

How to Mark Your Textbook

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

1. **Write questions next to each boldface heading when you survey a chapter.** Later, read to answer these questions. (What do you think the section will cover?)
2. **Mark up your book as you read:** If the text book does not belong to you, you can request a chapter though “Scan It” (on the library website) or take pictures of the chapter through your tablet or phone which you can then mark-up using digital note-taking tools!
 - 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 on the side.
 - c. After you read a section, use phrases to summarize the section. Write these ideas next to the paragraph where you have space.
3. **Fight the temptation to underline/ highlight only; writing summaries makes you a stronger student.**
 - a. Underlining/ highlighting is passive. It has no significant meaning when next to all other underlined points.
 - b. It takes longer to study for an exam when you have simply underlined/ highlighted because you must then reread all the underlined/ highlighted material.
4. **Modify this text-marking system to fit the particular assignment.**
 - a. If your reading assignment is short, condensed, and difficult (ex. 5-10 pages of philosophy or chemistry), write both marginal notations and a summary at the end of each section.
 - b. If your reading assignment is long (ex. 30-40 pages of history) and there is neither time nor need to make notes on every paragraph, underline/ highlight selectively and write a summary at the end of each section.
5. **Try to isolate and jot down general concepts** (points you keep seeing repeatedly) instead of just lots of facts, dates, and names.
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 [brackets].