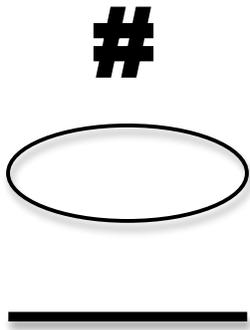


Marking the Text

“**Marking the Text**” is an active reading strategy that asks students to think critically about their reading. It helps students determine the essential information in a reading passage, isolating it visually from the rest of the surrounding text. While reading the text, students analyze ideas, evaluate ideas, and circle and underline essential information relevant to one’s reading purpose. With pencil in hand, students focus on what is being said in the text, leading to increases in comprehension and retention of textual material. **Marking the Text** can be used with textbook readings, articles, primary source materials, or classroom Cornell Notes.

How Should Students Mark the Text?



There are three basic marks you should use when using the “**Marking the Text**” reading strategy. The first is to number (#) the paragraphs. Numbering the paragraphs (or, if it is a very long text, numbering chunks of text) allows a reader to refer quickly to specific areas of the text during class discussions. You should then complete a “clean read,” or one in which your pencil is down and you are reading to build familiarity with the structure and ideas of the text.

Then, you should reread all or parts of the text, marking essential information as you reread. Specifically, you should circle key terms/phrases and underline information relevant to the stated reading purpose. In other words, the information you mark will be determined by the purpose of the reading. Depending on the type of text being read, key terms might include key concepts, content-based vocabulary, lesson-based vocabulary, names of people/places/dates, formulas, repeated words, literary devices, or other terms related to the reading purpose. Examples of the types of information you will underline includes author’s claims, evidence, facts about a person, place, thing, or idea, descriptions, cause-and-effect relationships.....it just depends on the reading purpose.

When Should Students Mark the Text?

Since “**Marking the Text**” is a fundamental skill, it ought to be used whenever you are asked to read. When you are reading copies of articles, newspapers, source documents, or other consumables, you should automatically mark the text. Numbering paragraphs, circling words and phrases, underlining key information...this should become second nature to you as you practice and get into the habit. But what about when you are reading textbooks or other materials that you should not write directly on? Do you just not mark those types of texts? Of course you should; you just need to get a little creative. Suggestions for marking texts you are not allowed to write on include using sticky notes, overhead transparencies laid on top of the text, or a t-chart in your Cornell Notes where you keep track of circled key terms and underlined information (this last one is my personal favorite).

Why Should Students Mark the Text?

Students need to focus on the texts they read and they need tools to help them understand the complex ideas on the page, not to mention a way to stay engaged and focused while they read (Have you ever read a page of text, gotten all the way to the bottom, and realized that you zoned out the entire time and didn't remember anything you just read?). **Marking the Text** gives students a way to isolate essential information that can be referenced (or found) easily during a writing task or class discussion. Students might also use their markings

- to assist in summary writing,
- to connect sections of the text,
- to investigate claims or evidence,
- to engage in other types of analysis
- to interact with their Cornell Notes because numbering paragraphs/chunks/main ideas, circling key terms, and underlining essential information is an important part of Note-making (or step R—Review and Revise Your Notes)

Numbering paragraphs is also essential for class discussions. Once paragraphs are numbered, students can easily direct others to those places where they have found relevant information. **Marking the Text** is a fundamental strategy that students must learn to do well.

Key Questions to Consider:

Ultimately, Critical Reading strategies are meant to help you become a better reader, helping you to increase your level of college readiness so you can do well now and also prepare for life in the University after high school. This is not just busy work....**Marking the Text** is one type of strategy good readers turn into a habit so that they can construct meaning from the texts they read. Someday you won't be reading "like" a college student....you will be reading "as" a college student.

Ask the following questions to help you reflect on the use of **Marking the Text**:

- How did this strategy improve your understanding of the text?
- What stood out to you that you would have missed otherwise?
- What did using Marking the Text do to your level of interest, engagement, and/or understanding while you read?
- Why would readers want to use this strategy?
- When would you want to use a strategy like Marking the Text? How would you mark a text in your other classes?
- What types of texts would it be useful on? What types would you want to steer-clear of using it on?

