

## UNDERLINING

Imagine you are reading a chapter of several pages and you decide to underline and write in the margins. Immediately, the underlining takes you out of the passive, television-watching frame of mind. You are engaged. You are participating. It is now necessary for you to discriminate, to distinguish more important from less important ideas. Perhaps you have thought of underlining as a method designed only to help you with reviewing. That is, when you study the material the next time, you will not have to reread all of it; instead, you can review only the most important—those that are underlined—parts. However, even while you are underlining, you are benefiting from an imposed concentration, because this procedure forces you to think, to focus. Consider the following guidelines for underlining:

1. Underline the main ideas in paragraphs. The most important statement, the topic sentence, is likely to be at the beginning of the paragraph.
2. Underline the support for those main ideas.
3. Underline answers to questions that you bring to the reading assignment. These questions may have come from the end of the chapter, from subheadings that you turn into questions, from your independent concerns about the topic, or from questions posed by your instructor.
4. Underline only the key words. You would seldom underline all the words in a sentence and almost never a whole paragraph.

The trick is to figure out what to underline. You would seldom underline more than about 30 percent of a passage, although the amount would depend on your purpose and the nature of the material.

**ANNOTATING** Notes for yourself before forming a written response.

**Annotating**, writing notes in the margins, is a practice related to underlining. You can do it independently, although it usually appears in conjunction with underlining to record your understanding and to extend your involvement in reading.

Writing in the margins represents intense involvement because it turns a reader into a writer. If you read material and write something in the margin as a reaction to it, then in a way you have had a conversation with the author. The author has made a statement and you have responded. In fact, you may have added something

**READING-BASED WRITING** [Use the class template with title, introduction to start all reading-based writing.]

Reading-based writing requires you to read critically, write a reply that shows you understand what you have read, and give credit for ideas you borrow and words you quote. The form can be a summary, a reaction, or a two-part response (with separated summary and reaction). Documentation, in which you give credit for borrowed ideas and words, can be either formal (MLA) or informal, as directed

**Summary** = Objective

- The summary is a statement presenting only the main points of what you have read by using different wording without altering the meaning, adding information, or showing bias. [A summary is objective, that is, without personal comment, opinion.]
- It is the purest form of reading-based writing.

**Reaction** = Subjective Response/ Personal Comments

- In the reaction, the meaning of what you have read will be central to your topic sentence of your paragraph or to the thesis of your essay.
- Although the reaction is not a personal narrative by itself, it may include personal experience to explain elements of the text. For example, if your source is about driving styles, your own experiences as a driver or an observer of drivers could be relevant in your analysis of the text.
- The reaction may incorporate a summary to convey a broad view of what you have read, but your summary should never be the main part of your reaction.

**The Two-Part Response**

- The two-part response separates the summary from the reaction.
- This should be arranged in two separate parts headed 1) Summary and 2) Reaction.