# Marking the Text Toolbox

1. **Number the paragraphs.**

   Before you read, take a moment and number the paragraphs in the section you are planning to read. Start with the number one and continue numbering sequentially until you reach the end of the text or reading assignment. Write the number near the paragraph indentation and circle the number; write it small enough so that you have room to write in the margin.

   As with page numbers, paragraph numbers will act as a reference so you can easily refer to specific sections of the text.

2. **Circle key terms, cited authors, and other essential words or numbers.**

   In order to identify a **key term**, consider if the word or phrase is...
   - repeated
   - defined by the author
   - used to explain or represent an idea
   - used in an original or unique way
   - a central concept or idea
   - relevant to one’s reading purpose

3. **Underline the author’s claims and other information relevant to the reading purpose.**

   A **claim is an arguable statement or assertion made by the author.** Consider the following statements:
   - A claim **may appear anywhere** in the text (beginning, middle, or end).
   - A claim **may not appear explicitly** in the argument, so the reader must infer it from the evidence presented in the text.
   - Often, an author will make several claims throughout his or her argument.
   - An author may **signal his or her claim**, letting you know that this is his or her position.

4. **[Bracket] the author’s supporting details or evidence.**

   [Data], [facts], or other [backing] should support an author’s assertions.

5. **Use arrows to show the relationship between an author’s claim and the supporting evidence or details.**

   Sometimes an author uses multiple pieces of evidence in paragraphs that are structurally complex.

   Draw arrows between data or facts and the claim that they are supporting or clarifying.

6. **Use metacognitive markers to indicate places in the text where my thinking effects how I am understanding what I read.**

   Here are some suggested symbols, but many other might be used:
   - ? – This is a question that I would ask for clarification or to incite discussion.
   - ?? – This is a portion of the text that I do not understand.
   - ! – This is a portion of the text I think is interesting or alarming.
   - ∞ - This connects with another text I have read, a movie I have seen, an experience I have had, or something going on in the world.