Annotate Text: *Leave Tracks of Thinking*

See this lesson in action on pages 149, 179, 183, 209.

WHEN *and* WHY: As kids do research and read for information, they need to leave tracks of their thinking so they can learn, understand, and remember what they read.

INITIATE: Annotation is a powerful reading tool. Explain that we need to make our reading "thinking intensive" and interact with the text while we read by jotting our thinking. Share an analogy. Talk about the tracks animals leave in the snow after a storm. When we wake up in the morning after a snowfall, we can tell who has been there from the fresh tracks, even though the animal is long gone. Explain that we need to see the kids' thinking even if they are no longer reading. Readers need to leave tracks in the margins, just as animals do in the snow or on the beach.

TEACH/MODEL: Explain that *annotating* means writing down your ideas as you read. Tell them, "Nothing matters more than your thinking when you read." Let kids know that instead of highlighting, you are going to jot your thoughts because when readers do that, they remember why they wrote something and are better able to understand. Mention that tracks like these give readers a place to hold their thinking. At the overhead projector, think aloud through a piece of text and jot connections, questions, important information, and inferences in the margins. Share some text codes—a ★ for an important information, a **?** for a question, and so forth. Show how you notice when you find an answer or how you might need to research further if your question is not answered.

GUIDED PRACTICE: Engage kids in the process by handing out a copy of the same article you have been modeling with. Read a paragraph, then stop and give students time to jot their thoughts and codes in the margins. Encourage them to turn and talk to a partner and discuss their thinking tracks. Create an anchor chart of various text codes that you come up with together.

TEXT CODES

✓	for something known
L	for new learning
? or Q	for a question
??	for confusion
★	for important information
!	for exciting or surprising information
R	for a connection (Reminds me...)

COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE: Encourage kids to leave tracks of their thinking as they continue to read and respond to articles in their inquiry circles.

> **TIP:** When working with library books or text-books that cannot be marked up, kids use Post-its instead of writing in the margins. Post-its are especially handy for our earliest readers, since they can also draw their thoughts. The 3x5 size works very well for the youngest kids. We teach older students to use the whole range of text-marking tools—Post-its, codes, underlining, and annotation—so they can really "attack" the surface of texts and dig out meaning.

Harvey + Daniels (2009). Comprehension + Collaboration. Heinemann, Portsmouth NH