AACC: Annotation, Abstract, Contextual Connection

Annotation Strategies for Fiction Texts.

1. Use colored pencils or hi-liters to mark different elements of the text, such as vocabulary, dialogue, repeated words, etc. (But don’t go nuts with the highlighter!)
2. Look up and define new vocabulary words including both figurative and connotative meanings; mark what part of speech it is according to how it’s used in the sentence.
3. Mark descriptive “power words” that have a strong positive or negative connotation with a + or – sign; consider the impact of those word choices on tone and meaning (theme), including words with multiple meanings or language that is especially fresh, unusual, affective, or beautiful.
4. Add your own insights or impressions in the margins. “Talk” to the text.
5. Agree/disagree with the text and jot down why; don’t require a work to mirror your own attitudes & standards to be worthwhile. Jot down your experience or knowledge with other texts that contrast or compare with this text.
6. Identify passages that need clarification with a question mark, and predict events and outcomes as you read
7. Read poetry texts aloud to help you with pacing, phrasing and tone identification.
8. Consider why the author structures his/her story in a certain manner: the beginning/end, whether the resolution is comic/tragic, whether foreshadowing or flashbacks are used, the beginnings/ends of stanzas, chapters or other organizational segments, and so on.
9. Determine two or more themes or central ideas and plot their development and interaction throughout the text.
10. Be open to the author’s purpose and to new responses or perspectives in yourself. Approach a disturbing text as an opportunity to refine and articulate your own ideas and to see what the strengths and weaknesses are. Good literature should challenge you.

Annotation Strategies for Non Fiction/Informational Texts.

1. Use colored pencils for hi-liters to mark different elements of the text, such as purple for statistics, yellow for quotes from experts in the field, or orange for key arguments in a rhetorical text.
2. Hi-lite topic sentences in each paragraph of an information text to plot main ideas/key points.
3. Hi-lite any new vocabulary terms and their definitions, especially any technical vocabulary.
4. Line-out any information that is superfluous or redundant.
5. Circle names, dates, and “numbers” that summarize information or analyze data.
6. Always read the info-graphics (like bar charts with text) and sidebar texts for clarifications, additional information, or summary information.
7. Mark “power words,” figurative and/or literal, that have a strong positive or negative connotation with a + or – sign
8. Add your own insights, opinions, questions or impressions in the margins.
9. Agree or disagree with the text and jot down why; jot down your experience or knowledge with other texts that contradict or agree with the text.
10. Mark key arguments and the evidence to support them in rhetorical texts; “rate” each argument 1-5 for effectiveness according to your opinion or “rank” each argument 1-5+ for effectiveness, #1 being the strongest argument.
11. Identify passages that need clarification with a question mark.
12. Make “relevance” notes about how this text applies to you personally and to your community, nation, and/or world.

Abstract.

* An abstract is a **summary** (**NOT** a paraphrasing) of the main ideas and key points in a text. Abstracts do not bother with parts of a text that may be trivial, superfluous, or repetitive.
* An abstract should be approximately ½ page in length double spaced in Times New Roman 11 point, setting out the main ideas like a reporter: the **WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, HOW, AND WHY.**
* An abstract is **NOT** an opinion. You only summarize what is actually in the text without adding analysis or judgment.

Contextual Connection.

* Look back on your annotations and think about what images, ideas, opinions and associations came to mind as you read the text. Unlike the abstract, you can be **both** analytical (determining the impact and judging the effectiveness of the text) and opinionated in a contextual connection.
* Then type a contextual connection, which is a personal response/opinion about the piece, relating it to you in some way. Doing this makes the text **relevant and meaningful.** You will “connect” with some texts more than others, but in a contextual connection you are simply giving your **opinions and impressions** by examining how the text **affected** you and why the text is important/relevant to you, your community, your nation, or your world.
* Some possible “starters” to get you writing a contextual connection…
  + I strongly agree with\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
  + I strongly disagree with\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
  + I never knew that\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
  + I was shocked (surprised, delighted, inspired, annoyed, alarmed, amused, etc.) by\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
  + I wish the writer had included more information about\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
  + The reason(s) the author wrote this text include\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_; the audience the author most likely wrote for is best described as\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
  + I think this text is important and relevant to me (my family/school/community/nation/world) because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
  + My favorite description/incident/event in the text was when\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_because\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
* You may be asked to “publish” your CC in one of the following formats: article for the school newspaper, email to your teacher, blog entry on class website, blog entry on other assigned website, class debate, small group discussion, or typed in a rhetorical format using logos, ethos, and pathos to argue a position regarding the assigned text.

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