

Teaching with Hypothesis

What is Hypothesis?

Hypothesis enables users to place a conversational layer over an entire webpage or PDF stored online, allowing users to interact with the text and other users' comments. It allows for collaborative sentence-level highlighting and annotation, notetaking, and critique on top of any text. WashU has an institutional license with Hypothesis which integrates with Canvas.

How Does It Integrate with Canvas?

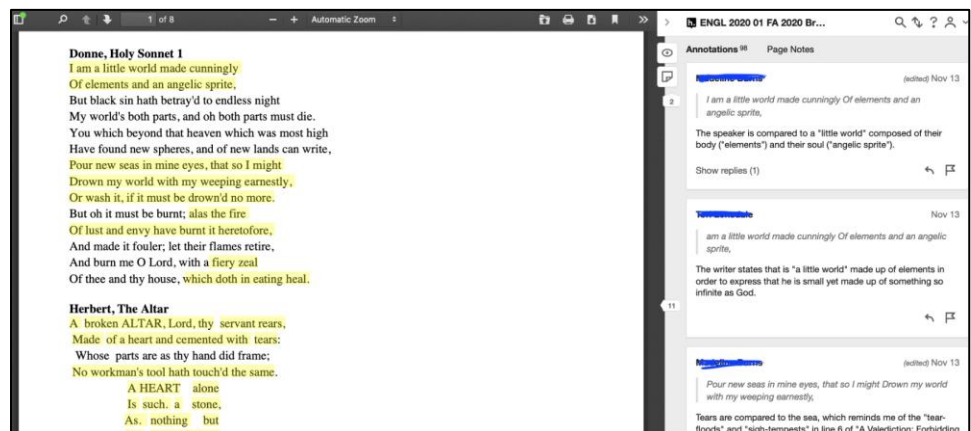
Instructors can set up annotation activities within a Canvas course. Instructors and students do not need to make any kind of account and any annotations that they make are covered by an extra layer of privacy (annotations can only be shared with others logged into the same Canvas course within the institution). These activities are automatically integrated fully with SpeedGrader and Canvas Gradebook (if you choose to make the activity a graded assignment). All of this makes it easy for students to navigate to an annotation activity within your course and complete it without a large increase in cognitive load that often comes with learning a new tool.

What Are the Potential Benefits of Social Annotation?

A number of published studies demonstrate the value of social annotation as a classroom practice. A metaanalysis conducted by Novak et al in 2012 suggested that social annotation tools can "lead to learning gains in higher education" (47). In particular, the study found that social annotation activities contribute to "improved critical thinking, meta-cognitive skills, and reading comprehension" (47). Preliminary findings in the same study also suggested that using social annotation "promotes motivation for reading and contributes to higher frequency of positive emotions and lower frequency of negative emotions" (towards the reading) (47). In addition, Brown and Croft (2020) argue that social annotation is an inclusive teaching practice because of how it promotes collaborative knowledge building (2).

6 Common Hypothesis Activities

- **Discussion Board Alternative:** Students benefit from conversations that take place *within* a text. This can keep their conversations specific and grounded. Students can post questions and then respond to other students' questions OR you can place questions within the text for students to respond to.
- **Comparative Activity:** Students work to closely analyze a series of texts looking for commonalities, dissimilarities, or other points of importance for future discussion.
- **Close Reading Practice:** Students often fly through short complex texts too quickly. A Hypothesis activity can slow them down and encourage them to engage in slow, careful reading. Students may be tasked with adding definitions to unfamiliar words, grappling with passages that seem critical or patterns that stand out in the text, and linking to other texts or theories that a passage seems to allude to etc.
- **Rhetorical Analysis:**
Students might be tasked with marking and explaining rhetorical strategies that they encounter in a text.
- **Multimedia Writing:**
Students use Hypothesis to create a collaborative multimedia text by annotating a written text with images and video.



- **Creative Writing Exercise:** Students could respond creatively and collaboratively to a written text. It could also be used as an exercise (e.g. annotate “x” text in the voices of characters from a prior text).

Setting Up Hypothesis in a Canvas Course

Hypothesis is integrated into Canvas Assignments. It does not appear in the navigation bar on the left of your Canvas course.

To set up an activity, follow the steps below:

1. First, if you want students to annotate a PDF, make sure that it is OCR'd (searchable). Then upload it to either your Canvas course files OR to Google Drive
2. Go to “Assignments” and click to add a new assignment
3. Fill in directions for students so that they know what you want them to do while they are annotating
4. When you get to “Submission Type” in the Assignment details, click on “External Tool”
5. Click on “Find” without typing anything into the search bar
6. Scroll down and click on “Hypothesis”
7. Select what the file or webpage that you’d like students to annotate from the options provided (URL or PDF from webpage, Canvas, Google Drive) and click Submit
8. If you want students to annotate together in small groups, you can use Group Sets. Note: your Group Sets have to be set up under People in Canvas before you click “This is a group assignment”. For more information, see: <https://web.hypothes.is/help/using-canvas-groups-to-create-hypothesis-reading-groups/>
9. Click the “Select” button to finish the Hypothesis set up
10. Click “Load This Tool In A New Tab” (opening in a new tab allow students to use screen readers and other tools available in their browser)
11. Note: if you are not grading the activity, mark it as an “ungraded assignment” or if you want to keep track of who did it but not count it you can click “do not count this assignment towards the final grade.”
12. Be sure to tell students that they’ll need to click on the grey box within the assignment to open the annotation activity

The screenshot shows the 'Submission Type' configuration in Canvas. A dropdown menu is set to 'External Tool'. Below this, under 'External Tool Options', there is a section 'Enter or find an External Tool URL'. It features a link icon, a text input field containing the URL 'https://lms.hypothes.is/lti_launches?url=', and a 'Find' button. At the bottom, there is a checkbox labeled 'Load This Tool In A New Tab' which is checked.

Need additional ideas or want a one-on-one walkthrough? Contact Sally Wu (sallywu@wustl.edu) at the Center for Teaching and Learning or check out our [Hypothesis teaching guide](#).

Further Resources

- Brown, M. & Croft, B. (2020). “Social annotation an inclusive praxis for open pedagogy in the college classroom.” *Journal of Interactive Media in Education*, pp. 1-8.
- Dean, J. (2015) “[10 Ways to Annotate with Students](#).”
- Novak, E. et al. (2012). “The educational use of social annotation tools in higher education: A literature review.” *The Internet and Higher Education*, 15, pp. 39-49.
- [Annotation Etiquette for Students](#)
- [An Illustrated Guide to Annotation Types](#)
- [Using Images, Links, and Videos in Annotations](#)