

Reading: Text Marking and Underlining

Why underline or highlight?

Text marking (underlining and writing margin notes) helps you to focus and concentrate while reading. When underlining, you are selecting, organizing, and thinking about the importance of what you are reading. Text marking is also important because it decreases the time it takes to read for important information when reviewing for tests or exams. You can just reread and review the highlighted text.

Know your purpose

Before you begin, preview the assigned task. There are differences between reading a science textbook to retain information and prepare for a test, and doing secondary reading for a research paper. Knowing your purpose will give you a better sense of what type of information to look for so that you can highlight and annotate your texts more purposefully.

What to mark

It is a good idea to employ a regular system for highlighting or text marking; For example, you may want to:

- use headings, bold print, italics, and labels to determine the important ideas in a passage
- circle all unknown words so that you know you need to look them up; write the definitions in the margin.
- highlight definitions and put "def" in the margin so that you know you need to study this important definition.
- put question marks in the margin as reminder your need help.

Text marking also involves writing in the margins of your text. Writing comments, summing up information, and posing questions allow you to think about the material at an even higher level of understanding.

When to mark text

In order to think adequately about the information, it is best to underline and makes notes immediately after reading a paragraph or section.

How much to underline

A good rule of thumb is to underline no more than 25% of the text. Instead of underlining entire sentences, underline key words or phrases, examples, and/or supporting details.

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