

Annotating and Marking Texts

WHAT IS ANNOTATING AND MARKING?

- You *mark* a text by using underlining, circling and using other symbols to identify important ideas.
- You *annotate* by writing notes about what you have read in the margins.

HOW TO ANNOTATE AND MARK EFFECTIVELY:

1. Underline or highlight the major points and important statements in each section or paragraph.
2. Use different color highlighters to highlight major ideas or arguments.
3. Put a vertical line, star, asterisk or other symbol to emphasize a very important idea.
4. Use arrows and other symbols to show how ideas are connected (you can even draw diagrams of the ideas in the margins if you like).
5. Use numbers in the margin to indicate a sequence of points or the steps in a process.
6. Circle keywords or phrases and write down unfamiliar words' definitions.
7. Write notes in the margin in your own words in English to summarize important points and simplify complicated ideas.
8. Write any questions or ideas that come to mind as you read in the margins.

REASONS FOR ANNOTATING AND MARKING YOUR TEXT:

1. Marking the text and writing your thoughts and interpretations about what you read is a way to "talk" to the author, making the process interactive.
2. Making the process interactive helps you to stay alert and concentrated because you think and write while you read and you stay active.
3. Annotating and marking help you to understand what you read.
4. They can help you discover your own views.
5. Writing down your ideas as you read keeps you from losing them. These annotations can lead to points you'll use in your own writing.
6. When you review for an exam, you can go over your notes instead of re-reading a complete chapter or article. You will be able to focus on and remember:
 - The main ideas or arguments
 - The connections between ideas
 - The meanings and usage of important words
 - Specific points
 - The reactions and thoughts you had when you first read the text

Adapted from Nathalie Destandau & Karen Wiederholt

http://web6.duc.auburn.edu/academic/liberal_arts/english/ec/handouts/annotation_guidelines.pdf