How to Annotate a Book

Annotating Text

Annotating simply refers to marking the page in your book as you read with comments, marks, and notes.

Annotating is done to help in understanding the text. Marking key ideas, characters, and information will enable you to discuss the reading with more evidence than if you just rely only on memory.

Annotating may include the following:
- Highlighting key words, phrases, or sentences
- Writing questions or comments in the margins
- Bracketing important ideas or passages
- Connecting ideas with lines or arrows
- Highlighting passages that are important to understanding the text

How to Annotate a Text:
- Highlighting/ underlining- highlighting stands out from the page and allows you to scan a page quickly for information. Be careful not to mark too much. If everything is highlighted, nothing becomes important. If you use different colors, include a legend explaining what each color represents.
- Brackets []-If several lines seem important, place a bracket around the passage. Highlight only key phrases within the bracketed section. This will draw attention to the passage without cluttering it with too many highlighted or underlined sentences.
- Asterisks *—An asterisk indicates something unusual, special, or important. Multiple asterisks indicate a stronger degree of importance.
- Marginal notes- use space in the margin to respond to ideas in the book. You can ask questions, label literary elements, summarize critical events, explain ideas, identify characters, or make comments.

Types of things to mark/write in book:
- Names of characters when they are first introduced
- Insights into characters
- Images, ideas, objects that pop up repeatedly (motifs)
- Passages relating to the theme
- Passages that indicate tone (author's attitude toward the subject)
- Figurative language (alliteration, similes, metaphors, personification, hyperbole, etc.)
- Passages that indicate setting and its effect on characters or plot
- Words or phrases that are confusing
- Possible foreshadowing