

# Your Guide to Awesome Annotations

Welcome! Annotating is one of the most powerful study skills you can develop. Think of it as having a conversation with your reading material—it's how you move from passive reading to active learning. This guide provides the *specific* steps and rules for annotating in this class.

## What is Annotation?

Annotation is simply adding notes, comments, and questions directly to the text as you read. It helps you:

- **Understand Better:** Grasp the main concepts and tricky ideas.
- **Study Faster:** Quickly review the important parts for exams or papers.
- **Prepare for Discussion:** Generate key ideas and questions to bring to class.

## How to Annotate: 5 Key Steps

Follow these steps to ensure you are meeting the assignment requirements:

### 1. Highlight Smartly

Use your highlighter to mark the most important information.

| Goal                           | Rule                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Identify Key Points</b>     | Mark important ideas, terms, or phrases that are central to the text's argument.                                      |
| <b>Avoid Over-Highlighting</b> | Be selective! If you highlight everything, you've highlighted nothing. The goal is to isolate the <i>main</i> points. |

### 2. Summarize Main Ideas

Summaries should be written in the margins in your own words.

| Goal                    | Rule                                                                     |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Capture the Core</b> | Focus your summary on the text's main arguments and supporting evidence. |

| Goal                 | Rule                                                    |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Keep it Brief</b> | <b>Summaries must be no more than 3 sentences long.</b> |

### 3. Ask Analytical Questions

Questions are essential for digging deeper, but they must be high-level.

| Goal                               | Rule                                                                                                                                                                             |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Minimum Requirement</b>         | <b>You must include a minimum of 2 analytical questions per assignment.</b>                                                                                                      |
| <b>Focus on High-Level Inquiry</b> | Basic questions you could easily Google (e.g., "What does this word mean?") do not count. If you have a basic question, look it up, and then annotate its meaning in the margin. |
| <b>Ask Critical Questions</b>      | Your questions should focus on seeking clarification, connecting ideas, or critically examining the content.                                                                     |
| <b>Do Not Ask for My Opinion</b>   | I will not answer questions about my personal opinions on the topic. Instead, reflect on your own feelings and opinions in a comment.                                            |

### 4. Make Analytical Comments

Analytical comments show me that you are making connections beyond the page.

| Goal                       | Rule                                                                                                          |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Connect the Content</b> | Link the reading to: Lectures, other assigned readings, personal experiences, or current events.              |
| <b>Note Reactions</b>      | Write down whether you agree or disagree with a point, and <i>why</i> .                                       |
| <b>Variety is Key</b>      | Your annotations cannot consist <i>only</i> of questions. You must include summaries and analytical comments. |

## 5. Use a System of Symbols

Using consistent symbols helps you organize your notes at a glance.

| Symbol Example | Meaning                                          |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| ?              | A question for later discussion or clarification |
| !              | An extremely important point or powerful idea    |
| ★              | Connection to a core course theme                |

## Example Annotations

These examples show what a good annotation looks like:

- **Highlight:** "Global warming impacts..." (A key phrase is highlighted.)
- **Comment:** "This concept directly connects to the economic model we discussed in last week's lecture." (This is an analytical comment connecting to course material.)
- **Question:** "How might this relate to current international economic policy?" (This is a critical, high-level question.)

## Final Warning: Academic Integrity

Your annotations are meant to show **your** unique engagement and understanding of the text.

- **NEVER** use Artificial Intelligence (AI) to help you annotate your readings.
- Annotations are a direct way for me to gauge *your* understanding—not a robot's.

Successful annotation will make your studying much more effective!