**Annotating the Text**

Before students read an expository text, they can begin marking or annotating the text and continue doing so as they read. The key in this activity is to get students to *interact* with the text as they approach it and read it.

**Materials**
- 1 copy of a short, engaging piece of expository prose (essay, article, excerpt)
- Two different-colored highlighters
- Pencil or pen
- Overhead transparency of the piece of expository prose

**Instructions**
1. Distribute a copy of the text to each student, and make sure all students have a pencil or a pen and two different-colored highlighters. Brainstorm ideas with students about how they determine the main ideas in a text. Put the ideas on the board.
2. Discuss the difference between “coloring” the whole page with the markers and actually highlighting the main points. Tell them they will learn a correct way to highlight in this lesson.
3. Read the title of the piece. Predict the topic of the piece through this title, and write your prediction to the right of the title in abbreviated form. *Model this for the students using the overhead.*
4. Read the first paragraph or two together with the students to identify the main ideas related to key questions: *Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?* (*GIST*)
   - Use one color of highlighter to mark the information related to the key questions.
   - Have students write *Who? What? Where? When? Why?* or *How?* in the margin to the right of the highlighted word/phrase to identify the question it answers. *Model this for the students using the overhead.*
5. Have students highlight confusing words and/or passages with the other color of highlighter, and write a question in the margin that, when answered, clears up the confusion. *Model this for the students using the overhead.*
6. Have students write any further questions about the text in the margin to the right of each paragraph and a star to the right of the text where it relates to their own lives. Brainstorm with the students to determine the answers to their questions. *Model this for the students using the overhead.*
7. Students should complete the annotation of the text either individually or in groups through a Jigsaw activity, a Pair-Share activity, or a choral read-around activity.

**Reflection**
What does this piece say about the social, political, cultural, or scientific trends, conflicts or ideas that were central to the time the leader lived? How might these have influenced the life and work of the leader. Write a one-paragraph reflection on a separate sheet of paper, and be sure to include specific references to the annotated text.

Taken from “1.4 Annotating a Text” in *AVID High School Writing Curriculum*
Adapted by Brad Ruff – AVID Region 8
Annotating the Text: Sample

Below are the first three paragraphs of a biographical article on the Dalai Lama. The text of the article has been annotated according to the instructions on the previous page. Once you have modeled the annotation of a few paragraphs with/for your students using an overhead transparency of a text, the students will then be empowered to annotate the remainder of the selected text or any text you assign.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama’s Biography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important traits of DL?</th>
<th>The 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, the spiritual and temporal leader of the Tibetan people, is respected worldwide for his message of compassion and tolerance, his promotion of human values, and of inter-religious understanding, and his focus on peace through non-violent conflict resolution, including the issue of Tibet.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meanings?</td>
<td>He was born on July 6, 1935 in the village of Taktser in the Tibetan area of Amdo (now Qinghai province) and, in accordance with Tibetan tradition, was recognized at the age of two as the reincarnation of his predecessor the 13th Dalai Lama. Tibetan Buddhists believe that the Dalai Lamas are the manifestations of the Bodhisattva of Compassion, Chenresig, who choose to reincarnate to serve the people. Dalai Lama is a combination of Tibetan and Mongolian terms, meaning Ocean of Wisdom. Tibetans normally refer to His Holiness as Yeshin Norbu (the Wish-fulfilling Gem) or simply, Kundun, meaning &quot;The Presence&quot;.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is a manifestation?</td>
<td>The Dalai Lama began his education at age 6 and completed the Geshe Lharampa Degree (equivalent to a Doctorate of Buddhist Philosophy) when he was 25. At age 24, he took the preliminary examination at each of the three monastic universities around Lhasa: Drepung, Sera and Ganden. The final examination was held in the Jokhang Temple during the annual Monlam, the Festival of Prayer, held in the first Tibetan month of every year. He was examined on logic, the Middle Path, the canon of monastic discipline and the study of metaphysics. He passed the exams with honors, conducted before a vast audience of monk scholars.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What kinds of Studies are these?</td>
<td>How can a leader be so young? What is Buddhism? Who still believes in reincarnation?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Taken from “1.4 Annotating a Text” in AVID High School Writing Curriculum Adapted by Brad Ruff of AVID Region 8