HOW TO HIGHLIGHT A TEXT

Whether you are reading a chapter out of your textbook or reading a research article for your next paper, knowing how to highlight and/or mark a set of text is an important skill. Many students end up highlighting too much of a page at a time and so when it comes to revise, the student just ends up re-reading everything. Highlighting and text marking is meant to be a way to pinpoint key concepts, ideas, and words, as well as note information that is unclear or that you have further questions about.

A part of developing your skills in text marking works hand in hand with your ability to critically read text and understand what you have read. Therefore, in developing one skill set, you are concurrently developing the other.

UNDERSTANDING THE PURPOSE OF HIGHLIGHTING/TEXT MARKING

WHEN TO DO IT

Very rarely do we understand a specific block of text after reading it once, so we will often re-read the passage to understand the overall meaning and pick out specific points. Highlighting text should be approached in a similar fashion, in which the highlighting should happen concurrently with the second or third re-reading of the passage. During a first read it is difficult to distinguish which information is more important in the grand scheme of the passage, which can lead to highlighting too much of the text.

Highlighting and text marking can also be an important component of the SQ3R reading method, in which after reading a passage, you should be able to note key ideas and terms, so that you can summarize the text you have just read, without having to re-read the entire passage over again.

WHAT TO MARK/HIGHLIGHT

Before jumping into highlighting or marking a text, it is important to understand what you are hoping to get out of reading the specific text. Are you looking for specific stats for a paper, or are you looking for key definitions? Maybe you're reading material to supplement a class, or a novel that will later be included in a group discussion.

Depending on what it is that you are reading and what you are hoping to get out of it, you should be approaching text marking/highlighting slightly differently. Some general tips for tackling any block of text include:

- Highlighting the definition term rather than the entire definition
- Circle unknown words to look up later
- Number a series of events
- Put question marks in the margin of the page beside information you don’t understand
HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?
A good rule to keep in mind is to not highlight any more than 25% of the given text. In this particular case, less is more! By bringing your attention to only 25% of the text, it shows the ability to critically read a text and pick out information that really is the most important. Just as in summary writing where you want to be a concise as possible, you don’t want to have large blocks of text highlighted.

As per marking text, no more than 25% of the text should be underlined also. If you are reading the material and genuinely having trouble understanding it, it is more than okay to star or place question marks beside the material you are having trouble with. It makes it much easier to find the material again when you approach a friend, TA, or professor.

CONCLUSION
The point of highlighting is to pick out key bits of information so that when studying, you can immediately notice key ideas and concepts. Likewise, text marking is used to star important points, or ask questions about the passage in the margins. A page that is too highlighted or cluttered negates the effect of doing either in the first place; rather than finding key points later, everything on the page suddenly looks important, and so in studying you will just end up re-reading the entire block of text.

REFERENCES
Commitments to quality of project and presentation

By signing my name below, I am making a commitment to:
1. Developing a high quality product that I will be proud of,
2. Creating a product that will make sense, be interesting and informative to my audience.
4. Doing my share on time.
5. Doing my best.

Signature of team members

Commitments to collaborating effectively

- Listening without interrupting
- Turn-taking & involving everyone
- Offering assistance
- Communicating about difficulties

Check 3 that will be primary goals:
- Respecting different opinions, skills, & abilities
- Encouraging & complimenting others
- Recognizing the others' successes
- Recognizing unique talents of others
- Giving “I” messages
- Consensus building
- Giving negative feedback
- Peacefully resolving conflicts
- Other

Commitments to using effective habits of the mind

- Using & keeping timelines
- Resisting impulsiveness
- Engaging in challenging tasks
- Persisting during tough times

Check 3 that will be primary goals:
- Organizing ideas & being clear
- Being accurate
- Noticing how you & others think
- Using information resources
- Being open minded
- Being creative
- Viewing an idea in unusual ways
- Presenting an idea in usual ways
- Other