

Taking Notes on Literature

Taking notes in class on grammar is fairly easy. It is like taking notes in math class – you write down the terms defined and discussed and the examples given by the teacher in class. However, taking notes on literature requires that you are taking notes as you read the literature as well as taking notes in class when the selection is discussed.

One way to take notes while you read is to follow the chart method I gave you in class. As I mentioned, you are not going to take notes if you try to summarize each paragraph or section of the story. You will find that you become so engrossed in the story that you forget to stop and summarize. [By the way, becoming engrossed in the story is a good thing, so we need to work around that.] Instead, you get half way through the story or poem and realize that you haven't written anything down. Then you need to backtrack to take notes. You probably will not do that. Using the chart method allows you to write as you read because the only thing you are recording are names, a word or two to remind you of the events, and any questions that occur to you as you read.

Look at the example below for beginning notes from “The Most Dangerous Game.” Always include the title of the selection, the author, and the date that you read the selection. It is another memory jogger that you can use when you study for a quiz or test. Notice you are generally writing down names and phrases in this method. Later in the story, you might want to repeat the name of a character in order to write a new identifier to indicate that the character has changed somewhat during the course of the events of the plot. Keep your record of events to words or phrases so that you can actually write these down as you read. Try this method to see if it will work for you, but whatever you do, make sure that you are using either this method or another one to take notes as you read.

“The Most Dangerous Game,” by Richard Connell

October 14th

Characters	Events	Questions
Whitney – captain of yacht	- passing Ship-Trap island	- why are sailors uneasy about this island – what’s going on there
Rainsford – big game hunter, off to the Amazon	- Rainsford falls overboard, hears shots, swims to the island - Rainsford comes to a mansion	
Ivan – butler, assistant to Zaroff	-Ivan opens door, looks threatening	
Zaroff – owner of the island, big game hunter	Zaroff appears, recognizes Rainsford’s name Zaroff - bored with hunting animals Zaroff now hunts humans Zaroff traps sailors for his hunts Zaroff asks Rainsford to participate in his hunt	what will he hunt instead why humans - reasoning What if R. won’t?