

AP Economics
Annotating a Text

From *How to Read a Book* (Mortimer Adler & Charles Van Doren)

If you have the habit of asking a book questions as you read, you are a better reader than if you do not. But . . . merely asking questions is not enough. You have to try to answer them. And although that could be done, theoretically, in your mind only, it is easier to do it with a pencil in your hand. The pencil then becomes the sign of your alertness while you read.

****When you buy a book, you establish a property right in it, just as you do in clothes or furniture when you buy and pay for them. But the act of purchase is actually only the prelude to possession in the case of a book. Full ownership of a book only comes when you have made it a part of yourself, and the best way to make yourself a part of it -- which comes to the same thing -- is by writing in it. Why is marking a book indispensable to reading it.*

- First, it keeps you awake -- not merely conscious, but wide awake.
- Second, reading, if it is active, is thinking, and thinking tends to express itself in words, spoken or written. The person who says he knows what he thinks but cannot express it does not know what he thinks.
- Third, writing your reactions down helps you to remember the thoughts of the author.

For this summer reading, and for the fall course, for these reasons among others, you will be asked to annotate the major books that we will be reading. Below is a list of books for you to choose from. Choose one to read in the summer, with 3 more being read during the year. I recommend starting with *Naked Economics*, as it is a simplified yet thorough introduction to the topics. But it is your choice.

Note: Summer reading assignments should be read *and* annotated before you return to class for the fall session.

Note: If you find annotating while you read to be annoying and awkward, do it after you read. Go back after a chapter or assignment and then mark it carefully. You should be reading assignments twice anyway, so this isn't any less efficient than marking as you read and then rereading the material.

For the sake of standardization of annotating for class and for grading purposes, your book notes should follow this format:

Inside Front Cover: Topic list with small space for topic summary and for page references for key scenes, moments of development, etc. You may paper-clip notes inside the cover or you may use a journal approach.

Inside Back Cover: Themes, allusions, images, motifs, key points, etc. List and add page references and/or notes as you read. Again, paper-clip or use a journal.

Bottom and Side Page Margins: Interpretive notes, questions, and/or remarks that refer to meaning of the page. (Post-it notes) Markings or notes to tie in with information on the inside back cover.

Top Margins: thesis notes – a quick few words or phrases which summarize what happens here (useful for quick location of passages in discussion and for writing assignments).

Additional Markings:

underlining: done while or after reading to help locate passages for discussion, essays, or questions. (erasable pen, pencil, or erasable highlighter)

brackets: done while or after reading to highlight key speeches, descriptions, etc. that are too long to underline easily. Same as above.

Marking and Note taking tips (optional):

- ⇒ At chapter or section ends, stop to index page numbers on your front cover list of topic information and traits as well as on your back cover list of themes, images, allusions, etc.
- ⇒ Do underlining as you read and side margin notes as you finish a page or two.

Grading:

Since everyone's notes will be similar in format yet somewhat different in content (there is obviously no one correct phrase to have at the top of a page of a book you are all reading), book grades will be based on thoroughness, clarity, neatness, and effort

Book List for AP Economics

*=Good info, recommended.

- **Naked Economics*. Charles Wheelan.
- *The Travels of a T-Shirt in the Global Economy: An Economist Examines the Markets, Power, and Politics of World Trade*. Pietra Rivoli.
- **The Choice: A Fable of Free Trade and Protectionism*. Russell Roberts
- **The Wealth of Nations*. Adam Smith
- *The World is Flat*. Thomas Friedman
- **Knowledge and the Wealth of Nations*. David Warsh
- *Freakonomics*. Stephen D Levitt.
- *Freedomnomics: Why the Free Market Works and Other Half-Baked Theories Don't*. John Lott, Jr.
- *Eat the Rich*. P.J. O'Rourke
- *Scratch Beginnings*. Adam Shepard
- *Nickel and Dimed*. Barbara Ehrenreich
- *Thinking Strategically*. Nalebuf and Dixit
- *The Undercover Economist*. Tim Harford
- *New Idea's From Dead Economists: An Introduction to Modern Economic Thought*. Todd G. Buchholz.
- *The Worldly Philosophers*. Robert L. Heilbroner
- *Hidden Order: The Economics of Everyday Life*. David Friedman
- *Framework for Understanding Poverty*. Ruby Payne
- *One Minute Economist*. Henry Hazlitt.
- *The Law*. Frederic Bastait.
- *The History of Economic Thought*. Stanley Brue.