

Textbook Marking

Read to increase your focus and comprehend major points. - A convenient way of making this happen is to change headings into questions and then attempt to answer the question while reading. This technique will help you become more realistic and even increase your speed. Once you have found the main idea in a block of text you can usually move on and save time. However, there are several good reasons for not moving on. First, and most important, read on if you do not understand the concept. Second, read on if you can see that there are additional key ideas illustrated by highlighted words, lists with numbers, or charts. Do not expect to memorize the content. Look for relationships which apply to the core principles of the subject material.

Read first and highlight later. - Before determining what you want to mark, read the complete paragraph or section. When you have determined the main ideas, highlight them or underline with the pen of your choice. Premature underlining often leads to highlighting unimportant information.

Mark only essential ideas. - Reading can become an arduous and tedious task if you are attempting to remember or memorize every detail. Since you cannot remember everything you read, it becomes important to mark or underline only essential information. Main ideas and major supporting points are most important to highlight. Learn to identify and discriminate between them. The extent to which you underline details depends on your purpose and the demands of your instructor. Reading material that has been marked excessively slips in value. It is frustrating to review reading material that has been over-marked because it becomes difficult to quickly perceive the important points and give those points our focused attention. Most college students have gone to the bookstore to buy a used book and found that many of the books are ruined by excessive marking.

Highlight key phrases, not complete sentences. - It is generally best to refrain from highlighting complete sentences. Concentrate instead on highlighting important words or phrases within important sentences. Delay your underlining until you recognize what is important to remember. A page with occasional highlights, bringing attention to fewer items, is easier to review.

Use a marking system that shows the relationship between key points and supporting points. - Underlining or highlighting alone may not be sufficient to distinguish quickly between main ideas and supporting points and to see clearly how they relate to each other. A marking system that uses symbols, numbers, letters, or lines will help you quickly identify relationships while you read and review. The marking system you adopt is up to you. The goal is to develop a method that enhances your learning. Students find many effective marking systems, for example, double underline or star the most important points, single underline supporting points. Some students find it better to design a color coding system (using different highlighting colors for main and sub-points). Drawing arrows is an effective way to draw attention to connecting thoughts or to show cause and effect relationships.

Review your marked textbook. - The sooner you review, the better. Most scholars recommend that you review material you have noted or marked within 24 hours. If you wait longer you will find yourself relearning the material. While reviewing, try to test your ability to remember and restate the material in your own words. To recite or write the main ideas as you review will enhance your memory and understanding. No matter how difficult the task of summarizing might be for you, stick to it until you feel confident that you understand and comprehend the content. As you recite these important main points, go a step beyond memorization and help your memory by thinking how each idea relates to you, your community, or other concepts in the subject material.

Based on **How to Study in College** by Walter Pauk. B Y U - <http://ccc.byu.edu/learning/txt-mkg.php>

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Additional Suggestions For Marking A Text You Own

- ✦ Use double lines under words or phrases to signify main ideas.

Radiation can produce mutations...

- ✦ Use single lines under words or phrases to signify supporting material.

...comes from cosmic rays...

- ✦ Mark small circled numbers near the initial word of an underlined group of words to indicate a series of arguments, facts, ideas--either main or supporting.

① Conditions change...
② rocks rise...
③ some sink...

- ✦ Rather than underlining a group of three or more important lines, use a vertical bracket in the margin.

[had known...
who gave...
the time...

- ✦ Use one asterisk in the margin to indicate ideas of special importance and two for general ideas of unusual importance. Reserve three asterisks for principles and high-level generalizations.

* When a nuclear blast is...
** People quite close to the...
*** The main cause of mutations...

- ✦ Circle key words or terms.

The genes are the...

- ✦ Box words of enumeration or transition.

Fourth, the lack of supplies...
...furthermore, the shortage...

- ✦ Place a question mark in the margin, opposite lines you do not understand, as a reminder to ask the instructor for clarification.

? The latest...
cold period...

- ✦ If you disagree with a statement, indicate that in the margin.

Disagree → Life became...
On dry land...

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