

# Annotating an Essay or Book

0:00	<b>Owl:</b> Welcome to Annotating an Essay or Book, an instructional video on reading comprehension brought to you by the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab.
0:20	Whether you're reading an essay or book for class or just for fun, it can be difficult to understand what the author is trying to say.
0:28	However, if you practice active reading strategies like annotating while you read, you can improve your understanding of the text.
0:36	We'll treat essays and books together in this video because they share a similar purpose and structure.
0:43	Both tend to be thesis-oriented, that is they put forth and support an argument.
0:50	And both do so using a common structure that has an introduction, body, and conclusion.
0:56	Of course, since books have multiple chapters, they have much more space to develop an argument than an essay does.
1:04	You can think of a book as a long essay and chapters as essays within an essay.
1:09	Therefore, while the book as a whole has an introduction, body, and conclusion, so does each chapter.
1:17	In this video, we will cover five tips for what to look for in an essay or book to help you improve your reading comprehension.
1:26	Specifically, we will talk about how to
1:29	find the stated thesis,
1:31	find the implied thesis,
1:33	identify topic sentences,
1:36	identify key supporting details,
1:39	and identify transitional words and phrases.
1:43	By looking for these things as you read, you will improve your understanding of the text and make the most of your time while you read.
1:50	Let's get started!
1:52	The thesis, also called the thesis statement, is the main idea of the text.
1:58	It's sometimes referred to as the author's central argument.
2:02	A thesis consists of a specific topic and a position statement on the topic.
2:08	All of the other ideas in the text support and develop the thesis, so it's really important to identify the thesis as you read.
2:15	There are two kinds of thesis statements: stated thesis and implied thesis.
2:21	Often the author makes his or her thesis explicit by stating it directly in the text.
2:28	This is called a stated thesis.
2:31	A stated thesis might appear in different places in the text.

2:35	Sometimes, a text opens with the thesis by stating it in the introduction or first paragraph.
2:41	This may happen after a hook—an interesting example or anecdote meant to draw the reader's interest.
2:48	Other times, the author might build up to the thesis and state it in the conclusion or last paragraph.
2:54	This approach may be combined with a rhetorical question at the beginning of the essay that serves as a hook to set up the thesis as an answer delivered at the end of the text.
3:05	Once you locate the thesis, be sure to mark it somehow, either by highlighting or underlining it, or by bracketing it or placing a symbol next to it in the margin.
3:15	You might also want to paraphrase it in the margin, which will help you to understand it and remember it.
3:21	Sometimes the thesis is not directly stated in an essay or book.
3:26	This is called an implied thesis.
3:29	In that case, there are three strategies you can use to discover the implied thesis.
3:35	You can...
3:37	add a word or phrase to a sentence in the paragraph that almost states the thesis or main idea,
3:43	identify two key sentences from the paragraph and combine all or parts of them into a single sentence that states the thesis or main idea,
3:52	or summarize important ideas into one sentence that states the thesis or main idea.
4:00	Let's look at an example of a passage with an implied thesis.
4:04	By applying the second strategy we just discussed, we can guess what the thesis is.
Displayed on screen	A cooperative business is defined as a business in which each employee is a co-owner who shares in both the profits and the responsibilities of the company. Cooperative businesses are growing in popularity across the United States. In some states, the growth of cooperative businesses rivals that of conventional businesses. Millennials, in particular, are attracted to this business model because of its greater emphasis on egalitarianism, autonomy, and creativity.
Displayed on screen	Remember to look for: Key Sentence + Key Sentence
4:26	Okay, let's check it out.
4:28	Using this key sentence...
Displayed on screen	Cooperative businesses are growing in popularity across the United States.
4:30	...and this key sentence
Displayed on screen	Millennials, in particular, are attracted to this business model
4:32	...we can derive the following implied thesis:

4:35	Cooperative businesses are growing in popularity across the United States, especially among millennials.
4:42	To help you remember, use the margin to write down what you think is the thesis.
4:48	In addition to locating the thesis, you also want to pay attention to topic sentences.
4:53	A topic sentence states the main idea of a paragraph.
4:57	Just like with the thesis, there are several places you might find a topic sentence.
5:02	A topic sentence might come
5:04	at the beginning of a paragraph, followed by supporting details;
5:08	at the end of a paragraph, after the supporting details;
5:11	or in the middle of a paragraph, after some kind of opening hook or example, but before the supporting details.
5:19	Now, here are some clues to help you find the topic sentence:
5:24	look for a title or heading that indicates the topic;
5:28	look for a word, name, or phrase in the paragraph that appears in special print;
5:34	look for a word, name, or phrase that is repeated throughout the paragraph;
5:39	or look for a word, name, or phrase referred to throughout the paragraph by pronouns or other words.
5:47	Once you find the topic sentence, you should note its location by underlining, highlighting, bracketing, or marking it with a symbol.
5:57	Topic sentences are normally supported by supporting details.
6:01	Supporting details are pieces of information that develop the topic sentence.
6:06	This may include:
6:08	facts (such as names, dates, and events),
6:12	figures and statistics,
6:15	quotations or paraphrases,
6:17	summaries,
6:19	and personal experiences.
6:23	Supporting details normally answer the questions who, what, when, where, why, or how.
6:34	When you locate a key supporting detail, make a note of it in the text.
6:39	Here's an example of a paragraph summarizing another study to support its main idea.

Displayed on screen Video games may actually offer a safe and effective alternative for players to vent violent behaviors that might otherwise play out in public. This idea runs contrary to the commonly held belief that video games are responsible for provoking violent behavior among players, especially impressionable youths. For instance, many credit the mass shooting at Columbine High School in 1999 to the fact that the two teenagers who carried it out were avid players of the first-person shooter game, Doom. However, recent studies demonstrate that the link between video games and behavior is more complicated than previously believed. One study found that aggressive behavior declined significantly after playing a first-person shooter.

6:44	Finally, as you read, it's important to be aware of transitional words and phrases.
6:51	Transitional words and phrases are intentional signposts that the author provides to guide the reader.
6:57	Observing the author's signposts will help you to follow the author's argument and understand it better.
7:03	Transitional words and phrases come in different types.
7:06	They can be used to signal or show...
7:09	Example—such as: <i>for example</i> or <i>for instance</i>
7:15	Time or Sequence—such as: <i>first</i> , <i>second</i> , and so on
7:21	Comparison—such as: <i>similarly</i> or <i>likewise</i>
7:28	Contrast—such as: <i>however</i> or <i>on the other hand</i>
7:34	Concession—such as: <i>admittedly</i> or <i>granted</i>
7:41	Addition—such as: <i>furthermore</i> or <i>in addition</i>
7:47	Cause and effect—such as: <i>as a result</i> or <i>consequently</i>
7:54	Conclusion—such as: <i>therefore</i> or <i>in conclusion</i>
8:00	Or, they can be used to signal or show...
8:03	Summary—such as: <i>in summary</i> or <i>in other words</i> .
8:09	Here's an example of an author using transitional words and phrases to guide the reader through his or her argument.

Displayed on screen It is a commonly held belief that video games are responsible for provoking violent behavior among players, especially impressionable youths. For instance, many credit the mass shooting at Columbine High School in 1999 to the fact that the two teenagers who carried it out were avid players of the first-person shooter game, Doom. However, recent studies demonstrate that the link between video games and behavior is more complicated than previously believed. One study found that aggressive behavior declined significantly after playing a first-person shooter. Therefore, video games may actually offer a safe and effective alternative for players to vent violent behaviors that might otherwise play out in public.

8:17 Now, once you understand what to look for in an essay or book and how to find it, you can greatly increase your understanding of the text.

8:25	So, remember to look for the thesis (stated or implied), topic sentences, key supporting details, and finally, transitional words and phrases.
8:40	Thanks for listening to this instructional video on Annotating an Essay or Book!
8:46	Visit the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab for more support with reading and writing skills.

