Mark It Up!

Prepare: Find any reading selection that has text features or content that students need to know. Make copies for each student and, if possible, make a copy for the overhead, document camera, or SMART Board.

Objective: Students will be able to mark up a passage that shows they understand what they read.

Explain: Tell students that with complicated texts, many readers read with a “pen in hand.” They do this to actively study the text, make connections, summarize, and mark up important or confusing parts to return to later. Explain that readers have different methods of marking or annotating the text. Often it is a combination of underlining, drawing lines down the side of a text, writing words or symbols in the margin, or highlighting. Students must not underline or highlight a passage too much, because then it’s hard to see what is truly important.

Tell students, “I will read this passage and mark it up in a way that’s helpful to me. I want you to do what I do. (Later, we will discuss other options for marking a passage.) Next, you will read some of the text and mark it up in your own way. We’ll put some student samples up on the overhead and discuss how effectively each person has marked up their passage.”

Some key things to think about when you model:

- Use underlining and circling sparingly. Try to hit only keywords. I sometimes use circling for characters and people and for setting (when, where). Model how you can retell a section of text just by the words you have underlined and circled.
- Use “Two Words,” or “Hash Tag,” by writing just two or three words to summarize a section or paragraph. This helps students think about the main idea. Students may disagree about what two words to pick, but it will be a good conversation if they can support their ideas.
- Use icons (not fully developed pictures). A picture is worth 1,000 words, so it really helps if students can quickly draw something to represent the key idea from a section of text.
- Use common symbols for shocking parts (!), confusing parts (?), or for important things (e.g., a star).
- In math I use underlining for key information and parentheses for things you (need to solve) or (need to do).

Follow up: After modeling, have students read some of the passage on their own and compare their notes to a neighbor’s. Then put student samples up on the projector or overhead and discuss them. Have students explain what they did and why they did it. If they’ve done a good job, they should be able to retell the article part by part. Also, play The Look-Back Game to see if the annotations helped them.

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Also see “Syntax Surgery” in When Kids Can’t Read: What Teachers Can Do by Kylene Beers (2002).
The Nautilus was the first submarine that used nuclear power. Read about its most famous trip and then answer the questions that follow.

The Nautilus
by Patrick O’Brien

1. The Nautilus was the first nuclear-powered submarine. Before the Nautilus was launched in 1954, submarines ran on electric power when cruising underwater and used diesel fuel when on the surface. They were slow, and they could only stay underwater for a few hours at a time. Because the Nautilus used nuclear power it was twice as fast as any other submarine and could stay underwater for weeks.

2. In June of 1958 the Nautilus set out from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on a top-secret mission to reach the North Pole. There is no land at the North Pole. It is in the middle of the Arctic Ocean, and the water is covered with a huge sheet of ice hundreds of miles across. The captain of the Nautilus, William Anderson, steered his sub north toward the Pole, and in the Bering Sea between Russia and Alaska, dove under the Arctic ice sheet. But the bottom of the ice sheet went down so deep that the Nautilus was forced to a depth of only a few feet off the seafloor. It was too dangerous, and Captain Anderson had to turn the Nautilus back.

3. The ice sheet melted a little as summer arrived, and the Nautilus tried again in July. Captain Anderson was able to find an area where the ice sheet was not too thick. He had plenty of room between the bottom of the ice and the seafloor, but he still had to steer carefully around the huge bottom parts of icebergs that hung down into the sea. At last, on August 3, 1958, at 11:15 p.m., the crew gave a wild cheer as they became the first people ever to travel under the North Pole.


From MCAS — grade 3 2013

Source: MCAS Grade 3 2013 Reading Comprehension Test (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013)
In A Dog Year, Jon Katz writes about the strong bond that develops between him and his two yellow Labrador retrievers, Julius and Stanley. Read the excerpt and answer the questions that follow.

from A Dog Year
by Jon Katz

We hardly had a bad moment, the three of us, so neatly did we fit together, interlocking pieces of the puzzle that is the varied partnership between humans and dogs.

Julius and Stanley embodied the noblest characteristics of their proud breed. They were handsome, loyal, utterly dependable, and affectionate. Julius came first. My daughter was young, and while there are different viewpoints about this, I personally don’t believe there’s a more rewarding moment for a parent than handing a happy, squirming, doe-eyed Lab puppy over to a small kid. I carry the look on her face in my memory, and while there are times when I can’t remember what day of the week it is, I can always recall the wonder and joy in her eyes as if it had just happened.

Although I bought the dog with my daughter in mind, she was soon playing computer games and collecting garish-looking dolls, and I was out in the chill winter mornings cheering and exulting when a puzzled but earnest puppy took a dump outside.

Julius became mine, of course, the two of us bonding as if by Krazy Glue.

A year later, the breeder called and invited me to take a ride with my daughter to see the new litter. I was just looking, I assured my muttering and incredulous wife, Paula, who’d dragged Julius’s old plastic dog crate out of the basement, ready to house its new resident, before I’d left the driveway.

My daughter and I returned with tiny, heart-melting Stanley. Julius was initially dubious about this new pest he had to contend with, but within a couple of days the two Labs loved each other as much as I loved them both, and they loved me and my family and, well, everybody who passed by.
Abe stacked boxes onto a truck. Each box he stacked had the same weight. The table below shows the total weight for different numbers of boxes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Boxes</th>
<th>Total Weight (in pounds)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. What is the total weight in pounds, of 8 boxes? Show or explain how you got your answer.

b. Based on the table, write or describe a rule that can be used to find the weight of \( n \) boxes, where \( n \) is any number of boxes.

c. Is it possible for the total weight of the boxes Abe stacked onto the truck to be exactly 520 pounds? Show or explain how you got your answer.

Source: MCAS Grade 5 Math 2013 Test (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2013)