






Annotation Symbols

	Symbol	Explanation
1	Underline/Highlight	Underline/Highlight sentences in conjunction with a symbol.
2	[]	Put brackets around key ideas or claims being made in the text. Make sure you explain in the margin what the author is saying or doing.
3		Circle key terms and words you do not know. If you do not know a word, make sure you define it.
4		Draw an arrow to illustrate a link between two parts of the text. Write your own explanation near the arrow or in the margin.
5		Put a star next to an idea in the text that you find enlightening, interesting, or that taught you something new.
6	☺	Draw a smiley face next to something that you like. Explain why in the margin.
7	?	Put a question mark next to anything you find confusing. Explain why in the margin.
8		Put a box around a sentence that you think is the main idea, thesis, or organizing concept of the text. Make sure you explain why you think this is the main idea.
9	!	Put an exclamation mark next to anything that you find interesting or surprising.
10	X	Put an X next to anything that you think should be cut from the piece. Explain why it isn't necessary for the reader.
11		Put a triangle next to something you disagree with and write a note in the margin explaining your disagreement.
12	EX	Write EX in the margin when you find a cause/effect in the text.

Other tasks you can ask students to complete.

1	Write a question or a statement about something that you have read in the margin. Draw a line to the relevant portion of the text.
2	Paraphrase or summarize part of the text that you find interesting or confusing.
3	Make a connection to what you have read.
4	Draw a picture or cartoon to help you understand something that you have read in the margin. Draw an arrow to the section of text that the picture/cartoon relates to.
5	Your thoughts, feelings, and reactions to the text.

Annotating an article, or any passage, requires you to “close read.” In addition to underlining what you consider to be important parts, you should also write notes/commentary in the margins using this key.