Annotation

The purpose of a reading assignment is rarely to memorize information. While readings do provide a common point of knowledge for the class to discuss, instructors are usually more interested in students' responses to the content. That's why, when reading, it's most important for you to interact with the text, to build your own thoughtful and relevant understanding.

Annotating a text means marking significant parts of the text and adding your own thoughts, connections, and analyses as you read. It's the best way to make sure you're interacting with a reading—and a crucial step toward writing about the text later or discussing it with others.

When you annotate, try to include the following:

What	How
Interesting passages, key details, and big ideas	Underline, highlight, or draw stars and arrows in the margins
Associations and connections to your prior knowledge, including class themes, discussions, and other readings Assumptions, predictions, and extensions — especially via connections to prior knowledge Questions and noticing any lack of clarity (return to these later and see whether or not they were resolved within the text) Personal connections (this motivates us to continue reading and helps us remember details later)	Write these notes in the margins or use sticky-notes
Most important takeaways Summaries of the reading Reflections on themes and earlier predictions and questions	At the end of a chapter, section, or entire reading; on a sticky-note or in a reading journal (some students keep a section of their class notebook for this)