

## How to Annotate a Text

Definition: Annotate – v. To furnish [a literary work] with critical commentary or explanatory notes.

### Why Annotate?

Annotation helps you to think critically about what you are reading. While the amount of annotation may vary widely from page to page, any notes you add to a text will help you to read more critically – any attempt to annotate your book/article will help you to understand the reading as you read – and will help you return to the reading with confidence later.

### Circle

key words that are used in special ways, words that you do not know \* or words repeated for emphasis.

**Underline** evidence. The evidence is the article's pool of primary material – quotes, details, statistics, etc. – that does not come from the writer's opinion.

**Box** Statements that are not clear and write in the margin questions that you have about those statements.

**Take notes in the margins.** Try to summarize main points in the margins. Ask questions that you would like to bring into a class discussion. Write down connections to other sources (historical, literary, personal) that you are reminded of by the reading. A text should look like a dialogue between the writer and you, the reader. Your words need to exist on the same page to show your thought process.

\*For every word you do not know, use a **dictionary!** **Make a list of quick definitions** (in your own words is fine) on the back of the article.

*These annotation instructions have been adapted from Chris Rokous's excellent guide to annotating which, in turn, was in part inspired and informed by "How to Mark a Book," an essay by Mortimer J. Adler, Ph. D*