

Layer 1, Individual Annotation: Processing the Text and Developing a Working Thesis



In this phase, you will annotate the play *Doubt* by yourself to formulate an initial stance regarding Father Flynn’s guilt or innocence and process the text to lay the groundwork for building and defending an argument to support your working thesis.

All annotations in this layer must be Posted to **Only to Me** from the drop-down post-to menu and include two separate tags: a **Layer 1** tag in addition to the **tag types**, which are listed below the following image, on the next page:

Ms Robin A Bell

You're insane! You've got it in your head that I've corrupted this child after giving him wine, and nothing! [More](#)

B I " " Σ ¶ ? Preview

earlier in the play that his explanation for Donald's strange behavior after his return to class provided a reasonable account that was so plausible, Sister James considered the issue settled and Sister Aloysius had to drop the matter for the moment as well.

Thesis Innocent × Layer 1 ×

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When you post “**Only to Me**,” this puts annotations in a private space that only you can see. It is vital that for Layer 1, all posts are posted here. Other layers will be posted to the class later.


Layer 1 Annotation Types and Guidelines

 **Initial Annotations, Tag: IA** On the first read-through, begin by focusing on passages, dialogues, or scenes that seem significant. Highlight and annotate significant moments, ambiguous statements, or conflicting evidence, providing explanations and interpretations, or posing questions to the group. Aim for a substantial number of annotations throughout the play to fully process it and explore different aspects related to your thesis. Your annotations should be organic and prolific, but also a thoughtful and reflective, contributing to a deeper understanding of the play and your stance.

 **Developing a Working Thesis, Tag: Thesis** Based on your initial reading and annotations, formulate a working thesis that reflects your current stance. This can be a simple statement for now: Father Flynn is [indicate his guilt or innocence]. Anchor your working thesis to a specific piece of textual evidence and explain your reasoning, connecting that to other parts of the text, too, if applicable. This will help ensure that your initial stance is grounded in textual evidence and not just a general feeling that you can't justify.

 **Analyzing Evidence, Tag: AE** When making annotations, pay close attention to the evidence that supports your working thesis. Highlight specific quotes, actions, or interactions that reinforce your interpretation. Explain how each piece of evidence strengthens your thesis and contributes to your overall argument. Consider the context, characterization, and thematic elements that surround the evidence to provide a comprehensive analysis. **AE tags** should only appear in the second or subsequent readings of the text, after you have formulated a working thesis. Now, you are going back through to re-analyze or reflect on the evidence in light of your thesis and looking for things you may have missed or not considered. [Read-through 2]

 **Exploring Counterarguments, Tag: EC** While developing your annotations, remain open to alternative perspectives and counterarguments. Engage with moments or evidence that may challenge your working thesis and consider how others might use the very evidence you have highlighted and annotated to achieve an opposite end. Analyze opposing viewpoints or interpretations and consider how they impact your overall understanding of the play. Address counterarguments in your annotations, providing thoughtful responses or counterpoints that strengthen your own stance. [Read-through 2]

 **Reflective Analysis, Tag: RA** Throughout the individual annotation process, take moments to reflect on your evolving understanding of the play and your working thesis. Consider how your interpretations have developed or changed based on the evidence and analysis. Reflect on the significance of key moments or themes that emerge from your annotations. Use these reflections to refine and strengthen your working thesis or arguments as you progress.

Layer 1 Tag Type Example Annotations

1. Initial Annotations (IA)

Ms Robin A Bell (edited) Just now
Only me

*When William London gets a nosebleed, be skeptical.
Don't let a little blood fuddle your judgment. Godgave y* [More](#)

Sister Aloysius is certainly skeptical up to this point, and it's clear she would prefer it if Sister James were, too. Thus far, she makes a lot of negative assumptions about boys in general and William London in particular. A few lines previous to this she says that "Boys are made of gravel, soot and tar paper. Boys are a different breed" (15) and she illustrates what she means by that by urging Sister Aloysius to get the girls through school "in tact," meaning untouched by the sexual advances or desires of the boys. In the line I highlighted here we see a reference to the fact that Sister Aloysius assumes William London's nosebleed was self-induced, something else she assumes to be based on whatever she knows about William London's character up to this point.

It remains to be seen whether her skepticism is justified or if this is a general character trait.

IA Sister Aloysius Observation Layer 1

Although not required, it can be useful to include a descriptor next to the **Initial Annotation (IA)** tag. Include a **Layer 1 tag** on all posts, too.

2. Developing a Working Thesis (Thesis)

<p>Ms Robin A Bell (edited Just now) 5 hrs ago</p> <p><i>You're insane! You've got it in your head that I've corrupted this child after giving him wine, and nothing I</i> More</p> <p>My basic and initial stance or thesis is that Father Flynn is innocent. In this exchange, Sister Aloysius admits that there is nothing that Father Flynn can say to convince her of his innocence, despite the fact that she conceded earlier in the play that his explanation for Donald's strange behavior after his return to class provided a reasonable account that was so plausible, Sister James considered the issue settled and Sister Aloysius had to drop the matter for the moment as well.</p> <p>Thesis Innocent Layer 1</p>	<p>Ms Robin A Bell (edited 1 min ago) 5 hrs ago</p> <p><i>You have not the slightest proof of anything.</i></p> <p>My basic and initial stance or thesis based on the central question in the play is that Father Flynn is guilty. When Sister Aloysius directly asserts that Father Flynn is guilty, his response to that is to say, "You have not the slightest proof of anything" (38). This is not how someone who is innocent would respond to such an awful allegation. In fact, this kind of response suggests his guilt. It's what a smug, entitled, and powerful person might say and can be construed as a tacit admission of guilt.</p> <p>Thesis Guilty Layer 1</p>
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After initial annotations, present your basic stance on Father Flynn's innocence or guilt, grounded to one piece of textual evidence and an argument that justifies it. It will take your whole paper to prove your stance, but this will help ensure that even your basic stance is grounded in textual evidence and argument from the outset. Include a **Layer 1 tag** on all posts, too.

3. Analyzing Evidence (AE)

Ms Robin A Bell (edited Just now) 3 mins ago
Only me

The only reason you haven't been thrown out of the Church is the decline in vocations.

I missed this line on the first read-through, but Sister Aloysius points out that there has been a "decline in vocations," meaning that there has been a shortage of priests. This evidence can be used to build an argument supporting his claim that there was an innocent reason for his transfer from the previous parish and also justify why he has been assigned to three parishes in the past five years: because he was sent where he was needed most, not because he preys on children and is getting shuffled from one church to another.

AE Innocent Layer 1

Ms Robin A Bell (edited) Just now
Only me

You have no right to go rummaging through my past!

I didn't really catch this on the first read-through, but now that I am on the second and analyzing evidence in light of my thesis, this seems to suggest Father Flynn's guilt. He tells Sister Aloysius that she has "no right to go rummaging through [his] past" (38). "Rummaging" sort of has a negative connotation in this context. This seems to be an odd choice of words. He has already pointed out that she is not following protocol by claiming that she spoke to a nun instead of a priest. When Sister Aloysius goads him with the suggestion that he might want her to follow protocol because he and the other priest might have an "understanding" of some kind, he follows with the line about rummaging through his past, which suggests that maybe he is afraid she might find something if she continues to dig.

AE Guilty Layer 1

Remember, the **Analyzing Evidence (AE)** tag can only be used after you've read the play and developed a thesis. Now you are re-analyzing evidence in light of your thesis. If you believe Father Flynn is innocent, all descriptors on your AE tags will say "Innocent." If you believe he is guilty, they will all say "Guilty." Include a **Layer 1** tag on all posts in this layer, too.

4. Exploring Counterarguments (EC)

Ms Robin A Bell (edited Just now) Jun 11
Only me

The only reason you haven't been thrown out of the Church is the decline in vocations.

Although my stance is that Father Flynn is innocent, and I have an annotation on this that can help prove that using this piece of evidence, I can also see how this same piece of evidence can be spun to suggest his guilt. The other side can point to the fact that it was common practice for priests' "indiscretions" to be swept under the rug and that they were often moved around instead of being brought to some kind of justice. This argument can provide an alternative view for why Father Flynn might have been in three parishes in the last five years.

The fact that I can see this means I need to make some kind of concession to show that I can see it, but I need to do a better job of proving my point and figure out other ways to diminish the impact of that argument vs. mine.

EC Layer 1

Ms Robin A Bell Just now
Only me

His resignation was his confession. He was what I thought he was. And he's gone.

Although my stance is that Father Flynn is guilty and analyzed this piece of evidence as support for that, as I'm going back through to consider how the other side might spin this, it is helping me to see what I need to do to defend my own position.

The other side might point to the fact that it was just prudent for him to leave St. Nicholas. His sermon on gossip highlights the danger and damage that even indirect whispers can do. Sister Aloysius herself points out the potential consequences for Donald if any word of this gets out and highlights that as one of the reasons to be cautious in their approach. If word gets out, even if untrue or in the service of clearing his name, there would be consequences, not just for him or Donald but also for the parish, community, and possibly for the Catholic church on the whole if allegations weren't somehow kept quiet.

If I can't figure out how to counter this, it will likely be better for me to leave my initial point on this out, which is basically just relying on Sister Aloysius's assumption that "his resignation was his confession" (40).

EC Learning What to Leave Out?

The **Exploring Counterargument (EC)** tag or annotation will help you consider how the other side might spin the evidence. This can help you figure out what concessions you need to make or whether you need to abandon a point because you can't counter it. Include a **Layer 1** tag on all annotations, too.

5. Reflective Analysis (RA)

The image displays two screenshots of a social annotation interface. The left screenshot shows a comment by Ms Robin A Bell, dated June 11, with the text: "His resignation was his confession. He was what I thought he was. And he's gone. 40". Below the text is a paragraph of analysis: "One of the things I've learned is that the practice of actively considering counterarguments sometimes caused me to second-guess my stance, but in retrospect, it has empowered me to take off my blinders and see things from a different perspective. I think this has increased my empathy for each of the main characters in the play. I may think one thing on a first read-through and only consider that possibility until I go through and consider it from a different vantage point. This is true for the line I highlighted here. I already have an annotation on it to suggest Father Flynn's guilt but will likely opt to leave this out because even though I can piggyback off of Sister Aloysius's assumption that his resignation was a sign of his guilt, in thinking it through, I don't think I can counter what the other side might say in response to that. This must be how a lawyer's mind has to work. To make a really good case, you have to be able to anticipate how the other side will approach theirs, so you can counter that and best it. Lightbulb moment here." The right screenshot shows a comment by Ms Robin A Bell, dated "Just now", with the text: "Nuns fall, you know. FLYNN: No, I didn't know that. SISTER ALOYSIUS: It's the habit. It catches us up More". Below the text is a paragraph of analysis: "One thing I'd like to reflect on is that multiple readings prompt me to see layers of possible meaning I may have missed the first time. This line is an example of that. On the surface, Sister Aloysius is pointing out that the nuns' habits--their clothing--can sometimes cause them to trip and fall. If you look at the rest of the line though and the double meaning of 'habit' coupled with the fact that they are black and white, I see another layer of meaning that is possible. It might be suggestive of the fact that nuns (and priests, too) might be inclined to see things in absolutes--in black and white, and they may be rigid in their thinking and this might cause them to fall short in some way as a result. Just a thought." Both screenshots include a "RA" button and a trash icon.

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Your annotations should span the length of the play and demonstrate thoughtfulness, analysis, and reflection.

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Minimum number of annotations = Enough to have fully processed the play for yourself and to prepare for the social annotation layers that will follow this one. These annotations are not for me and my sake: they are for yours; however, you will receive points on this portion of the assignment; therefore, the frequency, distribution, and quality of your annotations matters.

Remember, this phase is an opportunity for you to actively engage with the play, develop a working thesis, and start annotating in a meaningful and organic way. Your annotations should be span the length of the play and demonstrate thoughtfulness, analysis, and reflection. They will serve as the basis for the subsequent social annotation and discussion with your peers.

Special Instructions for Layer 1 When You Are Finished



Because I cannot see your Layer 1 Annotations since you posted them “Only to Me,” as instructed, I will ask you to submit proof of your participation in a separate assignment link.

1. **Click** on the assignment link provided for this in Blackboard.
2. **Open** a Word document and include a proper heading in MLA format.
3. **Write** a brief paragraph summarizing your participation in Layer 1 or create a simple table to include the following information:
 - a. Total number of posts
 - b. Number of posts in each tag category
 - c. Number of posts for each act in the play
4. **Include** a screenshot of each tag type, showing a quality annotation.
5. **Include** a screenshot showing the total number of posts.
6. **Write** a brief reflection on this activity, the use of Hypothes.is, and any questions or comments you have.

Note: Although there are other workflows that would have allowed me to see your initial annotations directly, I wanted to show you the “**Only to Me**” posting area in this assignment, so you can use that any time you want to annotate an assigned text for yourself, even if I have not required it.

Note: There are other workflows that would have allowed me to see your annotations directly in this layer; however, I wanted to show you the “**Only to Me**” posting area and experience using that, as this is something you will always be able to do on any annotation assignment on a first read-through, to process the text for yourself, whether I require that or not.