

Shared Annotation Roles

Successful shared annotation groups require participants to fill a range of roles. While planning the work of your group, decide who is going to complete each of the following tasks. You may assign more than one student to each role if necessary:

Shared Annotation Roles	
Role	Tasks
Captain Cannonball	<p>Good conversations only begin with participants who are willing and able to find interesting ideas to talk about. That is Captain Cannonball's role in a shared annotation group. With a critical eye and an understanding of a group's interests and responsibilities, Captain Cannonball should find four or five key points in a shared reading to highlight and craft initial questions for other readers to consider. Captain Cannonball's choices are important. The success of a shared reading often depends on the quality of the first comments and questions added.</p>
The Provocateur	<p>Think about the best conversations that you've ever been involved in. They've always included a bit of passion, didn't they? Disagreements are really nothing more than evidence of deep thinking, as participants work to defend, explain, revise or refine their personal beliefs. Sadly, these opportunities for learning are few and far between in many conversations because everyone "plays nice," not wanting to "make waves" or to "rock the boat."</p> <p>The Provocateur's role in a shared annotation group is to stir things up a bit, challenging the thinking of peers in the conversation. Directly responding to comments made by others, the Provocateur works to remind everyone that there are two sides to every story.</p>
The Middle Man	<p>Just as important to successful conversations are participants who are skilled at finding the common ground between different positions. Pointing out the overlap between two seemingly contradictory positions helps all members of a group to remain connected to one another and can help to highlight areas for continued study.</p> <p>The Middle Man's role in a shared annotation group is to carefully consider the different viewpoints being shared in a conversation looking for connections. Middle Men are often the glue that holds contentious conversations together.</p>
The Author's Worst Nightmare	<p>Shared annotation tools like Diigo allow groups to do something that was once unheard of: With a few digital clicks, users can challenge statements and ideas made by any author. No longer are readers required to simply accept that authors are experts who have the final word on topics being studied. Instead, readers can publicly push back at the assertions and ideas of authors.</p> <p>That's the role of the Author's Worst Nightmare in a shared annotation group. Bringing a healthy dose of skepticism to the conversation, the Author's Worst Nightmare looks to question statements made and conclusions drawn throughout a shared reading. While groups may eventually decide that an author's assertions are spot-on, the Author's Worst Nightmare's responsibility is to make sure that every point is put through the fires of shared reflection.</p>

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The Repo Man	<p>Shared conversations are only successful if groups walk away with a collection of shared ideas that can be used in future work. That's where the Repo Man comes in. The Repo Man's role in a shared annotation group is to carefully monitor conversations, looking for summary points that define exactly what it is that a group learned together during the course of a collective reading.</p> <p>While the Repo Man's real work begins as a conversation is ending, he or she must stay "in tune" with the thoughts and ideas being shared as a conversation develops in order to identify important "takeaways" that a group can learn from.</p>
Questions for Reflection:	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which role in a shared annotation group do you think is the most important? Why? Which role could you live without if you didn't have enough group members to fill every job? Would your answers for question number one change depending on the type of reading that you are doing with your partners? If you were looking at nonfiction, what role would be the most important? Fiction? A piece of work that was written by a friend who is looking for feedback? Explain your thinking. 	

Record your shared annotation group assignments in the table below. Make sure that each group member has a copy of this handout and is aware of the roles that they are playing in your upcoming research project.

Member Name:	Role Assigned:	Explanation: (Why does this job fit this particular person?)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Captain Cannonball <input type="checkbox"/> The Provocateur <input type="checkbox"/> The Middle Man <input type="checkbox"/> The Author's Worst Nightmare <input type="checkbox"/> The Repo Man	
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