

“Response-Ability” – a.k.a. Annotation

Overview: Toni Morrison once said that a reader has a “response – ability” when he/she reads. A reader can and should interact with the text, demonstrating the capacity to make meaning of the author’s words. Being “response – able” means annotating a text, *showing* your mental conversation with the writer. This unique “conversation” can be heard by others in the form of underlining, highlighting, and commenting in the margins. “Response – ability” is critical to deep and provocative reading and should *not* be considered optional when you are reading with an academic purpose and have a text you can mark up.

Ways to Interact with a Text*

- Identify main topics in the margins. *also consider rhetorical focus?*
 - Description
 - narration
 - exposition
 - persuasion
- Number important points.
- Highlight important sentences and *say why they're important in the margin.*
- Highlight intriguing diction or syntax and *comment upon its effect in the margin.*
Consider tone!
- Ask questions in the margin.
- Add commentary/judgment *(Good for Argumentative essays)*
(e.g., “interesting concept”; “I wonder about the bias here”; “I don’t agree because . . .”; “neat idea”; “I’ve seen this behavior a lot myself”; “What a great phrase!”)
- Indicate key words (double score).
- Circle new and/or interesting vocabulary words; speculate on their meaning. *- Look up words - define w/ part of speech if able*
- Predict future information and/or linguistic moves by the writer.
- Connect text to life experience with comments in the margin. *(Good for Argument)*
- Connect text to other passages in the same text or other readings with comments in the margin. *(good for Argument)*
- Use arrows to connect key ideas within the text.
- Paraphrase or summarize information with comments in the margin or at the bottom of the page. *esp tone + write a thesis if essay prompt included*
- Draw directly on the text; use brackets to set off important information.
- Comment on the beauty of the language itself; highlight and name rhetorical devices.
- Identify specific allusions and comment on their significance in the margin.

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