

Student Name _____

Student ID _____

EWRT Instructor _____

Date Completed _____



Active Reading: Annotating a Text

ACTIVE READING:

Who has a lot of reading from all their classes? Who reads something and then has NO idea what they just read?

Yes, we all face this, but active reading—being an engaged reader—can help. It may take a little more time but it's totally worth it!

ANNOTATING A TEXT:

In order to read effectively, you need to develop a strategy that will work for you. Annotating a reading passage--writing notes on the pages of the reading selection itself--is one strategy you can use to become actively involved with what you are reading.

Although annotating may seem to take more time, it will benefit you in several ways:

- When you return to a text (when studying for an exam or writing a paper), you won't have to reread the entire piece. Notes written within the text and in the margins can remind you of important ideas.
- When you write notes about reading selections, you develop active rather than passive reading strategies. In general, when you are involved with what you read, you will better understand, remember, and engage with texts. Isn't this what we want? (And you won't fall asleep!)

Even though each reader has a preferred method of annotating text, the following suggestions provide some guidelines for marking a passage or annotating a text. This strategy should not only be helpful for this class, but for other classes, especially those which require a lot reading.

ACTIVE READING: Top 13 Ways to Annotate

- 1). **Re-write, paraphrase, or summarize** a key passage or paragraph, especially a particularly difficult line or section. (This will probably be the most common annotation you make, as it ensures you are comprehending the text and interacting with it.)
- 2). Make **meaningful connections to your own life** experiences. (This will keep you connected to the texts and really help with essay #1.)
- 3). Include **your reactions**—agree, disagree, or both—to the texts! You are encouraged to have opinions now that you are in college:)
- 4). Make notes on **key examples or themes**. (These will be helpful when you go back to the reading.)
- 5). Include **lines or passages that stood out to you**--places you found memorable, surprising, intriguing. (These can definitely get your mind going on a topic and thus fuel your writing! And you know your English teacher is going to ask: "What was memorable or surprising for you from this reading?")
- 6). Circle **vocabulary words** you are not familiar with (keep reading and then go back to look up the meaning of those words). You might also define slang; explore why the author would have used a particular word or phrase.
- 7). **Make connections** to other texts you have read or seen, including: movies, comic books/graphic novels, news events, other books, stories, plays, songs, or poems. Make connections to other parts of the book/article. (This is critical thinking and, again, will help you get further with your thinking and help you develop your essay.)
- 8). **Draw** a picture when a visual connection is appropriate.
- 9). Mark **anything that is confusing** with a question mark. (Then, ask a classmate, instructor, or teacher about it.)
- 10). Offer an **analysis or interpretation** of what is happening in the text. Go beyond just summarizing and I promise this will get you deeper into the topic and your ideas for writing.
- 11). Describe a **new perspective or moment of awe** you may now have.

12). You might write down a **possible quiz question** as you comb through the texts.

13). You might even make **a graph or a chart** to help you with ideas from a reading or readings.

Now, read the passage below. Then, review it with a tutor in a session, and use the Annotate Tool to use the 13 Ways (See examples at the end).

Or...

Print the essay below, annotate it on your own from any of the 13 Ways (See examples at the end), and show it to a tutor.

OPINION

GUEST ESSAY

Advice for Artists Whose Parents Want Them to Be Engineers

July 8, 2021

By Viet Thanh Nguyen

Mr. Nguyen is the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "The Sympathizer" and its sequel, "The Committed." He is a professor of English, American studies and comparative literature at the University of Southern California.

When I give lectures on college campuses, the most difficult question I am asked is this: "I want to pursue my dream, but my parents want me to do something different. What should I do?"

I can relate. What would have made me happy as a young person was to be a writer and study literature. What would have made my parents happy was for me to become a doctor like my brother, who went to Harvard and Stanford. How could I come home to my refugee parents, who worked seven days a week in their grocery store, and tell them that I wanted to read Jane Austen and the Romantic poets, and major in English, a language they didn't speak in their own home?

Eventually I did tell my parents I was majoring in English, but I wasn't ready at first to tell them that I wanted to be a writer. That would have been going too far. My day job was being

a professor, and my dream job was being a writer, which consumed my nights, weekends and summers. It was exhausting, but so were the sacrifices that my parents made for us.

I did not expect my parents to read my books. Their acceptance of my choice to become a professor was enough for me. And then one day I presented them with what they had not been expecting: a novel. Surprise!

What happens when our parents' definition of happiness makes our happiness impossible? On college campuses, the young people who ask me this question are often Asian American, as I am, but when I posed it on Facebook, people of various backgrounds, many of them successful and creative, responded with their experiences and advice.

There's no one-size-fits-all solution. Circumstances, resources and opportunities vary widely, as do the motivations of parents in trying to steer their kids toward or away from particular careers.

Beyond concern for their children's livelihood, parents may be trying to protect them from the pain of failure. If so, they're right — failure (and penury) is always a risk. Many of us believe that pursuing our dreams will bring happiness. But perhaps it won't. It took me over 20 years of struggle to become a writer, but it might have been 20 years of struggle to discover that I was not a writer. Isn't this just part of the lottery of life?

Once we decide to pursue our passion, how best to proceed? Here are some strategies gleaned from my friends and acquaintances:

Just go for it. Yuko Shimizu's parents wanted a conventional life for her, so she went to college in Tokyo for a degree in advertising. Then at 33 she quit her job in corporate public relations, left her native Japan and moved to the United States to become an artist. She explained her decision this way: "Your parents will pass away eventually, and you have to live your life for yourself."

Getting your parents to tolerate your choices may be enough. The parents of Adriana Ramírez are "still not fine and will never be fine" with her life as a poet, she told me. But "they simply tolerate my choices because they love me."

Truthfulness is overrated. Then there's the strategy that Zia Haider Rahman, a writer, advises: "Lie."

Sometimes that's the only way to avoid a pointless confrontation. I have lied often to my parents, in words or by omission. For example: My father is a devout Catholic who goes to church every day, and I am an atheist, but when I come home to visit, I take him to church and say nothing about what I believe. (Our parents have probably lied to us, too.)

The belt-and-suspenders approach.

Pursue your dreams, but prepare a backup plan — a double major for example (one major for your parents, one for yourself). This is also good preparation generally for a creative life.

That's what I did by pursuing academia for my day job, in the hope that one day I could call myself a writer.

Be patient.

While young people often want immediate answers, the road to acceptance from parents might be a long one. We may have to gradually wear down our parents, as Matty Huynh did. "Instead of declaring I was going to be an artist, I made art," he said. By the time he left law school, his parents had gotten used to climbing around frames and boxes of books in their garage. "Continuing to make art had become mundane, an inconvenience," he said, but eventually it became an "inevitability."

Assert your independence, respectfully.

Parents, especially immigrant parents, have often worked incredibly hard to create opportunities for their children. Still, some parents have to learn that their children's lives are not theirs, no matter what they sacrificed. Respect is the key, says Kavita Das, a writer: "It comes down to helping them understand that we are not throwing away all their hard work but honoring their hard work, because it allowed us to pursue our dreams."

Mr. Huynh suggests putting less weight upon your parents' approval: "It might sound aggressive to say one shouldn't ask for permission, but it's kinder not to expect a blessing from people who have no experience and only anxieties about your moonshot dreams."

Now that I am a parent myself, I like to think I would allow my son to be anything he wants, such as a writer, artist or musician.

"What about professional video game player?" my wife asked.

Reader — I hesitated. I still do.

But I know I will have to let him go and trust that he will make the right choices for himself, if we have properly prepared him.

My parents, too, accepted me, and I hope that they would have accepted me even if I had failed in the pursuit of my dreams. After all, they themselves had taken huge risks, as refugees — leaving families behind, becoming their own bosses instead of accepting the jobs they were expected to take. This country benefited from their work and sacrifice.

Doctors, lawyers and engineers make great societal contributions, too. Still, we will always need our poets and artists, our teachers and storytellers, our misfits and dreamers, contrarians and risk-takers

Sample Annotation (on a screen using Annotate Tool):

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July 8, 2021



By Viet Thanh Nguyen

Mr. Nguyen is the author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "The Sympathizer" and its sequel, "The Committed." He is a professor of English, American studies and comparative literature at the University of Southern California.

I can relate!

When I give lectures on college campuses, the most difficult question I am asked is this: "I want to pursue my dream, but my parents want me to do something different. What should I do?"

LOL!

I can relate. What would have made me happy as a young person was to be a writer and study literature. What would have made my parents happy was for me to become a doctor like my brother, who went to Harvard and Stanford. How could I come home to my refugee parents, who worked seven days a week in their grocery store, and tell them that I wanted to read Jane Austen and the Romantic poets, and major in English, a language they didn't speak in their own home?

Who? What?!?

Eventually I did tell my parents I was majoring in English, but I wasn't ready at first to tell them that I wanted to be a writer. That would have been going too far. My day job was being a professor, and my dream job was being a writer, which consumed my nights, weekends and summers. It was exhausting, but so were the sacrifices that my parents made for us.

I imagine he felt guilty?

I did not expect my parents to read my books. Their acceptance of my choice to become a professor was enough for me. And then one day I presented them with what they had not been expecting: a novel. Surprise!

Sample Annotation (on a printed copy):

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When I give lectures on college campuses, the most difficult question I am asked is this: "I want to pursue my dream, but my parents want me to do something different. What should I do?"

Main idea. I can relate!

My own parents immigrated

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Takes! Guilt?

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