

## *How to Read Literature Like a Professor* by Thomas C. Foster Note-Taking and Journaling

Foster's nonfictional exploration focuses on how to read and interpret great works of literature – what could be more thrilling?! Facetiousness aside, you're in for an edifying and often witty and humorous journey. Enjoy!

Reading this book, I found fresh and enlightening ways of seeing novels, plays, and poems that I had read years ago, and I hope this happens for you, too. You'll probably recognize some of the great works of literature that the author references; you'll undoubtedly encounter many titles and authors of fantastic literature for the first time, and I hope this text piques your interest to read more.

I trust you have learned about annotating texts as you read, in eleventh grade and earlier, for the purpose knowing and relating to a literary work on a more profound level. So, for *How to Read Literature*, I strongly suggest you mark up your copy of the book and keep a journal or notes (of several pages in length), in order to interact meaningfully with this text. Writing as we read can be time-consuming, yes, but this method can be vital to promoting critical thinking. Take at least a few notes on every chapter. Read the Introduction and the Appendix, but you don't need to annotate those parts. The format of your journaling and/or note-taking will be entirely up to you, but here are a few suggestions meant to promote a productive learning experience.

- Underline/mark/asterisk/bullet/highlight **efficiently** – only as needed and for language or points that have great meaning to you.
- What words or terms don't you know? Look them up and write definitions, so that you begin to learn new, relevant vocabulary.
- What stands out to you? What do you agree with?
- What do you find unsettling or confusing? What do you think of any example of the author's interpretation of a literary work?
- In each chapter, what major conclusions does the author reach?
- Can you summarize a chapter in two or three sentences?
- What comments can you offer? What is your initial, gut response to a point or a narrative that you're reading?
- What do you notice about the author's writing style?
- What does the author say about literature you know or at least have some familiarity with?
- How does the author develop ideas from chapter to chapter or throughout this book?