

Highlighting & Marking Texts

- 1. Finish reading before highlighting or marking in your text.**
Never highlight until you have finished reading a full paragraph or section and have paused to think about what you just read. The procedure will keep you from grabbing at everything that looks important at first glance.
- 2. Be extremely selective.**
Don't highlight or jot down so many items that they overload your memory or cause you to try to think in several directions at once. Be stingy with your highlighting, but don't be so brief that you'll have to read through the page again when you review.
- 3. Use your own words.**
Jot notes in the margins in your own words. Since your own words represent your own thinking they will be powerful cues to the ideas on the page when you return to it for later review.
- 4. Be brief.**
Highlight brief, but meaningful phrases, rather than complete sentences. Mark your marginal jottings short and to the point. They will make a sharper impression on your memory, and they will be easier to use when you recite and review.
- 5. Be swift.**
You don't have all day for highlighting. Read, go back for a mini-overview, and highlight. Then move on to the next portion of the chapter.
- 6. Be neat.**
Neatness takes conscious effort, not time. Later when you review, the neat notes will encourage you and save time, since the ideas will be easily and clearly perceived.
- 7. Organize facts and ideas under categories.**
Items within categories are far more easily memorized than random facts and ideas.
- 8. Try cross-referencing.**
For example, if you find an idea on page 64 that has a direct bearing on an idea back on page 28, draw a little arrow pointing upward and write "28" by it. Then turn back to page 28 and alongside the idea there, draw an arrow pointing downward and write "64" by it. In this way, you'll tie the two ideas together, in your mind and in your reviewing.
- 9. Be systematic.**
There are many ways to mark the text: highlighting w/ different colors; single and double underlines; the use of asterisks, circling, boxing for important items; and the use of top and bottom margins for longer notations. If some of these ideas appeal to you, work them into your marking system, one or two at a time. But use them consistently so you will remember what they mean at review time.

Adapted from The Leader's Guide to Supplemental Instruction, University of Missouri-Kansas City.

For more information on note taking skills or other study strategies, contact
University Learning Center ♦ 962-7857 ♦ www.uncw.edu/uls ♦ uls@uncw.edu