


Annotating Text

Grade: 3-5, 6-8, 9-12, UNIV

Type: Read Actively / Develop Language (MLL)

 **20-30** MINUTES

When:

During and after reading

Materials:

Annotating Text Codes resource, preselected short text, whiteboard or display, writing utensils



Description



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The Annotating Text strategy supports active reading and comprehension by letting students interact with the text through notes, highlights, and questions. This promotes metacognition and deeper thinking as students reflect on their understanding. It engages students, encouraging them to identify key points, make connections, and ask questions. Expected outcomes include

improved understanding, critical thinking, and information retention.



Procedure

- ① Select a short informational text or a selection within a longer text.
- ② Tell students they will participate in an annotation strategy to enhance their understanding and engagement with the text.
- ③ Discuss and develop a standard set of text codes as a class, allowing students to contribute ideas, or use the **Annotating Text Codes resource**. Explain to students that you will show them how to use these codes as you model a think-aloud for the first portion of the selected text.
 - *Note: Once finalized, print these codes on bookmarks or on a class anchor chart for students to keep and reference during their reading activities.*
- ④ Support students with a gradual release of responsibility by inviting them into the think-aloud process for a second portion of the text. Encourage students to turn and talk with a partner to share their thinking aloud as you model annotating their thoughts in the margin of the text.
- ⑤ Ask students to read and annotate the rest of the text in pairs or small groups.
- ⑥ Encourage students to read the text a second time to deepen their understanding and refine their annotations.
- ⑦ Conduct a class discussion to share and synthesize annotations, reflect on the process, connect to future reading, and provide feedback, celebrating students' engagement and understanding.



Differentiation

Support Structures: Include supports such as glossaries, images, and pre-annotated examples to aid comprehension. Challenges such as open-ended questions or prompts for deeper analysis can be incorporated into higher-level texts to strengthen students' critical thinking skills.

Text Complexity Adjustment: Provide texts that vary in complexity to match the reading levels of different students. This could involve simplifying the language or sentence structures for struggling readers, or offering more complex texts with denser content and higher-level vocabulary for advanced readers.



Multilingual Learning Support

Beginning Proficiency: Support text annotation by creating a simplified annotation key that combines universal symbols with bilingual labels (e.g., ♥ = "I like/*Me gusta*," ? = "I wonder/*Me pregunto*"). Encourage students to annotate key vocabulary in their native language and then work with partners to add simple English translations above these notes. Allow students to write brief notes in their native language next to the symbols, gradually adding basic English words or phrases with teacher support. This builds students' confidence in text interaction while developing their bilingual annotation skills.

Intermediate Proficiency: Deepen annotation practices by teaching a dual-language approach in which students use different colored pens—one for native language annotations and another for English. Provide academic phrase banks for common annotation purposes (e.g., "This shows...", "I predict...", "This connects to...") with native language equivalents. During partner discussions, have students explain their annotations in their native language and then practice rephrasing key points in English using the academic phrases provided. This develops

students' academic language while maintaining their deep comprehension through native language support.

Advanced Proficiency: Enhance sophisticated reading skills by teaching students to create layered annotations. First, ask students to mark initial reactions and questions using standard symbols. Then invite them to add analytical comments using academic vocabulary (e.g., "The author's evidence suggests..." or "This detail contradicts..."). Finally, invite students to write summary notes synthesizing their annotations. For younger students, focus on clear, simple analytical comments with basic academic terms. For older students, encourage more complex annotations that analyze the author's craft, make connections across texts, and evaluate arguments. During discussions, encourage students to reference specific annotations to support their analysis, using precise academic language to explain their thinking process.



Variations

Digital Annotations: Students can use digital tools to interactively highlight, add notes, and link to external resources directly within electronic texts. This approach facilitates collaboration and real-time feedback by allowing students to share their annotated documents on digital platforms where peers and teachers can view, comment, and discuss the annotations instantaneously.