

Academic Writing, Annotation Skills

The specific skills covered here are:

- Reading for the main ideas of paragraphs – annotating
- Reading for the general and specific points – highlighting/underlining
- Note making – using synonyms to help with paraphrasing

Task: Look at source text 1 below

1. Skim read each paragraph and annotate in the margin the main idea;
2. Carefully read each paragraph and highlight/underline the general and specific points that could be used in a cause and effect essay on deforestation;
3. Write notes for the general and specific points in the boxes below the paragraphs;
4. Try to use synonyms in your notes – this will help you to paraphrase later.

Text: Tropical Rainforests

RF = Rainforest

TRF = Tropical Rainforest

Tropical Rainforests are found in tropical areas of heavy rainfall. They are rich in many species of wildlife and vegetation. Rainforests cover less than two percent of the Earth's surface. They are home to some 50 to 70 per cent of all life forms on our planet.

*Focus:
Background Info.*

Rainforests are the most productive and most complex ecosystems* on Earth. The high rainfall and year-round high temperatures are ideal conditions for vegetation growth. The wide range of plants encourages a huge variety of insects, birds and animals.

Now take a look at the sample notes.

TRF - areas ^^^ rainfall - lots fauna/flora (plants/animals)
RF = 2% Earth > 50% of life
RF = Most prod. Ecosystem
Ecosystem = Group of plants/animals in one environment

* Ecosystem: a community of plants and animals sharing an environment (Internet Geography, 2007).

Deforestation is a major problem caused by humans in the tropical rainforest. Researchers have identified a number of significant factors of deforestation. One is land clearing. There are nearly 3 million landless people in Brazil alone. The government has cleared large areas of the Amazon Rainforest and encouraged people to move there and farm the land for the growing of crops (e.g., coffee and sugar cane). The scheme has not been successful. Farmers stay on the same land and attempt to farm it year after year. Nutrients in the soil are quickly destroyed; the soil becomes infertile and nothing will grow. In addition to land-clearing for crops, there is the added problem of land-clearing for cattle ranching. This is another major cause of deforestation, particularly in Central and South America. In Central America, two-thirds of lowland tropical forests have been turned into pasture or grassland for cows since 1950.

Make some notes.

The mining of iron ore, bauxite, gold, oil and other minerals has benefited many large international corporations and generated huge profits. However, it has also destroyed large areas of rainforest, e.g., The Amazon. Mining and industrial development lead to direct forest loss due to the clearing of land to establish buildings and machinery. Indigenous people are displaced. New roads are constructed by these mining companies through previously untouched land, opening up the rainforest to even more heavy industry and also to more landless farmers.

Make some notes.

Continued mining and land clearing for agriculture have resulted in a number of serious consequences. The first consequence is the removal of soil or earth from the rainforest. When vegetation is removed, the soil or earth is left exposed or uncovered to the heavy equatorial rainfall. When it rains, it washes the rich, fertile soil away. The land becomes badly eroded losing its richness and the forest cannot grow again. The removal of top soil means little vegetation will grow. Also, soil erosion leads to flooding as soil is deposited on river beds.

Deforestation can consume a country's only natural resource. If deforestation is not managed in a sustainable manner a country's only natural resource could be lost.

Make some notes.

Destruction of the world's rainforests also has serious effects on global climate. Rainforests absorb carbon dioxide, a necessary gas in the atmosphere. When rainforests are burned and cleared, more carbon dioxide is released into the earth's atmosphere. This causes a rise in the earth's temperature which scientists have argued increases the greenhouse effect and further contributes to global warming. Furthermore, if greater numbers of trees are cut down in the future, there will be fewer trees to absorb carbon dioxide, thus further worsening the situation.

Make some notes.

Text: Hagia Sophia

For over 900 years Hagia Sophia was the home of the Christian Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople. Unfortunately nothing remains of the original Hagia Sophia, which was built in the fourth century by Constantine the Great. Constantine was the first Christian emperor and the founder of the city of Constantinople, which he called “the New Rome.” The Hagia Sophia was one of several great churches he built in important cities throughout his empire. Following the destruction of Constantine’s church, a second was built by his son Constantius and the emperor Theodosius the Great. This second church was burned down during the Nika riots of 532 CE, though fragments of it have been excavated and can be seen today. Hagia Sophia was rebuilt in her present form between 532 CE and 537 CE under the personal supervision of Emperor Justinian I. It is one of the greatest surviving examples of Byzantine architecture, rich with mosaics and marble pillars and coverings.

Make some notes.

In 1934 CE, under Turkish president Kemal Atatürk, Hagia Sofia was secularized and turned into the Ayasofya Museum. The prayer rugs were removed, revealing the marble beneath, but the mosaics remained largely plastered over and the building was allowed to decay for some time. Some of the calligraphic panels were moved to other mosques, but eight large circular panels were left and can still be seen today. A 1993 UNESCO mission to Turkey noted falling plaster, dirty marble facings, broken windows, decorative paintings damaged by moisture, and ill-maintained lead roofing. Cleaning, roofing and restoration have since been undertaken.

Make some notes.