Guidelines For Annotating a Text

**STEP 1:** Read the text. This first time, read for basic understanding. What is the author saying? What do these sentences mean?

**STEP 2:** Re-read the text. I highly recommend reading and re-reading by paragraph, but that is up to you. Be sure that this second time, you are reading with a more careful, critical eye. Why did the author word that sentence that way? Why that word choice? Why is the author covering some material and not others?

**STEP 3:** Mark it up! Highlight, circle, and/or underline anything that you find:

1. Confusing
2. Interesting
3. Surprising
4. Important

**STEP 4:** After you mark something up, write a comment in the margin. What makes it confusing? If it’s interesting, what questions or ideas does it provoke in you?

**STEP 5:** Continue to annotate in a more detailed manner:

1. Mark repetitions or rhetorical signals
2. Note passages that seem inconsistent; does the author appear to contradict themself?
3. Note passages that generate a strong positive or negative response.

**STEP 6:** Make connections: what are the other texts that you’ve read that are similar to this one? Why are they similar?

**Track. React. Connect.**