

4. Annotation as Close Reading

Have students identify formal textual elements and broader social and historical contexts at work in specific passages.

Online annotation powerfully enacts the careful selection of text for in-depth analysis that is the hallmark of much high school and college English and language arts curriculum. Using web annotation, students are required to literally select small pieces of meaningful evidence from a document for specific analysis. Teachers can direct students to identify textual features (word choice, repetition, imagery, metaphor, etc.) or relevant broader contexts (historical, biographical, cultural, etc.) for passages of a text, and then prompt them to develop a short argument based on such evidence. Collaborative close reading can be especially effective in that multiple students can build off each other's interpretations to demonstrate how deep textual analysis can go. Teachers implementing the [Common Core State Standards](#) for reading might pay special attention to this use case for annotation in the classroom.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCR.R.1

Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

Common Core State Standards for Reading, Anchor Standard 1.

Some teachers will use web annotation as a tool throughout the semester for this purpose. Students thus gain regular practice in close reading and build ideas towards more substantive, summative assignments. Such assignments can also begin as collaborative exercises done by the entire class and culminate with individual or small group annotation projects.

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This can really help students interact with other people's annotations.

frostdavis May 27, 2016
Public

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I've used this technique with students reading Vergil's Aeneid in Latin: I assigned different types of annotation for sections of the text: grammatical, formal elements of the poetry, e.g., scansion, similes, etc., and literary or cultural analysis, e.g., themes in Vergil.

chillary Mar 22
Public

Common Core State Standards for Reading, Anchor Standard 1.

This is hyperlinked but when I click on it, it says that it fails to load. There is an option for a slide show. What am I missing here?

Show replies (4)

Combined with exercises six and nine, annotation as rhetorical analysis could be part of a composition course that also has **students map arguments** in a controversy using annotation and then begin their own advocacy through annotation of primary sources mapped and analyzed. (**This is how the rhetoric department at UT-Austin, where I taught while getting my PhD., structures their freshman composition courses.**) A twist on this assignment could ask students to analyze their own persuasive prose in this way—discussion of such self-reflexive annotation on one's own writing is a whole other category of annotation, probably deserving of a blog post in itself.

6. Annotation as Opinion

Have students share their personal opinions on a controversial topic as discussed by an article.

A lot of how people are interacting with content online today—commenting on web articles, **Tweeting about them with brief notes—is a kind of annotation.** At Hypothesis we might think of web annotation as a more rigorous form of such engagement with language and ideas on the Internet. Framing one's opinions as annotations of specific statements or facts is a reminder that our arguments should be grounded in actual evidence. **In any case, allowing students to express their opinions in the margins of the Web, and helping them become responsible and thoughtful in those expressions, is a huge part of what it means to be literate both on the Web and in democratic society more generally.** Students could be asked simply to respond to the reading with their thoughts, as in a dialectical reading journal, or employ specific cultural or persuasive strategies in their rhetorical intervention.

Again, this advocacy exercise could be a summative assignment within a unit that uses Hypothesis to complete annotation activities like those described in ways five and nine here.

The screenshot shows a social media interface with a top navigation bar containing a search icon, a share icon, a help icon, and a 'Sign up / Log in' link. Below the navigation bar is a header for a 'Public' group with a dropdown arrow and a search icon. The main content area displays a tweet from 'Imckeogh' dated 'Mar 17, 2016'. The tweet text reads: 'composition courses. This parenthetical also bolsters the writers ethos.' Below the tweet are icons for reply, share, and flag. A second tweet from 'jeremydean' dated 'Mar 17, 2016' is visible below, with a '2' in a circle next to it. The text of the second tweet reads: 'You can easily generate a link to an annotation that can be copy and pasted into any social media platform. Right now that link takes you to the hypothes.is stream, so the annotation is out of context of the original text annotated, but you can further link to that text. Very soon—as in this is a current engineering project--we'll be making these links "direct," taking the user straight to the text annotated, with the annotation opened. At the same time, we'll be making these links more easily and elegantly shared on social media, especially Twitter and Facebook.' The interface also shows a 'Hide replies (2)' option and a 'Public' privacy setting for the second tweet.