



Athletic Annotation

There are two sorts of reading: the kind you do while reclined by the pool or as you doze off to sleep at night, and the kind you do sitting up, pencil in hand, wide awake and ready to act. If you can't think of anything to say about a text, chances are you are reading it *passively*—allowing the author to do all the talking—rather than *actively* participating in the discussion. The following are some suggestions to help you take notes in a manner that will promote thought and increase your memory of what you read.

- 1. Read with a pen in hand.** You need to be ready to write down your immediate responses to the text. Your pen reminds you that you are writing; don't put it down!
- 2. Mark thoughtfully.** Use circles, checks, and arrows to identify and connect key passages, but *avoid underlining large chunks of text*. By itself, underlining is a substitute for thought. Instead, ask yourself *why* you thought the line was significant, and write your answer into the margin.
- 3. Annotate conversationally.** Talk back to the author by paraphrasing and either affirming or questioning their claims. "In other words," and "But...?" should always be on your mind, prompting you to briefly record your reactions.
- 4. Pause at the end.** It is absolutely vital that you take some time at the end of your reading to reflect and write about the main idea. I emphasize "at the end" because it's important that you ...
 - **Read manageable chunks of text in one sitting**—a chapter or subsection, for example. Don't read chapter two before you've written something about what chapter one said.
 - **Summarize**—Write a few sentences in the space at the end of the chapter/section summarizing its main argument. This is sometimes painful because it requires you to choose what is central to the argument and omit what is peripheral. Oh, it hurts! You will want to skip this part, telling yourself "well, I know basically what she's saying." No, until you write it down, you don't know.



Example of Athletic Annotation

Notice how taking notes allowed this reader to identify a theme in this paragraph by 19th-century women's rights advocate Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

There seems now to be a kind of moral stagnation in our midst. Philanthropists have done their utmost to rouse the nation to a sense of its sins. [. . .] Our churches are multiplying on all sides, our missionary societies, Sunday schools, and prayer meetings and innumerable charitable and reform organizations are all in operation, but still the tide of vice is swelling, and threatens the destruction of everything, and the battlements of righteousness are weak against the raging elements of sin and death. Verily, the world waits the coming of some new element, some purifying power, some spirit of mercy and love. The voice of woman has been silenced in the state, the church, and the home, but man cannot fulfill his destiny alone, he cannot redeem his race unaided. There are deep and tender chords of sympathy and love in the hearts of the downfallen and oppressed that woman can touch more skillfully than man.

America "sinful"
(is this related to temperance movement?)

→ *Like Jesus's "second coming"?*

Sin relates to "redemption"

*Strong Claim! Men
need women to "redeem" nation.*