

With her annotations, this student noted the meaning of the word *panacea*, translated the Barbie doll reference and the contrasting statistics into her own words, and recorded questions she intended to explore further.

◆ PRACTICE 35-4

Reread “No Comprendo” (page 482). As you reread, refer to the Questions for Reading Critically (page 485), and use them to help you annotate the article by writing down your own thoughts and questions in the margins. Note where you agree or disagree with the writer, and briefly explain why. Quickly summarize any points you think are particularly important. Take time to look up any unfamiliar words you have circled, and write brief definitions. Think of these annotations as your preparation for discussing the article in class and eventually writing about your response to it.

◆ PRACTICE 35-5

Trade workbooks with another student, and read over his or her highlighting and annotating of “No Comprendo.” How are your written responses similar to the other student’s? How are they different? Do your classmate’s responses help you see anything new about the article?

D Outlining a Reading Assignment

Yet another technique you can use to help you better understand a passage you are reading is **outlining**. Unlike a **formal outline**, which must follow fairly rigid conventions, an **informal outline** is easy to make, and it can be a valuable reading tool. In fact, after you have finished your informal outline, you should be able to see at a glance what the writer’s emphasis is—which ideas are more important than others—and how ideas are related.

To make an informal outline of a reading selection, follow the guidelines in the box below.

● Writing Tip

Formal outlines can help you keep track of ideas in long essays or research papers. See Appendix B for an example of a formal outline.

FOCUS Making an Informal Outline

1. Write or type the passage’s main idea across the top of a sheet of paper. (This will remind you of the passage’s focus and help keep your outline on track.)
2. At the left margin, write down the most important idea of the first paragraph or section of the passage.
3. Indent the next line a few spaces, and list the examples or details that support this idea.
4. As ideas become more specific, indent further. (Ideas that have the same degree of importance are indented the same distance from the left margin.)
5. Repeat the process with each paragraph or section of the passage.

The student who highlighted and annotated the passage from “Barbie at Thirty-Five” by Anna Quindlen (page 484) made the following informal outline to help her understand the ideas in the passage.

Main idea: Black and white teenage girls have very different attitudes about their body images.

White girls dissatisfied

90% dissatisfied with appearance

Dieting = cure-all

-self-confidence

-control

Ideal = unrealistic

-tall and thin

-Barbie doll

Black girls satisfied

70% satisfied with weight

Dieting not important

Ideal = realistic

-shapely

-not thin

◆ PRACTICE 35-6

Working on your own or in a small group, make an informal outline of “No Comprendo” (page 482). Refer to your highlighting and annotations as you construct your outline. When you have finished, check to make certain your outline indicates the writer’s emphasis and the relationships among her ideas.

E Writing a Response Paragraph

Once you really understand a passage, you are ready to write about it. Sometimes you will be asked to write an essay analyzing a writer’s ideas or comparing them with another writer’s position. At other times, you will be asked to write a **response paragraph** in which you record your informal reactions to a passage.

Because a response paragraph is informal, no special guidelines or rules govern its format or structure. Your goal is simply to think on paper, letting your mind react to the writer’s ideas. As in any paragraph, however, you should include a topic sentence, write in complete sentences, and link sentences with appropriate transitions. Informal style and personal opinions are perfectly acceptable.

The student who highlighted, annotated, and outlined the Quindlen passage wrote this response paragraph.

Why are white and black girls’ body images so different? Why do black girls think it’s okay to be “shapely” while white girls are obsessed with being thin? Maybe

For more on writing a paragraph, see Chapters 1 and 2.