

## Active Reading Strategies

Have you ever...

- skimmed through a reading assignment and discovered in class the next day that you didn't catch any of the important details?
- gotten overwhelmed trying to read every word of an assigned chapter or article and then learned that you spent too much time on some details and not enough on others?
- found yourself rereading the same sentence over and over again because you've lost focus and zoned out?

Time to change those passive reading habits into active reading strategies!

When you read passively, you are usually either trying to let all the information wash over you, hoping that you'll absorb it, or trying to cram in all of the information and losing a lot of it along the way. When you read actively, you approach your reading with a plan: the text was assigned for a reason, and you're on a mission to figure out what that reason is!

Helpful Habits:

- Highlight, but don't stop there!
  - Highlighting lets you know something is important, but doesn't tell you WHY.
- Annotate!
  - Use symbols or write in the margins to remind yourself of why what you highlighted was important.
- Take notes!
  - The margins of a textbook are small, so if you have questions, comments, or connections between ideas that you want to write down, use a sheet of note paper.
  - You might even add your reading notes to your lecture notebook and then compare and contrast the information you've gathered on topics in and out of class.
- Test your memory!
  - Close your book every few paragraphs or pages and challenge yourself: can you summarize what you just read? Eventually you will need to recall what you've read on the test without the book or your notes there to jog your memory.

Try the SQ3R Method:

- Scan
  - Before you start reading, take a minute to flip through the text. Notice the headings, bolded words, images or illustrations, charts or graphs... What do you think you'll be learning about?
- Question
  - Turn those headings into questions that you will be focused on answering as you read. For example, if the chapter title is "Writing Introductions and Conclusions,"

you might ask yourself, “What’s included in a good introduction and conclusion?” or “Why is it important for an essay to have a good introduction and conclusion?”

- Read
  - As you read, answer the questions you created! Take notes that you can revisit later (instead of spending a lot of time rereading the chapter).
- Recite
  - When you finish reading a section, close the book, cover your notes, and try to summarize what you just read. What did you learn? Is there anything that is still unclear?
  - When you complete the reading assignment, close the book, cover your notes, and try to answer the questions that you created.
- Review
  - Still unclear on a few questions? Revisit the reading and attend the lecture or discussion day in class to see if that clears things up. Ask those questions in class, stop by office hours, or send your professor an email!
  - Use the notes that you took, with your questions and answers, as a study guide as the test approaches!

#### Time Management Tips for Reading:

- Read the assigned text BEFORE going to the lecture on the same topic.
  - When you come to lecture already familiar with the topic, you have a foundation to build upon: you begin strengthening your memory as you hear things you remember seeing in the reading, and you find out whether your judgement of what was important or not was correct. (This will help you read smarter next time!)
  - You can also identify topics that are still confusing, even after both reading and lecture, sooner rather than later. This gives you more time to talk with your professor.
- Stay on top of your reading assignments!
  - For every hour you spend in class each week, you should be spending around two hours outside of class studying, completing homework, and preparing for assessments.
  - Schedule time to complete those reading assignments!
- Have a long reading? Break it up into more manageable pieces!
  - Instead of forcing your way through twenty pages all at once and losing focus in the middle, read five pages, take a break, read the next five pages, take another break, etc.
  - This will also build in opportunities for you to practice reciting what you learned from the last chunk of pages!