**Annotating a Text**

Annotating your text is one of the most effective ways to improve your reading comprehension and your reading retention. The process of annotating helps to keep us actively engaged in what we are reading, even if it is difficult or out of our comfort zone. This reinforces our ability to concentrate, understand, retain, and think critically—all skills that will be necessary on your college journey. There are many ways you can annotate—some people prefer to write directly on a printed page, while others prefer to keep a log of text notes in a handwritten journal or typed document.

Here are a few strategies for good annotations:

1. In one margin, write key words or phrases that summarize the content. Aim for one meaningful phrase per paragraph of text. This will help you track the author’s ideas in the essay.
2. In the other margin, you can explain new vocabulary words and/or respond personally to the author’s ideas.
3. Use highlighting or underlining sparingly. This should only be used for the most essential quotations.
4. Avoid writing too much. These should be notes, not essays. Save your extended ideas for the written assignments.

Creative Commons License

**This work is licensed under a** [**Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License**](http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/)**. This work may only be reproduced without changes and with full attribution to the Liberal Arts and Sciences in the College for Adults, St. Catherine University**