

## Marking the Text: *Non-fiction* (Argument)

This Strategy has three distinct marks:

1. **Number the paragraphs.** ① When reading a word problem that is only one paragraph, number each sentence.

② For longer word problems, start with 1 and count by fives (1, 5, 10).

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.** Data, facts, or other backing should support an author's assertion.<sup>1</sup> 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.

Ultimately, what you underline and circle will depend on your reading purpose. In addition to marking key terms and claims, you might be asked to mark other essential information such as the author's evidence, descriptions, stylistic elements, or language in the text that provides some insight into the author's values and beliefs.

<sup>1</sup>Toulmin, S. The uses of argument. (2003). U.S.A.: Cambridge University Press. (Original work published 1958)