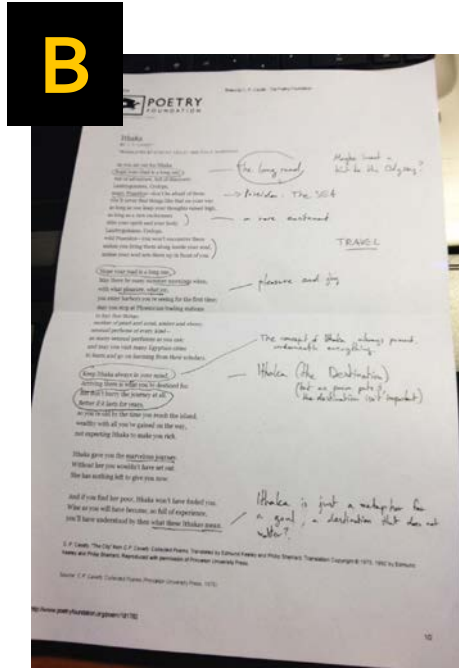
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## Which one of these is the best annotated text?

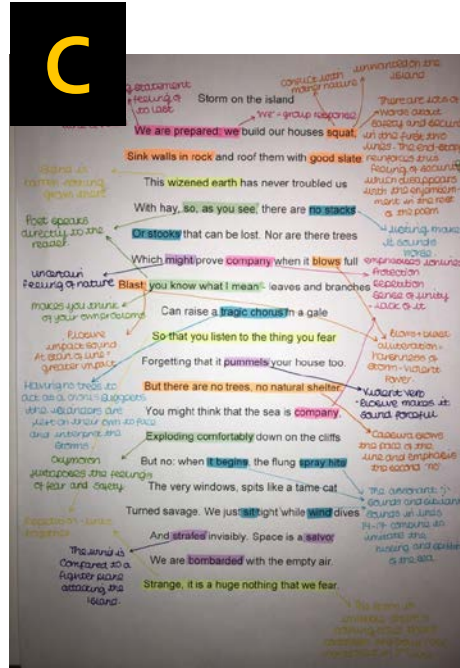
A



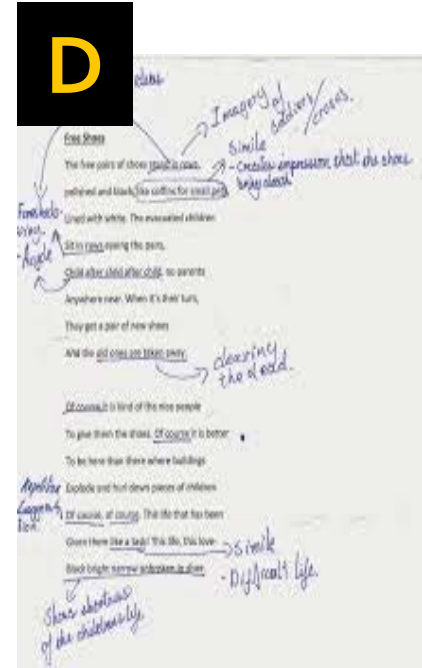
B



C



D



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**ANSWER?** None! Different people have different methods of annotating. Some people cover their entire page; some don't. Some use different colours; some don't. The only purpose of annotating is to actively engage with the text.

**(1) Take the information in (2) Pause (3) Make Meaning**

\*It's not necessary to annotate as much as A/B/C. It can take a long time to get through a text that way, but it's still valid.

# Annotating Techniques

- Define words, slang or unknown allusions.
- Make connections to other parts of the text.
- Make connections to other texts you have read or seen, including:
  - o Movies
  - o News events
  - o Other books, stories, plays, songs, or poems
- Re-write, paraphrase, or summarize a particularly difficult passage or moment.
- Explain the historical context or traditions/social customs that are used in the passage.
- Offer an analysis or interpretation of what is happening in the text.
- Note and interesting techniques that the author is using and their effects.

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**Task:** Read the short story *A History of Everything Including You*. Use the annotating techniques on the previous slide to help you. Then, get a different colour pen and annotate your annotations. What kind of annotator are you? Do you tend to summarise? Spot techniques? Make personal connections? A mix?