

INSTITUTE WRITING PROGRAM

THE WRITING CENTER

Annotating Texts

Recording thoughts in documents, or annotating, helps you remember the material and makes you think more deeply about the text. Simply highlighting or underlining might draw your eye to that section later, while annotations will help you develop critical thinking.

Good annotations will summarize the text and define key terms.

1. Paraphrase what happened in a scene or chapter and its importance to either another scene or the story as a whole.
2. Draw a picture of the scene, your response or an idea.
3. Write down definitions of words you do not know. This will help you learn more words, but also help you better understand the text.

Better annotations will do more than summarize. They will challenge the text, make connections to other readings, and ask questions. Students may use annotations to brainstorm ideas for their projects.

1. Ideas, feelings, and questions occur naturally in the reading process. Write down your feelings; consider if the author wanted this reaction.
2. Write down any connections to other texts, movies, or events that you notice.
3. Write down what is confusing to you. Write down when one of your questions is answered.
4. Interact with the author of the text by asking a question about a passage. Consider responding as the author to your question.
5. Notice and comment if a point the author makes is a central idea, supporting evidence, or an idea they are refuting.
6. Notice and comment on relating ideas or themes that you begin to notice the author focusing on.
7. Evaluate the author's writing. Is the argument convincing? Do you agree or disagree with their point of view?
8. Relate sections of the text to your own life and experiences.
9. Notice and comment on a literary device – rhetoric, metaphor, foreshadowing, tone, paradox, irony, symbolism, etc. What effect does it create for you, the reader, the text, or the argument?
10. Explain the moments of emotional impact. The author just killed the main character; are you apathetic? angry? happy?
11. Use your inference skills. Is the author using a passage or relationship to try to tell you something deeper than what is being said directly?

Develop a system of symbols that are meaningful to you (e.g., checkmarks for main ideas, circles around unknown words, stars for interesting supporting evidence, etc.) If you cannot take notes in the text, consider using sticky notes.



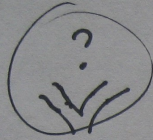
Tone = Whistful?
nostalgic?

Who is the speaker?

Why not taken?

Where does the road go?

The Road (Not) Taken



↓ Is it autumn?

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both regretful
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Hmm...

shows takes time to think!

Can't know

So, are the roads the same?

What's down there

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and not walked on;
Though as for that, the passing there
Had worn them really about the same.

at that point - but still, similar.

↓ not so different

No one to show the way

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.

? means stepped on

That won't happen

Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads onto to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.
I shall be telling this with a sigh

He knows once he picks, he'll never get the chance again
will always wonder what might have been

Literal Level:

A person is walking in the woods, + comes to a fork in the road. Tries to look down one road, but can't see where it leads. Both roads same - picks one but knows he'll never know what was down the other road. Thinks he will always wonder.

- Figurative -

In life, there are choices where neither one is so great that it jumps at you. You have to pick, so you do. And then that choice leads to people, experiences and you don't get to