Highlighting: The User's Guide

The Learning Center at UNC-CH

Highlighting can be an effective study tool…if done strategically!

Highlighting Tips:

- Only highlight after you've reached the end of a paragraph or a section. This will help you pinpoint key concepts.
- Limit yourself to highlighting one sentence or phrase per paragraph
- It's okay and even preferable to highlight key words and phrases instead of full sentences.
- Consider color-coding: choose one color for definitions and key points and another color for examples.
- Using your own words, write summaries of key concepts in the margins (in pen or pencil).

Highlighting Pros	Highlighting Cons
Helps isolate important facts	Over-highlighting text sharply reduces any benefits
Can keep you actively engaged while reading, if you highlight selectively	Little evidence that highlighting benefits long-term retention
Beneficial if you already have good comprehension of material	Doesn't lead to making inferences or connections between ideas
Beneficial only if you do the highlighting yourself. Little to no benefit if you read text highlighted by someone else.	Prevents you from using more effective learning strategies, such as Practice Testing and Distributed Practice.

For further reading Click Here!

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