

# *Study Strategies: A Simple Guide to Text Annotation*

*What is text annotation?*

Textbook annotation is part of a system of textbook marking that involves the reader (the student...you!) in:

1. Writing brief summaries in the text's margins
2. Listing or numbering multiple ideas (causes, effects, reasons, characteristics)
3. Sketching pictures and charts to explain difficult processes/ concepts
4. Predicting & writing possible test questions
5. Noting puzzling or confusing ideas that need clarification by the professor
6. Underlining key ideas or concepts

*What will text annotation do for me?*

Text annotation can have several advantages for the reader (you!). It will:

1. Improve your **concentration** so you will not become distracted and have to reread the text.
2. Provide an immediate self-check for your **understanding** of the text's key ideas.
3. Help you **remember** more.
4. Assist you in getting ready for **tests** on the material.
5. **Negate** the need of time spent in rereading the chapters.
6. Help you state ideas in **your own words**.

*What should I look for to annotate?*

Here are some important factors/areas to look for when reading and annotating:

What am I looking for?

How do I annotate it?

*Definitions*

*Def. \* [ ]*

*Lists, features, causes, effects, characteristics, reasons*

*1. (done in the text/margin)  
2.*

*Names, dates, events that are key*

*Underline or (circle)*

*Examples of main idea*

*ex (in the margin)*

*Good summary of the passage* { (in the margin)

*Good test questions of the passage* T.Q. (in the margin)

*Something you didn't understand* ?? (in the margin or the text)

### *How should I text annotate?*

Here are some steps to applying annotation to texts:

1. Skim through the chapter. Note the organization of the chapter (are there subheadings, pictures, graphs, etc.)
2. Skim the introduction, THEN the conclusion, before reading the entire chapter. This will help you get a sense as to what exactly you should know before diving in and reading.
3. Read one or more paragraphs. Then STOP. The amount of text you can read will vary from text to text, according to difficulty and organization.
4. Think about the key ideas that you have read—what is the author arguing, or how is the author supporting the argument?
5. Briefly write the key ideas in the margin, looking for the following:
  - Definitions
  - Examples
  - Lists
  - Causes and effects
  - Characteristics
  - Likenesses/differences
  - Names or dates or other important information
6. Check your annotations to be sure that they make sense to you.
7. Go on to the next section or paragraph. Remember, not every paragraph will have a key concept that should be annotated, but every page or section usually does.

### *How can I study from my annotated text?*

How can you study based on this system?

1. Cover the text.
2. Read your annotations. Ask yourself the following questions:
  - Do my annotations make sense?
  - Do I understand the concepts identified?
3. If not, uncover the text and reread only the key material. Do not reread the entire section.
4. In essence, you want to talk yourself through the entire chapter/text and actively learn the material.