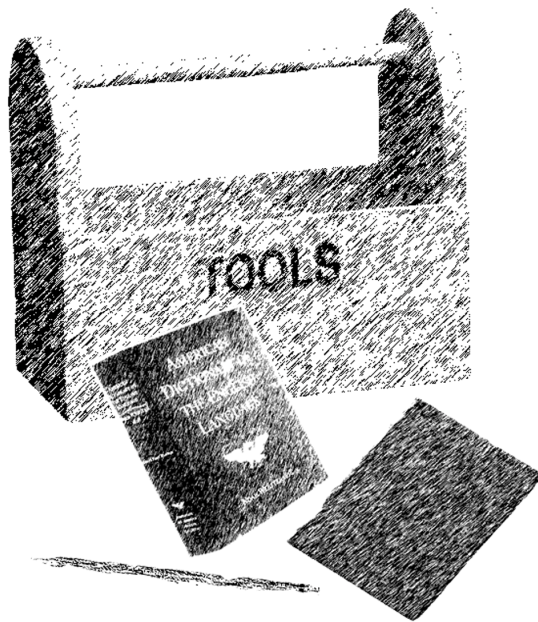


Annotating Texts: Having a Conversation With the Work

When you read, make sure you are armed with the proper tools to succeed: a pencil, a study journal, and a dictionary.



One of the most common complaints about annotating is that it slows down the reading process. That is the point! Slow down so you can really process the information. By taking the time to underline, question, predict, etc, as you read, you understand the text on a much deeper level!

If you annotate texts as you read, you cannot help but pay attention to what you are reading. Also, it will be easier to find the important information if it is marked. Once you get in the habit of annotating, reading will become a much more meaningful and memorable experience.

How do I annotate?

View the text as if it were a person talking to you. If you are confused, stop and write a question in the margins about what confuses you. If you passionately agree with a statement (or disagree), tell the author how you feel by writing your opinion next to the passage. If there is not enough room to write your thoughts, you can get a package of sticky notes on which to annotate.



The important thing is to find a style and a system that works for you. Don't be afraid to try different methods. Here are some ideas about how to annotate:

- **Make brief comments in the margins.** Use any white space that is available (the inside cover, the title page, etc). Write your questions and comments wherever there is space.
- **Underline important quotes.** If the passage is long, just put brackets around the beginning and the end. Write in the margins why that particular passage stood out to you.
- **Mark new vocabulary.** Putting a box around new words is a great method to mark vocabulary; other people enjoy circling or drawing clouds around new words. It might be helpful to write the definition of the word in the margins.
- **Name the chapter.** If a chapter is unnamed, take the liberty of naming it. If it is named, write whether or not you would have named the chapter something different.
- **Make connections.** If there are words, phrases, or ideas that connect, draw an arrow to physically connect the two ideas. If a particular part reminds you of something, make note of it next to the passage
- **Use symbols.** Come up with a system of symbols (triangles, stars, circles, etc.) and abbreviations to mark different things; you can create a legend on the title page to help you remember your code.

What do I annotate?

In a nutshell, annotate anything that pops out at you. If you think it is important, make a comment or draw a symbol. When you annotate, you are simply taking notes in the book while you read.

Make note of the following things:

- Anything that you would like to discuss or did not understand
- The mood and tone of the work
- The point of view of the narrator



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- The repetition of ideas, words, phrases, actions or events
 - The effect of word choices and writing strategies
 - Key events
 - Imagery and figurative language
 - Metaphors, similes and allusions
 - Irony and any other literary devices

Comment about the following things:

- The actions or development of characters – especially how characters change throughout the work
- Anything that makes you surprised, angry, excited, intrigued, disturbed, etc.
- Connections to other works
- Passages that are powerful or meaningful
- Lessons you learn from the work
- Themes

