

Why annotate a text?

As an "active reader," you already know that when you read textbook assignments, you should have questions in your mind. As you read, you should be looking for the answers to these questions. You should also have a pencil in hand so that you can "annotate" your text. As the word suggests, you "take notes" in your textbook.

Unlike "highlighting," which is a passive activity, the process of annotating text helps you to stay focused and involved with your textbook. You'll find that the process of taking notes as you read will help you to concentrate better. It will also help you to monitor and improve your comprehension. If you come across something that you don't understand or that you need to ask your instructor about, you'll be able to quickly make note of it, and then go on with your reading.

The following is a list of some techniques that you can use to annotate text:

- Underline important terms.
- Circle definitions and meanings.
- Write key words and definitions in the margin.
- Signal where important information can be found with key words or symbols in the margin.
- Write short summaries in the margin at the end of sub-units.
- Write the questions in the margin next to the section where the answer is found.
- Indicate steps in a process by using numbers in the margin.
- Make comments on the ideas expressed in the work
- Note questions that come up for you about unclear concepts, definitions, etc. as you read