Title: Annotating Text

The Basics

What? Marking a text for main ideas, key details, meaning, and questions

When? As students read a text

Why? To promote engagement with and comprehension of complex texts

Student Outcomes

This strategy helps students refine their understanding of texts to meet reading expectations and prepare for writing about texts.

How to Implement

1. Choose a short text or a short, complex portion of a text for students to read.
2. Develop questions based on the text for students to answer after annotating and reading.
3. Establish a system of text symbols that students will use to mark the text. There are many different ways to annotate a text. Samples of annotating legends are included in the "Resources for Additional Information."
4. Ask students to read the text, marking the text with the established symbols as they read. If the text cannot be marked, use sticky notes.
5. After students have annotated, ask them to respond to text-based questions and answer any questions they have raised while reading. This can be done independently or in groups.
6. Promote comprehension by providing an opportunity for students to discuss both the questions they raised and the teacher-developed questions. This can be done as a whole class or in groups/pairs.

Resources for Additional Information

- Brief video from TeachingChannel.org that shows text annotation use in the classroom
- Sample daily instruction from ReadWriteThink.org for teaching annotation to students
- Video that demonstrates different ways to annotate a text, including an annotating legend
- Directions for annotating a text
- Examples of how to use in lessons: Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8, Grades 9-12
- Reading mini-lessons, organized by grade level