

Annotating a Textbook

0:00	Owl: Welcome to Annotating a Textbook, an instructional video on reading comprehension brought to you by the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab.
0:12	So you've been assigned to read a chapter or section in a textbook.
0:16	Most likely, your teacher plans to give a quiz, test, or exam on the material.
Displayed on screen	Student: Yes.
0:22	Owl: Well, reading a textbook is easier when you understand how it works.
0:27	You'll be able to find the information you need and remember it when it comes time to study.
0:31	Textbooks are a unique kind of genre with their own specialized organization and goals.
0:37	In general, most textbooks share the following qualities: They
0:41	follow an explicit pattern of organization or structure,
0:45	emphasize facts and evidence,
0:47	rely on references to important research,
0:50	introduce many new terms,
0:52	and provide visual aids.
0:55	Okay. Let's look at the different elements that make up the structure of a typical chapter in a textbook.
1:01	A typical chapter may contain some or all of the following ten items:
1:06	1. An introduction, abstract, or synopsis that states the purpose of the chapter;
1:12	2. A list of chapter objectives, goals, or learning outcomes;
1:18	3. A chapter outline;
1:20	4. Titles, headings, and subheadings that divide up the chapter;
1:26	5. Key terms that are bold-faced, italicized, or made to stand out in some special way;
1:33	6. Boxes and sidebars to pull out key information;
1:38	7. Visual aids or figures;
1:42	8. A chapter summary or conclusion that reviews the main idea;
1:48	9. A vocabulary list or glossary;
1:52	and
1:53	10. Study questions and activities to help you focus on key ideas and remember them.
1:59	You can improve how well you read a textbook by applying five techniques.
2:04	First, remember to read with a pen, pencil, or highlighter in hand so that you can mark-up important information, such as key facts, terms, and ideas.

2:15	This will help you to remember them better and find them more easily when it comes time to study.
2:20	Also, write questions or comments in the margins as you read and answer any guide questions that you previously placed in the margins.
2:28	By doing so, you will improve your understanding and identify what you need to understand better.
2:34	Textbooks—especially those written for the physical and social sciences—often introduce and evaluate important theories.
2:41	When you come across a new theory, ask yourself the following questions:
2:46	What is it called?
2:48	Who proposed it and when?
2:50	What does it explain and how?
2:52	What evidence supports it?
2:54	Are there counter-theories?
2:56	If so, what are they?
2:59	You can improve your understanding of a theory by summarizing it in your own words.
3:04	You can do this in the margins or in a separate notebook.
3:09	Textbooks also tend to emphasize specialized or technical terms that are important to a field of study or discipline.
3:17	These terms are often singled out in bold-faced or italicized print and frequently accompanied by a definition in a sidebar or glossary.
3:26	Highlight or underline them.
3:28	Key terms can include the names of laws, theories, principles, models, concepts, patterns, systems, stages, processes, structures, parts, and important people in the field.
3:45	A good way to help you remember new vocabulary items such as specialized or technical terms is to make vocabulary flashcards.
3:53	As you read, make a list of all the terms that are new or challenging.
3:57	Then, look up the definition, either in the textbook or in a dictionary.
4:02	Write down the new word or phrase on one side of a note card.
4:06	Then write the definition on the other side.
4:09	Below that, write down a sentence using the word.
4:12	This will help you understand the word better.
4:14	When it comes time to study, you can challenge yourself by reading the word and guessing at the definition.
4:20	Then check your answer on the back of the flashcard.
4:24	Go here for more help with new vocabulary.
4:27	Another key feature of textbooks is the inclusion of visual aids to convey important information.



4:33	Visual aids can be found within the body of the text or in special boxes, sidebars, and appendices.
4:40	They normally have a title and caption that explain what they are.
4:45	Each visual aid is often referred to as a “table” or “figure” and numbered to make it easier to find.
4:52	Sometimes a textbook will have a special table of contents at the beginning of the text just to list all the numbered tables and figures for the reader’s convenience.
5:01	By paying attention to visual aids, you can learn a lot about the topic that the chapter is covering.
5:06	Make a note of key visual aids that you want to revisit later when it comes time to study or review information.
5:12	If you’re having trouble reading and understanding visual aids, check out this video.
5:19	Finally, after you read make sure to give yourself some time to go over any provided study questions or activities at the end of the chapter.
5:27	This will help you to monitor your understanding of what you’ve read, deepen your understanding, and help you remember it.
5:34	It’s also a good idea to create your own study questions and write them on flashcards to help you study later on.
5:40	Go back to the beginning of the text and review your notes.
5:44	Create study questions about important theories, facts, people, dates, and terms.
5:51	To make studying easier, write up your questions and answers on note cards with questions on the front and answers on the back.
5:58	Use these note cards to help you study.
6:03	When you’re ready to study for an exam, you should:
6:06	Review your notes;
6:08	If provided, review the chapter objectives and outline;
6:12	Review important information, such as theories, facts, names, dates, and terms;
6:19	Review any vocabulary flashcards you created;
6:22	Review your answers to study questions and activities;
6:26	Review any study questions you created.
6:29	Remember to give yourself enough time to study before the exam.
6:33	Don’t wait until the last minute!
6:35	Good luck!

Displayed on screen **Student:** Thank you!



- 6:39 **Owl:** Thanks for listening to this instructional video on Annotating a Textbook!
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- 6:44 Visit the Excelsior College Online Writing Lab for more support with reading and writing skills.

