

# Annotating a Text:

Annotating is carrying on a conversation with the text. It's a step toward deeply understanding what you read, which will in turn allow you to read with greater confidence, accuracy, and authority.

## Highlighting (mark the text itself)

- underline important ideas
- note new characters
- box key terms
- note unfamiliar terms
- note interesting passages
- connect related/interesting points
- identify central issues or themes

## Annotating (write in the margins)

- Ask questions
- Elaborate, define highlighted material
- Suggest ideas or parallels to other texts or other experiences
- Argue the writer's points or offer criticisms
- Comment on writer's style

American educator, literary critic, and author William Lyon Phelps, says that annotating is a practice that “enables you to remember more easily the significant sayings, to refer to them quickly, and then in later years, it is like visiting a forest where you once blazed a trail. You have the pleasure of going over the old ground, and recalling both the intellectual scenery and your own earlier self.” Without annotating, the trail, one would assume, is nearly impossible to follow. Lost in the woods? Yikes.