# Text – How to Mark a Book (1940) By Mortimer J. Adler, Ph.D. (1902–2001)

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| **Template Overview** | **Reading Rhetorically** |
| Prereading | Getting Ready to Read* Quickwrite –When you want to read a book, do you typically borrow it from the library? Do you purchase it and own it? How many books do you own? Why do you buy certain books and not others?

Introducing Key Concepts* Discussion – Is it necessary to own a book? Why or why not?

Surveying the Text* Read the title of the article. Read the description of the author.

Making Predictions and Asking Questions* What do you think about the title, “How to Mark a Book”? What do you think the article is going to be about? Do you think you will like the article? Why or why not?
* Based on the description of the author, what do you think his tone would be? Do you think it will be difficult to understand? Why or why not?

Introducing Key Vocabulary* mutilation (n)
* prelude (n)
* reverence (n)
* dilapidated (adj.)
* unblemished (adj.)
* indispensable (adj.)
* integral (adj.)
* presumably (adv.)
* humility (n)
* laboriously (adv.)
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| Reading | First ReadingAs you read, answer the following questions.* What is the thesis statement?
* According to Dr. Adler, how many ways can a person own books? How are they different?
* According to Dr. Adler, how many kinds of books owners are there? How are they different?
* Does he advocate marking all books indiscriminately? Which paragraph has the answer?
* What are three reasons that Dr. Adler give to support his notion that marking up a book is indispensable to reading?
* Does Dr. Adler think that all books must be treated the same? Why or why not? What solution does he offer for people who refuse to mark a valuable book?
* Why does Dr. Adler say that you must “write” while reading?
* According to Dr. Adler, what are the 7 things that you MUST do while reading?
* What is his opinion on speed reading?
* What solutions does Dr. Adler offer to what he calls “a die-hard anti-book-marker”?

Looking Closely at Language* What does it mean to have a “false reverence”?

Rereading the Text* Dr. Adler says, “the soul of a book ‘can’ be separate from its book.” What does he mean by this? How does he explain this idea?
* What does he mean by “that is exactly what reading a book should be: a conversation between you and the author.”?
* According to Dr. Adler, “marking a book is literally an expression of differences, or agreements of opinion with the author.” What does he mean by that?
* Do you agree with the statement that “a few friends are better than a thousand acquaintances”? What does Dr. Adler mean by that?

Analyzing Stylistic Choices* Dr. Adler, an admirer of classics, uses classical techniques to make his point (i.e. parallel structure.) Find a few passages that exemplify this technique.

ex) Having a fine library doesn't prove that its owner has a mind enriched by books; it proves nothing more than that he, his father, or his wife, was rich enough to buy them.ex) The second has a great many books -- a few of them read through, most of them dipped into, but all of them as clean and shiny as the day they were boughtex) A book is more like the score of a piece of music than it is like a painting.ex) You will lend him your car or your coat -- but your books are as much a part of you as your head or your heart.Considering the Structure of the Text* Dr. Adler uses question then answer technique throughout the essay. Find several examples of his questions and answers. Do you find it effective? Why or why not?
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| Postreading | Summarizing and RespondingAfter reading the article, summarize Dr. Adler’s main point. Thinking CriticallyQuestions about Logic* Does this article convince you? Why or why not?
* Are there claims in the article that are weak or unsupported? What are they?
* Has the author left out an argument on purpose?

Questions about Ethos* What does the author’s style and language tell you about him or her?
* Is this author knowledgeable? Smart? Successful?
* Do you trust this author? Why or why not?

Questions about Pathos* Do you think the author is trying to manipulate your emotion? How?
* Do your emotions conflict with your logical interpretation of the arguments?
* Does the author use humor? How does this affect your acceptance of his or her ideas?
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| **Connecting Reading to Additional Reading**After reading the article, have your student apply the techniques on reading another article. Students can also do a Rhetorical Précis on “How to Mark a Book” and the second article of your choice. |