

## Marking your Textbook

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The purpose of underlining or marking your textbook is to create signals for reviewing. All too often, students over-mark their text, leaving little or no indication of what is important. To combat this problem, we have listed below effective strategies to follow when marking your textbook.

The following are 9 strategies you can implement when marking your textbook.

**1. Finish reading before marking.**

Never mark until you have finished reading a full paragraph and have paused to think about what you have read. This procedure will keep you from underlining everything that looks important at first glance.

**2. Be extremely selective.**

Do not underline or jot down so many items that they overload your memory or cause you to try to think in several directions at once. Be stingy with your markings, but do not be so brief that you will have to read the page again when you review.

**3. Use your own words.**

The jottings in the margins should be in your own words. Since your own words represent your own thinking, they will later be powerful cues to the ideas on the page.

**4. Be brief.**

Underline brief but meaningful phrases rather than complete sentences. Your marginal jottings should be short and to the point. They will make a sharper impression on your memory, and they will be easier to use when you recite and review.

**5. Be swift.**

You do not have all day for marking. Read, go back for a mini-overview, and make your markings. Then proceed to the next portion of your reading.

**6. Be neat.**

Neatness takes conscious effort, not time. Later when you review, the neat marks will help you save time since the ideas will be easily and clearly perceived.

**7. Organize facts and ideas under categories.**

Items within categories are far more easily memorized than random facts and ideas.

**8. Try cross-referencing.**

If you find an idea on page 64 that has a direct bearing on an idea back on page 28, draw a little arrow pointing upward and write “28” by it. Then turn back to page 28 and alongside the idea, draw an arrow pointing downward and write “64” by it. In this way, you will tie the two ideas together in your mind and in your reviewing.

**9. Be Systematic.**

There are many ways to mark the text: single and double underlines; the use of asterisks, circling and boxing for important items; and the use of top and bottom margins for longer notations. If some of these ideas appeal to you, include them into your marking system, one or two at a time. Use them consistently so you will remember what they mean during your review time.

Remember, the key to successful reviewing is being organized. Once you have all the important information you need to study for an exam clearly marked, the process of studying becomes simplified.

Good Luck!

The Curators of the University of Missouri (2001). Marking your Textbook (p. 77).