

ANNOTATION STUDIO

User's Guide

DRAFT - Version 1/27/2014



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1.

Annotation Studio and How you can use it to improve the classroom experience

Annotation Studio is an easy-to-use web application that allows readers to write notes in the margins of digital texts. Readers have been writing marginalia in texts for centuries, as a way of engaging with an author, an approach to learning and remembering, and a process of note-taking for their writing. But the large-scale migration of texts from print to digital forms in the past two decades has made annotation difficult, if not impossible, for many readers.

Annotation Studio is a suite of tools for collaborative web-based annotation, currently under development by MIT's HyperStudio. Annotation Studio actively engages students in interpreting primary sources such as literary texts and other humanities documents. Currently supporting the multimedia annotation of texts, Annotation Studio will ultimately allow students to annotate video, image, and audio sources.

In our use of annotation in the classroom, we have found that it stimulates in-depth reading, strengthens student comprehension and memory, enables many new reading options, supports student discussion groups, and provides a highly useful note-taking method that supports writing. With Annotation Studio, students can develop traditional humanistic skills such as close reading and textual analysis, while advancing their understanding of texts by comparing original documents with their sources, adaptations, and variations in different media formats. Annotation Studio promotes active reading, in which students will discover, annotate, compare, sample, illustrate, and represent – activities that John Unsworth has dubbed “scholarly primitives.”

Annotation Studio has also proved to be “intuitive” – that is, useful with modest instructor and student learning. It may be added to an existing syllabus or curriculum with only minor changes. Students typically start working with it as a note-taking system almost immediately, and it may be integrated into your teaching with a modest amount of alteration in your syllabus and teaching materials.

To have a look at the Annotation Studio website, go to:

<http://www.annotationstudio.org/>. If you are interested in using Annotation Studio, download our [Levels of Involvement document](#), which explains some of your options.

Annotation Studio, unlike many annotation systems, is free to the public and is built collaboratively by humanities educators for other humanities educators. It is supported by Digital Humanities start-up and development grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. It uses Open Source Code, is freely available to all educators, and is based on the excellent open source [Annotator](#) from the [Open Knowledge Foundation](#). An initial version of Annotation Studio is currently being used in several classes in Literature, Media Studies, and German Studies at MIT, as well as classes at Hofstra and the University of Tennessee at Knoxville.

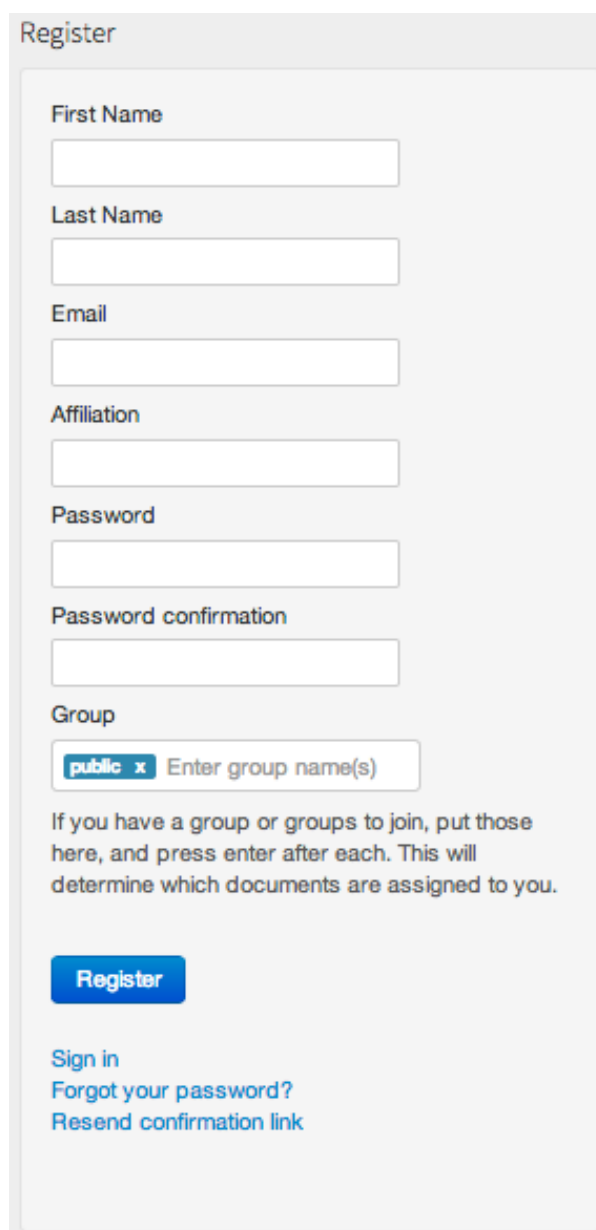
2.

Physical description and terminology

Annotation Studio activities take place in five main user interfaces or screens: (1) a registration interface for registering and signing in; (2) a dashboard for viewing the user's most recent content; (3) a user profile interface for managing group membership, changing passwords, and providing user information; (4) an annotating interface in which a document is read and annotated; and (5) a document creation form for adding new documents to the system.

2.1 The registration interface

The registration interface prompts you to enter your name, password, and group (if assigned) and, when you sign in, takes you to the Dashboard, where available texts are listed. If you would like to try out Annotation Studio, you can register at: <http://app.annotationstudio.org/> and use the documents that are stored there, to get an idea of what's possible.



The screenshot shows a web form titled "Register" with the following fields and elements:

- First Name**: A text input field.
- Last Name**: A text input field.
- Email**: A text input field.
- Affiliation**: A text input field.
- Password**: A text input field.
- Password confirmation**: A text input field.
- Group**: A section containing a button labeled "public x" and a text input field labeled "Enter group name(s)".
- Instructions**: A paragraph stating: "If you have a group or groups to join, put those here, and press enter after each. This will determine which documents are assigned to you."
- Register Button**: A blue button with the text "Register".
- Links**: Three links at the bottom: "Sign in", "Forgot your password?", and "Resend confirmation link".

2.2 The Dashboard

Each user has a dashboard for managing documents and group activities. At the Dashboard, you may select a document that you wish to read and annotate, and the document will appear in a new window, the Document Viewscreen. Note that the Dashboard has three lists for Documents, Annotations, and Groups. Each of these lists has multiple tabs.

The screenshot displays the 'Dashboard for Oreo Gregory' with three main sections: Documents, Annotations, and Groups.

Documents: Features two tabs: 'Assigned' (17 items) and 'Created' (5 items). The 'Assigned' tab is active, showing a list of documents with their titles and dates.

Document Title	Date
The Politics of 'Real Names'	03/03/2013
La Divina Commedia	01/30/2013
Der Besuch der alten Dame (Bahnhofszene)	01/30/2013
Hamlet	01/26/2013
Письмовник	01/26/2013
Origin of Species	01/26/2013
Moby Dick	01/26/2013
Frankenstein	01/26/2013
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chapters 8-9, 11-12	07/25/2012
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chapters 1-5, 7	07/25/2012

Annotations: Features three tabs: 'Mine', 'Class Groups', and 'Working Groups'. The 'Class Groups' tab is active, showing a list of annotations.

Annotation
I don't think it's cabin fever...
this is what i'm writing
John Brown
Slowly
That's the question implicitly asked by this socia...
The world
Fear
Cabin fever?
Why almanac version?
Some comment

Groups: Features two tabs: 'Class Groups' (2 items) and 'Working Groups' (0 items). The 'Class Groups' tab is active, showing a list of groups.

Group
public
RNSTest

At the bottom of each section, there are links to 'View all documents', 'View all annotations', and 'View all groups'.

Under Documents, you will find two tabs: Assigned, which lists the most recent documents that you have been assigned as part of a Class or Working Group, and Created, which lists documents that you have uploaded to Annotation Studio. Note that currently there are 17 assigned documents and 5 documents created by the user.

Under Annotations, you will find three tabs: Mine, Class Groups, and Working Groups. Each tab presents the user with a snapshot of the annotations in each category.

Under Groups, you will find two tabs indicating which Class Groups and Working Groups you are a member of. The current user in this dashboard is a member of 2 Class and 0 Working Groups.

2.3 Profile interface

The Profile Interface allows you to manage your Annotation Studio account. You may select or change membership in Class and Working Groups, and change your password. To add a new Class or a Working Group you must have the group's designation (e.g. 21L.448J). Please note you must enter your current password to confirm your changes.

Edit Profile for Oreo Gregory

First Name

Oreo

Last Name

Gregory

Class groups

public x

RNSTest x

Enter Class Groups

Enter the group names of any class groups you're in, and press enter after each.

Working groups

Enter Working Groups

Enter the group names of any working groups you're in, and press enter after each

Email

rachel.schnepper+hyperstudio

Your email is your username, and cannot be changed.

Affiliation

MIT

Current password

(we need your current password to confirm your changes)

Update

3.

How to work with annotation studio

After registering and/or signing in, you will be taken to the Dashboard, which will display a snapshot of the documents available to the user. You may select, read, and annotate these documents. The following steps provide an overview of the main stages of any annotation.

3.1 Select a document

After logging in, you will arrive at your dashboard. Click on the the link to the Documents list, which will take you to the complete list of documents you have been assigned to or uploaded. Select a document by clicking on one of the document titles. Note that a column identifies all the groups assigned to each document.

Documents

13 Assigned

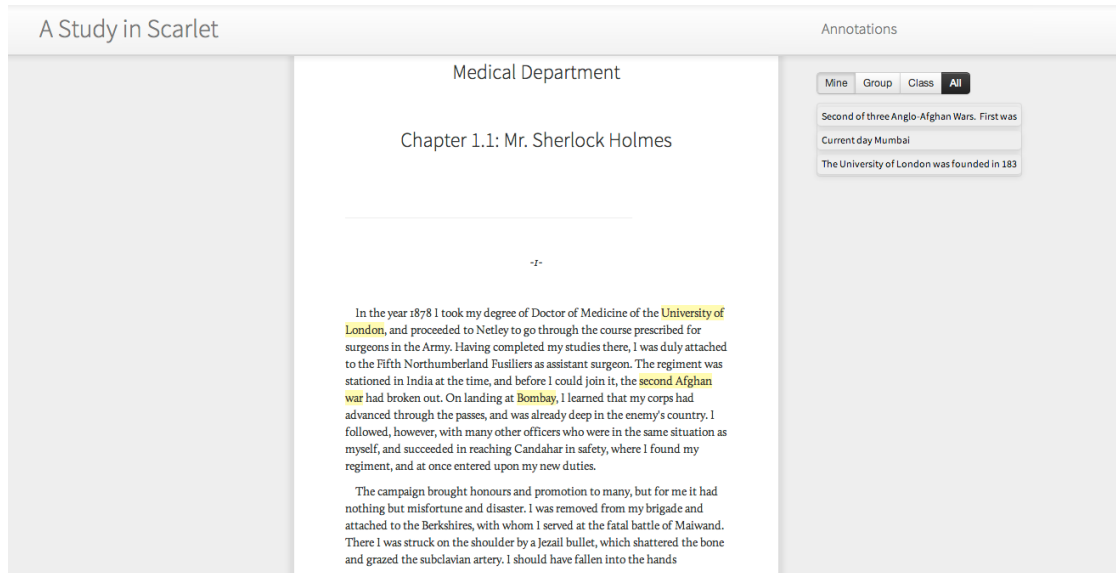
0 Created

Title	Author	Groups
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chapters 1-5, 7	Lewis Carroll	public
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chapters 8-9, 11-12	Lewis Carroll	public
Der Besuch der alten Dame (Bahnhofszenen)	Friedrich Dürrenmatt	public
Frankenstein	Mary Shelley	public
Hamlet	William Shakespeare	public
Homecoming at Howard	Ta-Nehisi Coates	public
Is yawning a tool for wakefulness or for sleep?	Dmitry Arbutov	public
La Divina Commedia	Dante Alighieri	workshop ans-lap public
Moby Dick	Herman Melville	public
Moby Dick, Chapters 1-5 (MEL Camp 2013)	Herman Melville	public MEL Camp
Origin of Species	Charles Darwin	public
The Politics of 'Real Names'	danah boyd	public
Письмовник	Михаил Павлович Шишкин	public

New

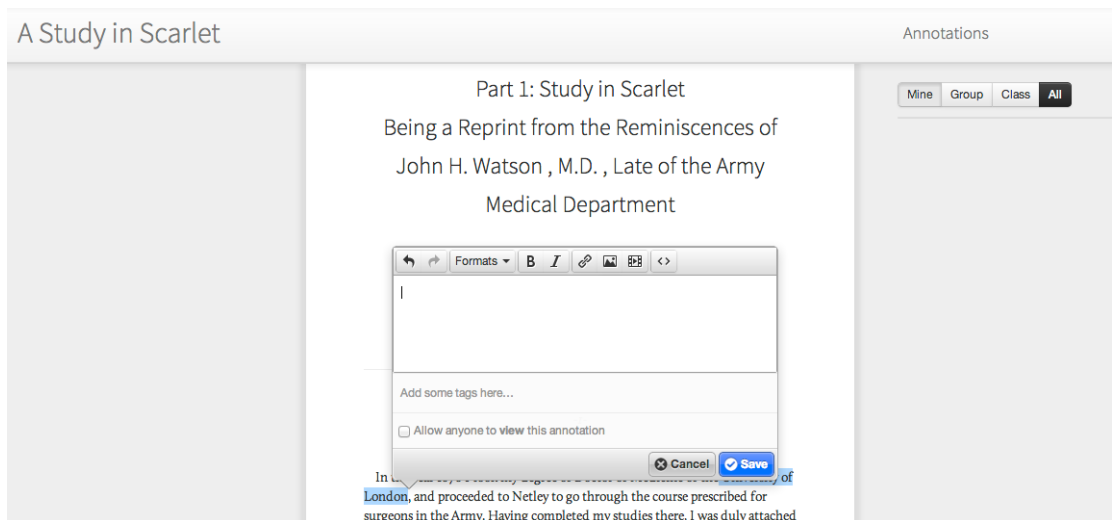
3.2 The annotation screen appears

You then arrive at the Document Viewscreen in a separate window. The Document Viewscreen consists of the document in the center of the screen and the Annotation Sidebar on the right.



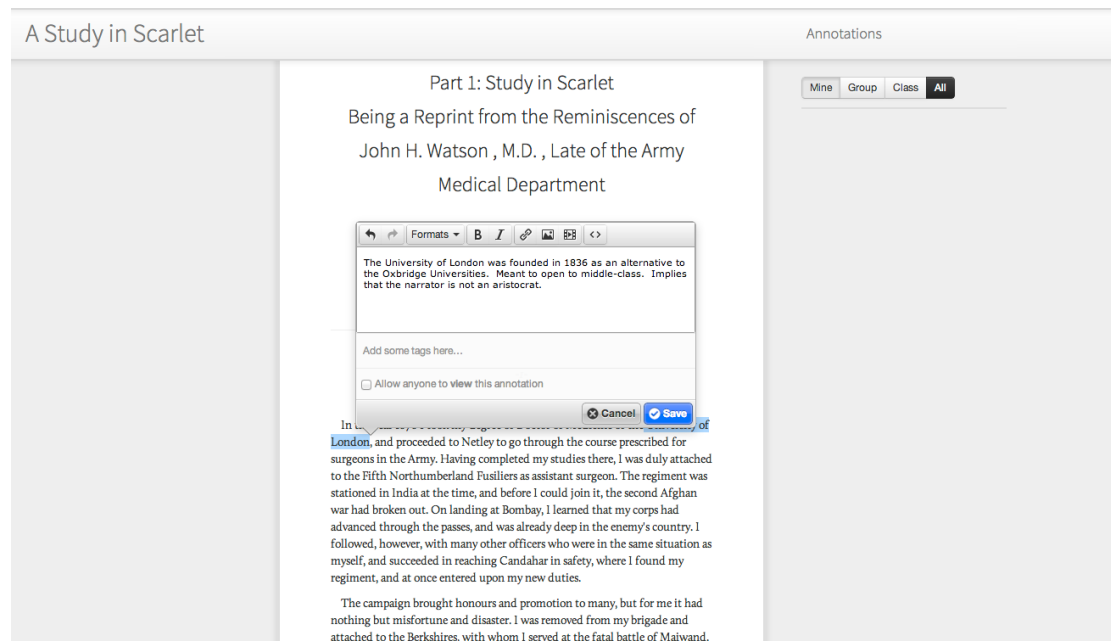
3.3 Select the text you would like to comment on

Select any amount of text (from one word to multiple paragraphs) you wish to annotate by highlighting it with your mouse. The annotate icon will automatically pop up above the highlighted word or phrase. Click on it. The Annotation Editor will appear.



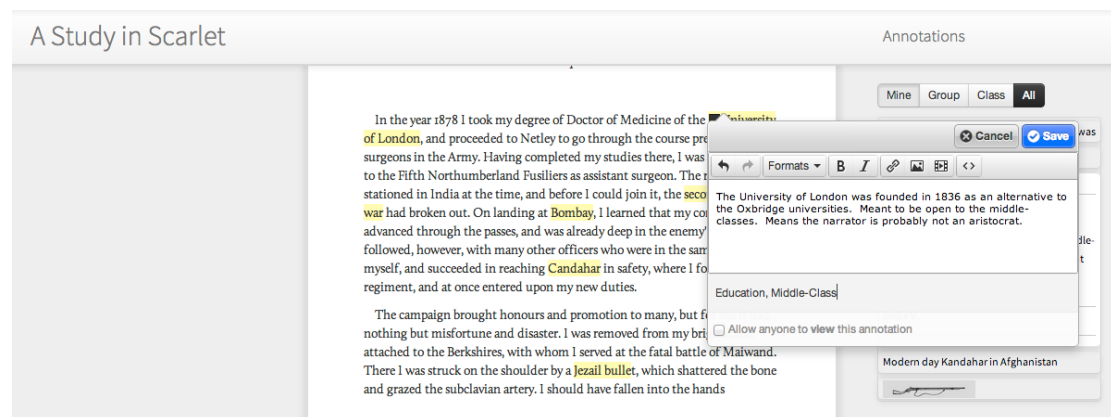
3.4 Type the annotation

Type your annotation into the Annotation Editor.



3.5 Tags and privacy options

Below the annotation field in the Annotation Editor is the tag field, which will allow you to establish your own, unique classification system to organize and manage your annotations. You may also decide whether or not to share your annotation with others by checking the checkbox, which will allow your annotation to be viewed by others (i.e. classmates or an instructor).



3.6 Save the annotation

After you click Save, your annotation (see below) will appear in a list in the Annotation Sidebar. This list is a cumulative collection of all the annotations that you have completed in the document.

The screenshot shows the 'A Study in Scarlet' document interface. The main text area displays the title 'John H. Watson, M.D., Late of the Army Medical Department' and 'Chapter 1.1: Mr. Sherlock Holmes'. Below the title, there is a paragraph of text: 'In the year 1878 I took my degree of Doctor of Medicine of the University of London, and proceeded to Netley to go through the course prescribed for surgeons in the Army. Having completed my studies there, I was duly attached to the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers as assistant surgeon. The regiment was stationed in India at the time, and before I could join it, the second Afghan war had broken out. On landing at Bombay, I learned that my corps had advanced through the passes, and was already deep in the enemy's country. I followed, however, with many other officers who were in the same situation as myself, and succeeded in reaching Candahar in safety, where I found my regiment, and at once entered upon my new duties. The campaign brought honours and promotion to many, but for me it had nothing but misfortune and disaster. I was removed from my brigade and attached to the Berkshires, with whom I served at the fatal battle of Malwand. There I was struck on the shoulder by a jezail bullet, which shattered the bone and grazed the subclavian artery. I should have fallen into the hands'.

 On the right side, the 'Annotations' sidebar is visible. It contains a list of annotations: 'Second of three Anglo-Afghan Wars. First was', 'Current day Mumbai', 'Modern day Kandahar in Afghanistan', and 'The University of London was founded in 183'. The sidebar also has tabs for 'Mine', 'Group', 'Class', and 'All'.

3.7 Additional options


You may also annotate with images. To insert an image in the Annotation Editor, click on the insert image button at the top of the annotation box. Paste the URL to the image in the Source field and add a description of the image. Then click Ok.

The screenshot shows the 'A Study in Scarlet' document interface with the 'Insert/edit image' dialog box open. The dialog box has fields for 'Source' (http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/comm), 'Image description' (Jezail Gun), and 'Dimensions' (312 x 73). There is a checkbox for 'Constrain proportions' which is checked. The dialog box also has 'Ok' and 'Cancel' buttons. In the background, the 'Annotations' sidebar is visible, showing a list of annotations: 'Second of three Anglo-Afghan Wars. First was', 'Current day Mumbai', 'The University of London was founded in 183', and 'Modern day Kandahar in Afghanistan'. The sidebar also has tabs for 'Mine', 'Group', 'Class', and 'All'.

3.8 Reviewing Annotations

As you generate a list of annotations, only the first line of your comment appears in the Annotation Sidebar on the right. To view the full annotation and its source text, you click on the line. In addition to the list of annotations in the Annotation Sidebar, Annotation Studio's roll-over feature creates a pop-up with full annotation content and lets you interact dynamically with your source text. Please note, image annotations created prior to January 2014 will render correctly in the Annotation Sidebar, but they will not display correctly in the roll-over.

A Study in Scarlet

In the year 1878 I took my degree of Doctor of Medicine of the University of London, and proceeded to Netley to go through the course prescribed for surgeons in the Army. Having completed my studies there, I was duly attached to the Fifth Northumberland Fusiliers as assistant surgeon. The regiment was stationed in India at the time, and before I could join it, the second Afghan war had broken out. On landing at Bombay, I learned that my corps had advanced through the passes, and was already deep in the enemy's country. I followed, however, with many other officers who were in the same situation as myself, and succeeded in reaching Candahar. I was attached to the 88th Regiment, and at once entered upon my regular duties.

The campaign brought honours and prizes to the victors, but the cost to the vanquished was terrible. I was attached to the Berkshires, with whom I served in the Crimea. There I was struck on the shoulder by a Jezair bullet, which shattered the bone and grazed the subclavian artery. I should have fallen into the hands of the enemy, but for the quick action of my comrades.

Annotations

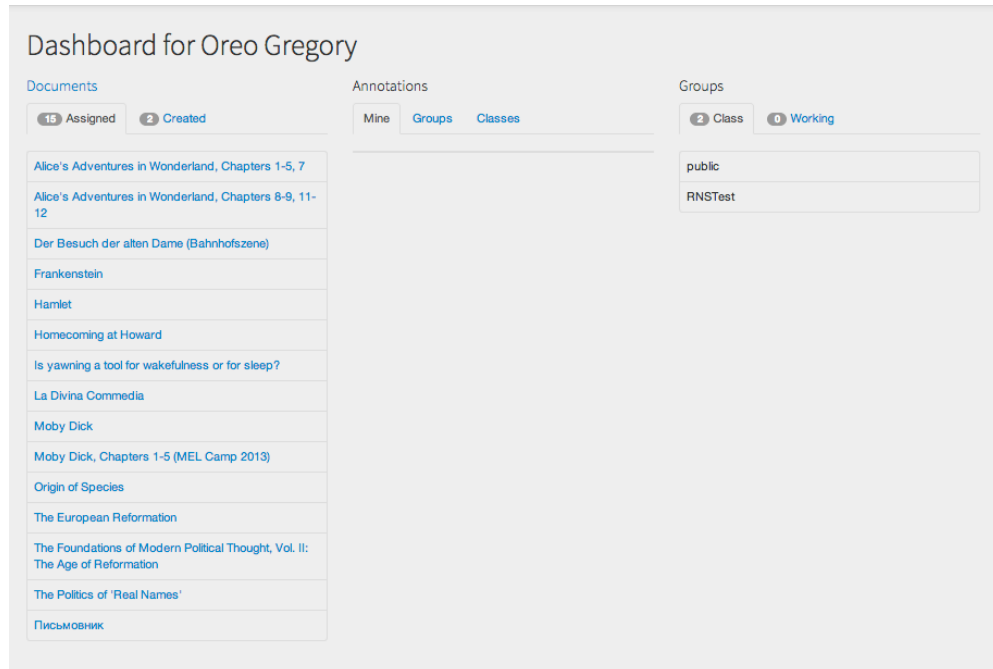
MineGroupClassAll

Second of three Anglo-Afghan Wars. First was Current day Mumbai The University of London was founded in 183 Modern day Kandahar in Afghanistan

4.

Uploading documents

The interface for uploading documents to Annotation Studio is through the link to the Documents list on the Dashboard. To upload a document, go to the Dashboard and click on the Documents link at the top of the screen, which will take you to the Documents list.



Click on New to upload a new document.

Documents		
15 Assigned 2 Created		
Title	Author	Groups
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chapters 1-5, 7	Lewis Carroll	public
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chapters 8-9, 11-12	Lewis Carroll	public
Der Besuch der alten Dame (Bahnhofszone)	Friedrich Dürrenmatt	public
Frankenstein	Mary Shelley	public
Hamlet	William Shakespeare	public
Homecoming at Howard	Ta-Nehisi Coates	public
Is yawning a tool for wakefulness or for sleep?	Dmitry Arbuck	public
La Divina Commedia	Dante Alighieri	workshop one-lap public
Moby Dick	Herman Melville	public
Moby Dick, Chapters 1-5 (MEL Camp 2013)	Herman Melville	public MEL Camp
Origin of Species	Charles Darwin	public
The European Reformation	Euan Cameron	RNSTest
The Foundations of Modern Political Thought, Vol. II: The Age of Reformation	Quentin Skinner	RNSTest
The Politics of 'Real Names'	danah boyd	public
Письмовник	Михаил Павлович Шичкин	public
New		

4.1 Uploading a new document

As shown on the New Document screen shot below, you may click on one of the two links under *Content* to add documents in two ways: 1) by uploading a Word or HTML file, or 2) by pasting or directly typing into the form.

You will be prompted to provide metadata on the document, including title, author, edition, etc., of the document. This information will appear when you hover over the document title in the Document Viewscreen.

New Document

Content

[Upload a file \(word or plain text\)](#)

[Paste or type directly into the form](#)

Metadata

Title

Author

Edition

Publisher

Publication date

Source

Rights status

Status

Only published documents may be annotated.
Once published, documents may not be edited or deleted.

☒ Draft ☐ Published

Groups

Enter the groups to whom you wish to assign this document, and press enter after each.

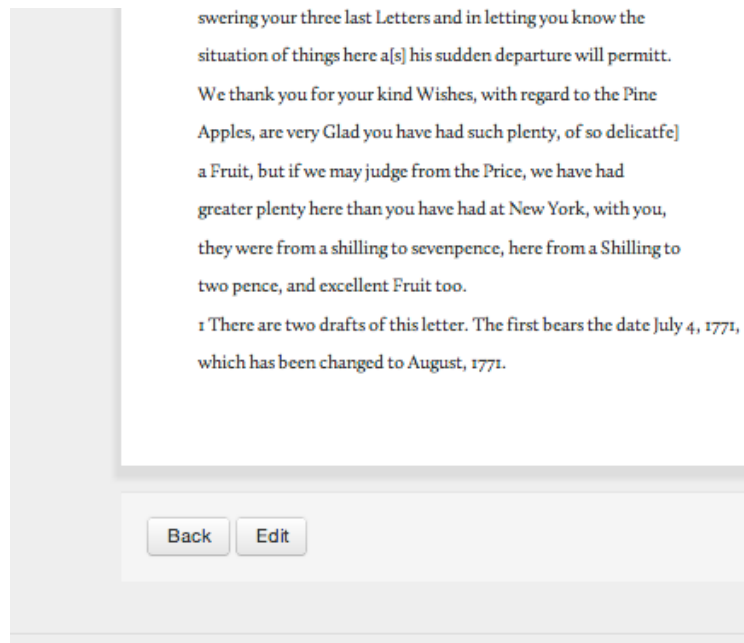
Whether you check draft or published under Status determines if the document can be seen by others. You may continue to edit the document while it is in draft mode. Once the user checks the published box, the user can no longer edit the document. However, only after the published box is checked will the document appear in its assigned group. Then it is ready to be annotated.

Uploading the document is the process by which both Class Groups and Working Groups are created. **When you upload the document, you must enter which Class Group(s) or Working Group(s) it belongs to.** You invent your own names for Class and Working Groups, and the document is automatically assigned to them when it is uploaded.

Any document you upload is automatically added to the Created tab under Documents in the Dashboard. Documents are only listed under the Assigned tab if you are a member of the Class Group or Working Group to which the document has been assigned.

4.2 Editing documents

After you have published a document, you can continue to edit metadata for the document, but not the document itself. At the bottom of the Document Viewscreen is an Edit button.



Clicking on the Edit button will take you to the Edit Document window, where you can edit the Metadata, Status, and Groups for the document. If you wish to create more groups for the document, you can do so in the Edit Document window.

A screenshot of the "Edit Document" window. The window has a title bar "Edit Document". Below the title bar, there are three sections: "Metadata", "Status", and "Groups". The "Metadata" section contains fields for "Title" (filled with "Letters & papers of John Singleton Copley"), "Author", "Edition", "Publisher" (filled with "The Massachusetts Historical Society"), "Publication date", "Source", and "Rights status". The "Status" section contains a note: "Only published documents may be annotated. Once published, documents may not be edited or deleted." and two radio buttons: "Published" (selected) and "Archived". The "Groups" section contains a note: "Enter the groups to whom you wish to assign this document, and press enter after each." and a text input field with "Spring 2014 Hist-150B" and a placeholder "Enter group name(s)". At the bottom of the window, there are two buttons: "Update Document" and "Cancel".

5.

Setting up Annotation Studio for your class and student signup

There are two actions the classroom instructor needs to take in order to use Annotation Studio in his or her class: 1) class setup, and 2) student signup.

5.1 Class setup

To set up your class for using Annotation Studio, you must first register for Annotation Studio. Once you have registered for Annotation Studio, you can upload documents, which will make them available to the students assigned to Class/Working Groups.

5.2 Student signup

Annotation Studio is best introduced to your class by adding a paragraph about it near the front of your syllabus, with a URL to Annotation Studio and a brief description of

- where to locate Annotation Studio
- how to sign up and log on to Annotation Studio using the registration interface
- which assignments will use Annotation Studio

As students log on to Annotation Studio, they will arrive at the Dashboard and find the documents that you have loaded for the class. Generally, students learn quickly how to use Annotation Studio and only minimum instruction is required by the instructor.

6.

Introducing Annotation studio to your students and some pedagogical suggestions

There are many pedagogical uses of Annotation Studio, and no instructor will make use of the application in the same way. Some instructors prefer just to offer the application as a note-taking device for uploaded documents, while others like to use the application in more directed ways. Here are some suggestions:

6.1 Unstructured student annotation

With a minimum of direction, students may simply use Annotation Studio as a note-taking application, annotating at will in order to develop reading notes on items or patterns of interest such as themes, images, and other narrative or analytical elements they detect on their own. This kind of annotation may emerge as a reading log or notebook and may later provide the basis for a paper or notes in preparation for an exam.

6.2 Directed reading, with tagging

The instructor may wish to direct students' annotations by asking them to read for specific key terms, phrases, or concepts. A directed reading approach may be requested in the reading assignment in a syllabus.

Examples of reading for key words and phrases include

- key words in the text (e.g. "rules" in *Alice's Adventures*, "variation" in the *Origin of Species*)
- metaphors and other figurative language
- key words/phrases used in other class readings
- allusions to literary antecedents
- key concepts
- actions such as historical events

6.3 Instructor contextualized readings

An instructor may wish to add his or her own context to a given reading. This may be accomplished in two ways--1) by adding material directly to the document itself and 2) by providing instructor commentary or imagery in the Annotation Sidebar. Material such as instructor comments may be added directly to the document by simply typing it in, or it may also be provided as an instructor-created annotation. For example, if you wish to ask students to answer specific questions or to look for key words or concepts, you may simply alert them at the start of the reading in the text itself or in the Annotation Sidebar.

You may also add other forms of media, such as images and video, to the document itself via HTML code when you upload a document. However, please note that at this time, Annotation Studio does not support the annotation of images and video, only text.

Note: Any editorial changes to an uploaded text will automatically delete all annotations that have been made to date to the text.

6.4 Monitoring student reading

The instructor has access to all the annotations for the class (i.e. those which students have checked for general viewing) and may read through student comments as a way of exploring student reactions to the readings.

6.5 Creating class and working groups

Annotation Studio may also be used to form student working groups, in which a subset of the class exchanges comments with each other. Working Groups are an excellent way to stimulate discussion of the readings, and Working Groups may be used effectively to get students to work on projects together.

6.6 Supporting and evaluating student writing

Annotation Studio is an excellent application for supporting student writing. It is an effective note-taking tool that students can use to prepare quotations of and comments on the readings.

Annotation Studio may also be used by the instructor to upload and comment on student papers. To do this, the instructor asks students to submit their papers in MS-Word format. Commentary on papers by annotation in the margins is a standard procedure that educators have been using for generations.