

TEACHER DIRECTIONS

Thinking Notes

Thinking notes are annotations (highlights, underlines or symbols) made on a text to document thinking during reading. These notes can indicate agreement, objection, confusion or other reactions. Thinking notes invite students to engage with *The New Jim Crow* in a non-threatening and accessible way, empowering them to say, “I was here, and this is what I think or feel about what I’m reading.”

Metacognition has been defined as self-knowledge of and control over one’s thinking and learning activities. Students who monitor their thinking are more effective readers and learners. Referring to thinking notes later aids metacognition by prompting students to reflect on what challenged, troubled or stood out to them.

Thinking notes illustrate that reading is a process with a purpose. Students must comprehend what they read before they can discuss and write about it. Thinking notes offer clues for you as the teacher. Notice what students mark up; these observations can generate ideas for discussion and provide insight into your students.

In this teacher’s guide, we recommend students do thinking notes upon their first independent reading of each excerpt, then integrate those notes in the shared reading part of the lesson. Students can access their notes during the after-reading discussion and, later, during assessment. Provide students a copy of the excerpt they can write on. (Sticky notes can substitute.)

Establish a system of symbols or cues before reading. Students should go beyond merely highlighting and underlining. See the sample symbols for ideas. There is also space to design your own symbols.

Make calculated decisions about how many and what symbols to use based on the content and length of the excerpt, your purpose for reading and your students’ abilities. Be careful not to overwhelm or distract students with too many symbols.

Instruct students to make thinking notes as they work on their first independent read of the excerpt. Make sure they know you will not be evaluating them on their notes. Students will use and build on these notes in subsequent class discussions and writing assignments as they think more deeply about *The New Jim Crow*.

English language learners: Thinking notes and visual symbols heighten metacognitive awareness in English language learners. Model the practice on an interactive whiteboard or by placing a clear transparency over the text and marking thinking notes together as you read.



Symbols and Thinking Notes

Symbols to facilitate an anti-bias, anti-racist examination of a text.

SYMBOL	WHAT IT MEANS
+	I agree with this.
-	I disagree with this.
!	This surprises me.
?	This would make for good discussion questions.
TS	Text-to-self connection
TT	Text-to-text connection
TW	Text-to-world connection
MI	Main idea
D	Supporting details
A	Alexander is making a claim or argument here.
RE	Reasoning or research the author uses to support her claim.
X	Alexander is contradicting herself.
POV-1, POV-2, etc	More than one point of view is offered.

Symbols to facilitate an anti-bias, anti-racist examination of a text.

SYMBOL	WHAT IT MEANS
ME	Alexander is describing her own lived experiences.
YOU	Alexander is telling another person's or group's experiences.
B	Alexander is making a bias claim or using biased language.
IB	Alexander is reporting or describing implicit bias.
CB	Alexander is reporting or describing color-blindness.
HP	Alexander is describing a historical pattern.
MYTH	Alexander is debunking a myth or misconception.

table continued

SYMBOL	WHAT IT MEANS
ST	This sounds like a stereotype.
+/+	Themes related to sameness
+/-	Themes related to difference
=	Language/Alexander is describing a balanced power relationship.
≠	Language/Alexander is describing an imbalance of power.
G	Alexander is making a claim or observation through a gender lens.
\$	Alexander is making a claim or observation through an economic lens.
R	Alexander is making a claim or observation through a race lens.
▲	Alexander is describing or advocating for social change.

Create your own thinking notes symbols

<i>What is our purpose for reading? What are we looking for?</i>	
SYMBOL	WHAT IT MEANS