

What is annotation?

Annotation is summing up information in a text or article by writing brief key points in the margins. It is an ACTIVE READING STRATEGY that improves comprehension and is the beginning of the learning and remembering processes. *It requires that **the student** take time to understand* what he or she is reading and then put it into his or her own words. *To annotate means that **you** supply critical or explanatory notes or to comment upon with notes.* It means that **you** look at parts of the text, sentence, or phrase in order to understand the whole passage completely, more deeply, or differently.

Students who annotate their texts **read to make meaning** rather than **read just to complete the assignment**. Annotation forces the students to think about what they are reading because they know they have to put it in their own words. Though annotation takes more time than the passive activity of highlighting or finding synonyms, **students actually spend less time studying because they are actually LEARNING the material while they are annotating.**

There are many benefits for annotation:

- Provides a purpose for reading
- Improves comprehension
- Offers an immediate test of understanding
- Increases concentration
- Seldom necessitates a reread of the material
- Creates a study tool

General annotating system:

- ✓ Represents an idea, concept, or key fact that you understand and can teach someone else
- Circle words that you don't know or familiar words that are used differently that keep you from understanding the point the author is making. (Look them up and make the connection)
- ___ Underline central ideas (**Thesis Statements and Topic Sentences**)
- Facts, names, dates, extended definitions, concrete details, & quotes that help you understand the central ideas (**Supporting details - make the connection**)
- ? Place a question mark next to sections/paragraphs that you don't understand
- TQ Use TQ to mark potential test questions
- * Use an asterisk to identify profound, special, or important statements or details in the conclusion

Margins:

Use the margins to:

- Summarize something specific in that particular paragraph (can be 3-4 words)
 - The main purpose of... is to...
 - The main function of... is to...
 - The author most likely intends to...
 - The principal aim of the passage is to...
- **Make predictions**
- **ANALYZE RELATIONSHIPS**
 - Relationships between events, ideas, people, trends, and different views about the same topic
 - Cause and Effect/ Comparison and Contrast
- Formulate opinions based on a different point of view
- **Make generalizations**
 - Based on the passage, the author would most likely agree with...
 - Because the author says ___, he/she would probably like to see...
- **Ask higher order thinking questions about ideas.**
- Analyze and label rhetorical devices, persuasive techniques, fallacies, stylistic devices, strategies, effectiveness of an argument or point
- **Draw Conclusions**
 - The author uses lines ___ to suggest that...
 - By using the word(s) ___, the author implies that...
 - The author wants the reader to think that...

Highlighting:

Highlighting is very effective for annotation. However, **HIGHLIGHTING WITHOUT NOTES IS NO GOOD**. DON'T over-highlight. If you highlight everything, then nothing is really that important.

Summarizing: (Author's name + action verb)

Once you begin to understand, use large margins, paragraph breaks, or chapter breaks to summarize the central ideas and evidence.

- What is the author really trying to say here?
- Why did the author write this passage?
- What angle is the author taking?
- What is the single most important point the author trying to make?
- How is the author making his/her point?

Getting started:

- **ATTENTION:** Make sure you annotate the first and last paragraphs as well as the first and last sentences of each paragraph. They contain important information: main ideas, main purpose, main theme, author's purpose, author's attitude, author's tone, etc.