

ANNOTATION TECHNIQUES

Annotation turns reading and reviewing notes into active learning by helping you identify important ideas, make connections, and record your thinking.

Highlight Strategically

Highlighting is most useful when it helps you identify important information—not when it marks everything on the page. Choose a simple color system and use it consistently.

Main ideas and key concepts: Information you need to understand and remember.

Definitions and vocabulary: Important terms, theories, formulas, or concepts.

Examples and applications: Evidence or examples that explain a concept.

Questions or confusion: Information you need to revisit or clarify.

Use the Margins to Think

Top Margin: Summarize

- After completing a section or page, write a brief summary sentence capturing the main idea or takeaway. This creates a reference point when reviewing later.

Side Margins: Engage

- Use the side margins to record your thinking as you read. Write questions, connections to other topics, examples, or explanations in your own words

Bottom Margin: Review

- Use the bottom margin to capture information that will support future studying. Record key vocabulary, connections to lecture topics, or concepts you want to revisit before an exam.

Use Shorthand and Symbols

Create a consistent system of symbols to quickly capture your thoughts while reading or taking notes. Your system does not need to match someone else's. Some options:

- ! Important idea
- ? Question or confusing information
- → Connection, cause, or result
- ★ Likely important for an exam
- EX Example or application



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