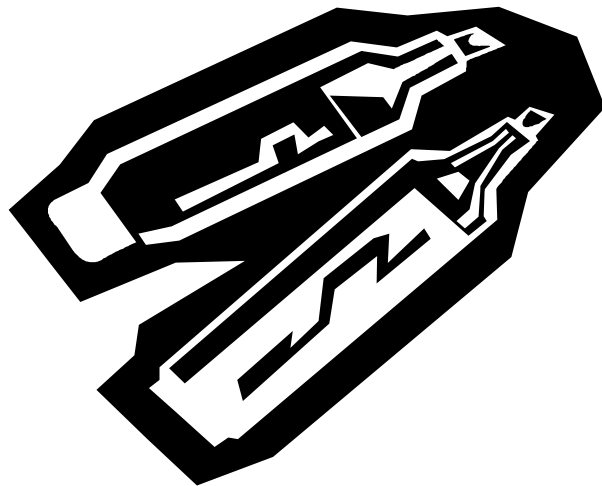


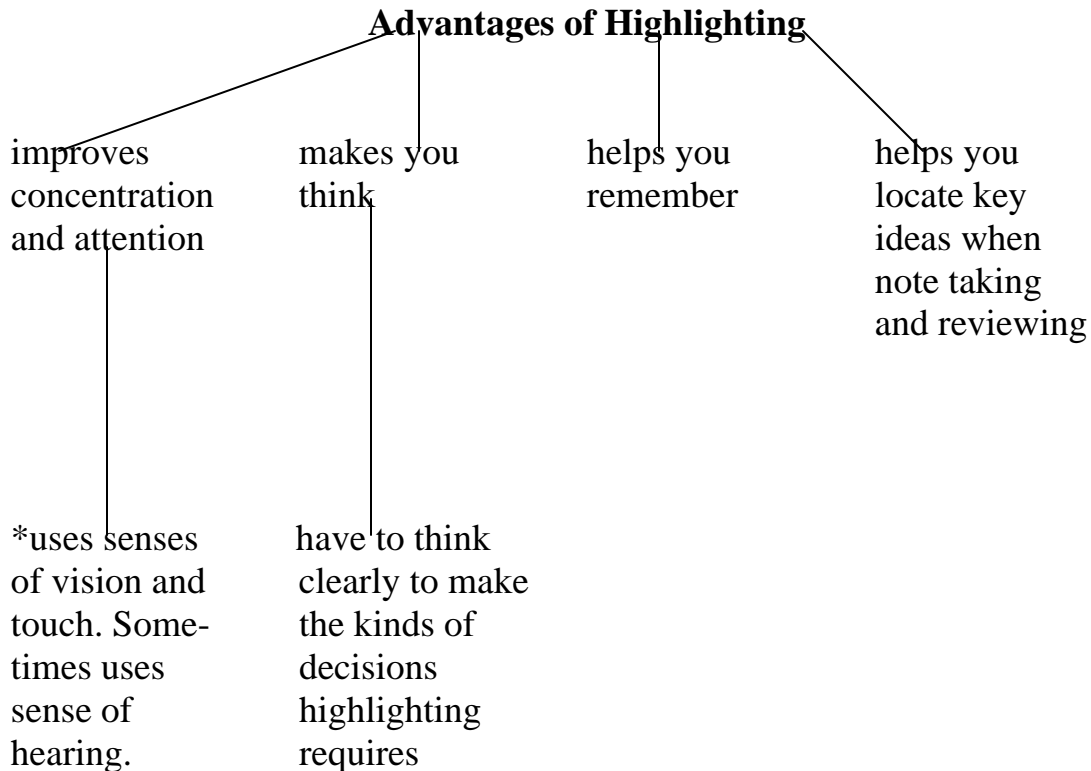
A GUIDE TO HIGHLIGHTING TEXTBOOKS



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HIGHLIGHTING TEXTBOOKS

In the process of selecting important information from what you read, highlighting is the first step. There are several advantages of taking this step.



**Any time you get more than one sense involved in the learning process, your learning becomes active. You then concentrate, understand, and remember better.*

For some students, it is difficult to write in books because we have been conditioned not to do so. But for a college student, it is a necessity. The main difference between textbooks and other types of books is that textbooks are meant to be studied. They must be read carefully and understood completely. This kind of reading is best done by marking in the text.

When you first begin to highlight, you will probably want to underline everything. You need to select only the major points and ideas, not all the details. Use the skills you have developed in locating topics, main ideas, and important supporting details to assist you in choosing points you will need to remember.

How to Highlight

The following is a suggested marking system. You are encouraged to use this system until you find or develop one that you prefer.

1. **Use a highlighter.** This is not only easier than using a pen or pencil, but is also more visible.
2. **Highlight headings and subheadings.** This will prevent one subject area from merging into the next as you review material highlighted in the chapter.
3. **Underline major points.** Clues to selecting these points include:
 - a. Topic sentence
 - b. Numbers
 - c. **Bold print** and *italics*
4. **Avoid excessive highlighting.** It helps to read all the material under a subheading before marking. This allows you to see where the author is heading. As you highlight during a second reading, it will be easier for you to be selective. This step is particularly important when you are first acquainting yourself with a textbook. Sometimes you will need to highlight details and examples, but you certainly do not need all of them. If the detail is a major one, and if the example provides the vehicle through which you are able to comprehend a concept, then highlight it.

5. **Use brackets** to identify an important graphic aid, a paragraph, or a list that is all-important. You need not take the time to painstakingly highlight each line in material where the whole is desired for review.
6. **Number items in lists or series.** If there are eight causes for an occurrence, number them if the author has not. This will make your review easier.
7. **Highlight all technical terms and their definitions.** Since these terms represent basic concepts from your field, you can plan on being responsible for remembering them on tests.
8. **Make marginal notes.** Sometimes ideas or examples occur to you while you are studying the chapter. Write these in your textbook. Again, they will serve to make the material more understandable to you as you review for tests.
9. **Avoid underlining complete sentences.** Taking phrases from sentences allows for more expedient review. Avoid just taking a word here and there, as this form of highlighting leads to disjointing the material and making what you have highlighted incomprehensible.
10. **Be consistent.** Find a system that works for you and stick with it. This will provide you with an organized highlighting strategy that will allow you to communicate with yourself every time.
11. **Proofread.** Reread what you have highlighted shortly after highlighting it, just to make sure that it will communicate to you in a few weeks.

Highlighting is a personal thing. If ten of us were given the same page, we would all highlight it somewhat differently. If you have a strong background of experience in a certain subject area, you will be inclined to highlight far less than the person to whom this is new information. Our minds will also abbreviate concepts differently in ways that personally communicate. So there is no one right way to highlight. It is a skill where each of us finds our own level of comfort. The trick is to find your own personal balance between over and under highlighting.

Some texts will require more highlighting than others. Your own information background and the information density of the text determine the amount you mark. Some books or sections are thick with vital information. Others have many details and examples that can be quickly read and eliminated. The ability to be flexible as you approach these differing materials will be important.

ASSIGNMENT

Highlight a chapter from one of your first quarter textbooks.