

How to Mark Your Textbook

Text-marking not only improves your concentration, it makes it easier to study later.

1. Write question words next to each boldface heading when you survey a chapter. Later, read to answer these questions.
2. Mark up your book as you read:
 - a. Underline the main ideas of each paragraph plus an item or two of supporting material.
 - b. Jot down the points you want to remember in the margin.
 - c. After you read a section, use phrases to summarize the section. Write in the space at the end of the section.
3. Fight the temptation to underline only; writing summaries makes you a stronger student.
 - a. underlining is passive
 - b. it takes longer to study for an exam when you have simply underlined because you must then reread all the underlined material.
4. Modify this text-marking system to fit the particular assignment.
 - a. if your assignment is short, condensed, and difficult (ex. 5-10 pages of philosophy or chemistry), write both marginal notations and the summaries at the end of each section.
 - b. if your assignment is long (ex. 30-40 pages of history) and there is neither time nor need to make notes on every paragraph, underline selectively and write a summary at the end of each section.
5. Try to isolate and jot down general concepts instead of just lots of facts, dates, names, and so on.
6. Write the meanings of italicized words (that you boxed in during the survey portion) out to the side.
7. If you have any original ideas or insights about the material you are reading, write them out to the side, or at the top or bottom of the page, and place them in [square brackets].