

# 3 Challenges for *The Plague*

by Albert Camus

## **Reminder: Annotation is Expected (many notes make meaning!)**

Annotate your reading by putting **post-it notes or flags** in your book and jotting brief **notes** on the post-it notes or in your journal as you read.

Try color-coding your annotations.

Your annotations will be a foundation for you as we work with the book and related activities in class. Good notes will help you understand the book and eventually create meaningful assessments....



## **Challenge #1: Trace significant changes in the town, Oran, as the plague spreads.**

To meet this challenge you need to note key details about the town and its citizens, In many ways, the town *is* a character. Construct a timeline or keep a calendar to trace the various events that occur in the progression of the plague, as well as the citizens' general responses to the events that sweep through their town.

\*Note: Depending on which method you choose to do for annotations, this may vary



## **Challenge #2: Trace the development of the six main characters:**

<b>Dr. Bernard Rieux</b>	(Bear-nahr' Ree-oo')
<b>Joseph Grand</b>	(Grahn)
<b>Jean Tarrou</b>	(ZhahnTah-roo')
<b>M. Cottard</b>	(Miss-you' Coh-tahr')
<b>Raymond Rambert</b>	(Ray-mohn' Rahm-bear')
<b>Father Paneloux</b>	(Pahn-ah-loo')

To meet this challenge you need to note key character details as you read, and record your impressions of these men. Look for physical descriptions, watch what the characters do and say, examine what other characters say about them. Your goal is to understand who they are and what they believe, as well as to trace significant changes that occur with these characters through the course of the novel.

You should use whatever note-taking/annotating method you wish to work out your understanding of these six characters. We will look for some evidence of your "unpacking" of the text. Some methods to try: outlining, charting, diagramming, mapping, concept-mapping, creating graphic organizers, etc.



### **Challenge #3: Be attentive to these literary elements.**

To focus your reading, mark and take notes on passages or quotations that illustrate the following concepts. We will look for significant evidence of your “excavating” the text.

#### **1. Images, Motifs, and Symbols:**

How does Camus use images, motifs and symbols to help convey the themes of the book? Mark these as they emerge in your reading, and speculate about their significance. When you come across a powerful image, note it. When something occurs again and again, note it. If something seems symbolic, note it.

#### **2. Elements of Allegory:**

An allegory is a tale in which the literal events, characters, and settings represent a larger truth or a symbolic meaning. Most critics believe that Camus wrote this novel as an allegory about the world before, during, and after World War II, in which he fought for the French Resistance against the Nazis. Look for reminders of WWII.

#### **3. Natural Setting:**

In addition to your view of the town, Camus offers some subtle pictures of the natural setting *around* the town. What is the relationship between humans and the natural world in this book? Note incidents and passages that reveal the characters' connections (or disconnection) with nature. What comments might Camus be making about the role of nature in our lives?



### **Bonus Challenge: Discover the identity of the narrator.**

The narrator's true identity is hidden until the end of the book, but Camus gives many clues that will help you solve this mystery before the end. See if you can figure it out....

### **Timeline**

Your reading and annotation on each part should be **finished** by the deadline below:

Part 1	Monday, January 9
Part 2	Thursday, January 12
Part 3	Friday, January 13
Part 4	Tuesday, January 17
Part 5	Thursday, January 19