

Name _____

AP English Literature & Composition with Mrs. Francis

Close Reading Drama with Your AP Journal

Tips on Reading a Play-

- *Read the cast of characters in the beginning and refer to it when necessary as you read, especially in plays with large casts.*
- *Recognize the difference between the stage directions and the dialogue.*
 - *Stage Directions: Usually in italics and/or in parentheses, these are the playwright's notes on how the drama is to be staged. Stage directions can be descriptive, interpretive, or both.*
 - *Dialogue: The lines delivered by the actors. In plays, characters use lines to talk to each other, to talk to themselves (soliloquy), and to talk to the audience (aside).*
- *Unlike a writer of a novel or short story, playwrights can only use dialogue, asides, and soliloquies to reveal the characters' thoughts. Playwrights can only tell stories in ways that can be presented on a stage, so:*
 - *Work with the playwright by staging the drama in your imagination as you read.*
 - *READ EVERYTHING!*
 - *Watch an uncut version of the play, the way the playwright intended the play to be experienced.*

Annotating the Text-

1. Make any notes about the **plot, setting, and characters** that question, clarify, summarize, and infer as you read.
2. Identify and comment on the use of any **significant elements & techniques**: foreshadowing, flashback, suspense, irony, figurative language, allusions, symbols, and **any others you recognize**.
3. Make notes on the **themes** of the play- what they may be; how they're revealed.

Probing Deeper- in the AP Journal

1. Explain the significance of the **play's title**. How does it suggest the playwright's overall emphasis?
2. List any **significant events** that the playwright **chose NOT** to dramatize **on stage**. How might this choice reveal the play's true focus?
3. Identify and interpret any **symbols** in the play. Which actions, characters, settings, objects, or words convey more than their literal meanings?
4. Analyze the **main characters**, especially the **protagonist and antagonist**, by examining (according to the handout) their appearance, background, personalities, motivations, relationships, conflicts, and changes throughout the play
5. How does the play reflect or challenge **your own values**?