

Look for Information

1.E.3.a 1.E.4.a, b 2.A.4.c, e

3

In school and on tests, most reading passages are followed by questions. Where can you find the answers? They are usually right there in the text. How can you sort the answers out from all the other information? Active readers sort and keep track of information by **taking notes**. Those notes will show you where to look when it's time to find answers.

Look Note words and phrases that you might need to know. You can also make lists, charts, and diagrams in your notes. Lists help you focus on key *details* like words, names, or phrases. Charts and diagrams show *relationships* among things or ideas.

The table below shows one simple system for taking notes. Instead of full sentences, these notes are small *flags*. As you read, use flags in the margins to mark information you think is important and likely to be needed again.

You Write	It Flags	It Means
!	Ideas	This is the idea that the passage or section is about.
+	Details	This detail <i>adds</i> to my understanding of a key idea.
?	Problems	I don't understand this.
(insert word)	Words	I may need to know what this word means and why it is important. (Write the actual word in your notes.)
✓	Anything	I agree with or already knew what the author says here.
X	Anything	I disagree with or would not have predicted what the author says here.

On the next page, you'll see how one student used notes to mark information in "The Oldest Noodles in the World"—and how the notes helped her find answers.



Connections This lesson shows one way to take notes, but there are many other ways. You might take one kind of notes in class, and another as you read. How do you mark important things as you read? Write anything you've tried on the lines below.

Example

Reread this section of “The Oldest Noodles in the World.” In the space provided, Marissa took notes about the important information in the passage.

Marissa’s Notes

The Oldest Noodles in the World

How long would a bowl of noodles last in your house? Noodles are so delicious they usually don’t sit around for more than a couple of hours, or even minutes. Can you imagine noodles lasting thousands of years? It sounds amazing, but scientists have discovered a bowl of noodles that is about 4,000 years old.

✓

!

A Village Is Lost—and Found

The prehistoric noodles were found in northern China. The village of Lajia stood near the Yellow River until around 2000 B.C. This river is famous for carrying enormous amounts of silt and mud. One day, as people went about their business, a terrible earthquake struck. It was rapidly followed by a flood. These dual disasters buried the village under a heavy layer of sediment.

X

archaeologists

+

Lajia was gone, but fragments of the village remained, hidden beneath the ground. The village stayed buried until modern scientists unearthed its ruins. As these **archaeologists** dug, they uncovered bits and pieces of the village life that had been interrupted by the disasters. Among these bits and pieces was a very interesting bowl.

Marissa made five notes as she read this section of “The Oldest Noodles in the World.”

- D** Marissa put a “✓” by how fast a fresh bowl of noodles gets eaten. Based on what she knows, this makes sense. The author may have included this familiar detail to make her more interested in the article.
- I** She used a “!” to mark the sentence about the discovery of a 4,000-year-old bowl of noodles. She thinks this is probably the main point of the article.
- S** Marissa marked the earthquake and flood with an “X.” In this case, the “X” doesn’t mean she disagrees with the author. Instead, she’s surprised that so much disaster could happen all at once.
- C** She noted the word “archaeologists.” It looks important because it’s in **bold**, but Marissa isn’t sure what it means. Noting it will remind her to look for clues about the word or use a dictionary to look it up later.
- U** Finally, Marissa marked the detail about the bowl with a “+.” Two clues tell her that it could be important. She remembers that an old bowl of noodles was mentioned before, and thinks this could be that bowl. She also knows that the opening and closing of a section of text often contains important ideas.