

Annotating Texts

ANNOTATING simply means marking the page with your thinking (comments and/or notes) as you read.

The principle reason you should annotate your books is to aid in understanding. When important passages occur, mark them so that they can be easily located when it comes time to write an essay or respond to the book. Marking key ideas with sticky notes will enable you to discuss the reading with more support, evidence, and/or proof than if you rely on memory.

ANNOTATING MAY INCLUDE:

- Highlighting key words, phrases, or sentences
- Writing questions or comments in the margins
- Bracketing important ideas or passages
- Connecting ideas with lines or arrows
- Highlighting passages that are important to understanding the work
- Circling or highlighting words that are unfamiliar

SPECIFIC ITEMS FOR ANNOTATION MIGHT INCLUDE:

- Character description
- Literary elements (symbolism, theme, foreshadowing, etc.)
- Figurative language (similes, metaphors, personification, etc.)
- Plot elements (setting, mood, conflict, etc.)
- Diction (effective or unusual word choice)
- Vocabulary words

HOW TO ANNOTATE A TEXT:

HIGHLIGHTING/UNDERLINING - This stands out from the page and allows you to scan a page quickly for information. Be careful not to mark too much—if everything is marked, then nothing becomes important!

BRACKETS [] - If several lines seem important, place a bracket around the passage, then highlight or underline only key phrases within the bracketed area. This will draw attention to the passage without cluttering it with too many highlighted or underlined sentences.

ASTERISKS * - This indicates something unusual, special, or important. Multiple asterisks indicate a stronger degree of importance.

MARGINAL NOTES - Making notes in the margin allows you to: ask questions, label literary elements, summarize critical elements, explain ideas, make a comment, and/or identify characters.