

REQUIRED TEXT:***The Talented Mr. Ripley* by Patricia Highsmith****ISBN: 0393332144**

In the first volume of Patricia Highsmith's five-book Ripley series we are introduced to the suave Tom Ripley, a young striver seeking to leave behind his past as an orphan. Newly arrived in the heady world of Manhattan, Ripley meets a wealthy industrialist who hires him to bring his playboy son, Dickie Greenleaf, back from gallivanting in Italy. Soon Ripley's fascination with Dickie's debonair lifestyle turns obsessive as he finds himself enraged by Dickie's ambivalent affections for Marge, a charming American dilettante, and Ripley begins a deadly game. "Sinister and strangely alluring" (Mark Harris, *Entertainment Weekly*) *The Talented Mr. Ripley* serves as an unforgettable introduction to this smooth confidence man, whose talent for self-invention is as unnerving—and unnervingly revealing of the American psyche—as ever. (W.W. Norton)

Reading Assessment: For this text, students should be prepared for a reading quiz over the content. The quiz will be open book. **Making annotations in the text is strongly suggested; see below for a brief guide to efficacious annotations.**

Why is marking up a book indispensable to reading? First, it keeps you awake. (And I don't mean merely conscious; I mean awake.) In the second place; reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The marked book is usually the thought-through book. Finally, writing helps you remember the thoughts you had, or the thoughts the author expressed.

Even if you wrote on a scratch pad, and threw the paper away when you had finished writing, your grasp of the book would be surer. But you don't have to throw the paper away. The margins (top as bottom, and well as side), the endpapers, the very space between the lines, are all available. They aren't sacred. And, best of all, your marks and notes become an integral part of the book and stay there forever. You can pick up the book the following week or year, and there are all your points of agreement, disagreement, doubt, and inquiry. It's like resuming an interrupted conversation with the advantage of being able to pick up where you left off.

And that is exactly *what reading a book should be: a conversation between you and the author*. Presumably they know more about the subject than you do; naturally, you'll have the proper humility as you approach them. But don't let anybody tell you that a reader is supposed to be solely on the receiving end. Understanding is a two-way operation; learning doesn't consist in being an empty receptacle. The learner has to question himself and question the teacher. He even has to argue with the teacher, once he understands what the teacher is saying. And marking a book is literally an expression of differences, or agreements of opinion, with the author.

There are all kinds of devices for marking a book intelligently and fruitfully. Here's the way I do it:

- **Underlining** (or highlighting): of major points, of important or forceful statements.
- **Vertical lines at the margin:** to emphasize a statement already underlined.
- **Star or *asterisk* at the margin:** to be used sparingly, to emphasize the ten or twenty most important statements in the book.
- **Numbers of other pages in the margin:** to indicate where else in the book the author made points relevant to the point marked; to tie up the ideas in a book, which, though they may be separated by many pages, belong together.
- **Circling, highlighting, or [bracketing] of key words or phrases.**
- **Writing in the margin,** or at the top or bottom of the page, for the sake of: recording questions (and perhaps answers) which a passage raised in your mind; I use the end-papers at the back of the book to record deeper themes and page numbers on which evidence appears.