



# LEARNING TO HIGHLIGHT WHAT'S RELEVANT

It is all too common for students to become too occupied with using a highlighter and end up highlighting more than half the text. This takes away from the primary purpose of highlighting, which is to distinguish the important points of a text from the rest of the text.



So, here are some tips to ensure that you do not end up highlighting whole passages or pages of your reading.

- Highlight only key terms and statements in a text. Does a portion of the text hold the main essence of that passage or of a few passages? Highlight that portion. Is a sentence just adding supplementary information to the main point? Do not highlight that sentence. You also do not have to highlight the whole sentence, just highlight words that convey the main idea.
- Start highlighting once you are done reading a passage. If you highlight as you read, you may not know the central theme of the passage and may end up highlighting more than you need.
- Highlighting is not a replacement for note-taking. Continue to take notes in the margin or on a separate page.

- Try to assign different colors for different purposes. This is called color coding. For example, you might designate orange for highlighting portions of the text you do not fully grasp while designating yellow for highlighting essential points. However, do not work with too many colors because it may be distracting and may confuse you during revision time.
- Use the highlighter to draw connections between related parts of the text. For instance, if you think one sentence in a paragraph links up with another sentence in a separate paragraph somehow, then draw a line between the two sentences with your highlighter. Seeing the visual connections on paper will help you with forming mental connections.

Have fun highlighting!

**References:** <http://students.sunyocc.edu/index.aspx?menu=708&id=4560>