

# Combining Highlighting and Annotating

**NOTE:** This is a general overview of highlighting and annotating. When completing annotations for Engl. 302, always follow the directions and examples given by your classroom instructor.

- 1. Read first; then mark.** Finish a paragraph or section before you highlight or annotate. Each idea may seem important at first, but you must see how it fits in with the others.
- 2. Use the boldfaced headings.** These suggest the topic of the chapter and paragraph.
- 3. Highlight the topic sentence.** Look for and highlight a general sentence that sums up each paragraph. What words or phrase is the topic of that section?
- 4. If there isn't a topic sentence, write one.** Use the margin to write a topic sentence when the paragraph doesn't have one.
- 5. Underline major supporting details.** Supporting details explain or prove the main idea by telling how, what, when, where, why, how much, or how many.
- 6. Pay attention to transitions and signal words; box when appropriate.** Often they are markers of major details and can help guide you through a paragraph to alert you what will come next. Look for words and phrases: *First, such as, later, for example, also, however, consequently*. Putting a box around these will help guide you through the text.
- 7. Develop a consistent system of highlighting.** How will you mark main ideas differently than details or vocabulary? Use a method that is simple and easy to follow. If you understand a paragraph or section, then your highlighting should be fast and efficient.
- 8. Highlight less, not more.** Highlight as little as possible (no more than 25% of a page). Because you can't erase a highlighter, it's easier to go back and add. If you are highlighting too much, you may not be sorting ideas as well as possible.
- 9. Use the margins to talk back to the text.**
  - a. Personal reactions.** Write brief ideas, personal knowledge, or questions you have. Include possible test questions, paper topics, or sections you will need to read again.
  - b. Paraphrase.** Briefly restate the author's ideas in your words. These do not need to be complete sentences—more like short headlines.
  - c. Outline.** The margin can also be a place to create a brief outline of major details.
- 10. Develop your own symbol system.** Use underlining, boxes, circles or stars to indicate key names, dates, and events. There are samples on the back of this page, but be sure to create a system that will make sense to you when you look back at it later.
- 11. Test your system.** Did the act of annotating help me understand the text?
  - a.** Do I show the main ideas of the text?
  - b.** Do I show how the text is organized?
  - c.** Can I find information quickly?
  - d.** Have I used my system consistently?
  - e.** Can I translate the annotation into useful notes or a summary?
- 12. Reread.** When you are finished, reread just the highlighted sentences, underlined words, and margin notes. Does the information make sense? Does it tell the most important idea in the passage? If there is still something you don't quite understand, reread that section or paragraph, and then highlight or annotate the areas that help further explain.

# Sample of Highlighted and Annotated Page from a History Textbook

## Sample Marginal Notes:

### (Personal reactions)

Progress, as in move forward?

Social Darwinism?  
Survival of the fittest.

### (Paraphrase)

varieties (impulses):

Antimonopoly-limit and spread authority/wealth.

Social cohesion-- individual well-being depend on being of whole society.

Faith in knowledge: a way to make society equal

Government role-- important in process of improvement.

Paper topic: How has Progressivism affected modern politics?

## THE PROGRESSIVE IMPULSE

Progressivism was, first, an optimistic vision. Progressives believed, as their name implies, in the idea of progress. They believed that **society was capable of improvement** and that **Belief in Progress** continued growth and advancement were the nation's destiny.

But progressives believed, too, that growth and progress could not continue to occur recklessly, as they had in the late nineteenth century. The "natural laws" of the marketplace, and the doctrines of **laissez faire** and Social Darwinism that celebrated those laws, were not sufficient. Direct, purposeful human intervention in social and economic affairs was essential to ordering and bettering society. \*

### Varieties of Progressivism

Progressives did not always agree on the form their intervention should take, and the result was a **variety of reform impulses** that sometimes seemed to have little in common. **One** powerful impulse was the spirit of **1**

"Antimonopoly" **"antimonopoly," the fear of concentrated power and the urge to limit and disperse authority and wealth.** } def

This vaguely populist impulse appealed not only to many workers and farmers but to some middle-class Americans as well. And it helped empower government to regulate or break up trusts at both the state and national level.

**Another** progressive impulse was a belief in the importance of **social cohesion:** **2** the belief that individuals are part of a great web of social relationships, that each person's welfare is dependent on the welfare of society as a whole. That assumption produced a concern about the "victims" of industrialization.

**Still another** impulse was a deep faith in knowledge— in the possibilities of applying to society the principles

**3** **Faith in Knowledge** of natural and social sciences. Many reformers believed that knowledge was more important as a vehicle for making society more equitable and humane. Most progressives believed, **too,** that a **modernized government** could—and must—**play** an important role **4** in the process of **improving and stabilizing society.** Modern life was too complex to be left in the hands of party bosses, untrained amateurs, and antiquated institutions.

Brinkley, Alan. *American History: A Survey*, 13<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston, McGraw Hill, 2009. 26 October 2011. <[http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/dl/free/0073385492/664084/bri38559\\_ch20.pdf](http://highered.mcgraw-hill.com/sites/dl/free/0073385492/664084/bri38559_ch20.pdf)>

A variation of simply annotating is to combine highlighting with annotating.

Here I highlighted the main ideas and then underlined the supporting details.

## Sample Annotating Symbols:

- Circle unknown words
- Star particularly important statements or quotations \*\*
- Indicate definitions.
- Number lists of ideas, causes, reasons, or events.
- Box transition words that number or show transitions.
- Another option is to use brackets [ ] or vertical lines for Major Details

- Use Abbreviations to show type of support:  
Ex- Example  
Stu- Study  
R- Reasons  
Exc-Exceptions  
Stat- Statistics

## Further explanation and activities for Annotating can be found in the following texts:

Flemming, Loraine. *Reading for Results*, 12<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2014. (See pages 29-33)

Flemming, Loraine. *Reading Keys*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston: Wadsworth, 2011. (See pages 18-24)

Rothman, David and Jiliani Warsi. *Read to Succeed*. San Francisco: Pearson Education, 2010. (See pages 122-123)

McWhorter, Kathleen T. *Reading Across the Disciplines: College Reading and Beyond*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. San Francisco: Pearson Education, 2012. (See pages 190-200)