

COMMON PLACE BOOKS

AND

FACTUAL MARGIN NOTES

TWO STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN
KNOWLEDGE BUILDING IN YOUR OWN READING



Common place book: transcribe passages of meaningful text from various sources.

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The usage of common place books began in the 15th century but were truly popular by the 17th century.

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Things to consider when purchasing a commonplace book:

- Size (make it easily accessible)
- Distinctive (don't confuse it for other notebooks)

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Common place books help spark recall of text and serve as a review for previously read books/passages.



Margin notes: note points of knowledge or personal reflections.

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Factual margin notes: facts you want to drive into long term memory, e.g., Pliocene, begins 5M year ago, earliest hominids, climactically disruptive.

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Reflective margin notes: keep track of ideas sparked by reading, e.g., Hamlet's concern that his actions may be considered political, rather than personal, delay his vengeance.

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Factual Margin Notes push one to attend consciously to facts. Writing them down helps encode them in long term memory for future recall and use.