

## Academic Reading Strategies

### 1. Preview text (alone or with classmates)

- a. Consider purpose for reading (To prepare for lecture? To write a response? Other?)
- b. Look at overall length, organization, headings, visuals, keywords/main concepts, etc.
- c. Reflect on your own background and prior knowledge and make some connections
  - i. Consider doing a short internet search if needed to build up your knowledge base if content is completely unfamiliar
- d. Predict what the overall argument(s) might be.
- e. Try to consider WHY this reading was assigned. What does it offer, in relation to the class overall?

### 2. As you read

- a. Notice (or form) sections in the reading.
- b. Consider the best sequence of reading: (Intro/conclusion first?)
- c. Try to identify main arguments, thinking about the “new” perspective this author brings
  - i. In other words, What is s/he saying? and Why does it matter?
- d. Engage physically with the text (margin notes and symbols, underlining,)  
OR  
Make a “double-entry” journal with quotes/main points and reactions
  - i. Try to have at least one note, marking, or comment per page
- e. Test yourself at various points: See if you can summarize the author’s main points and offer some kind of response/reaction.
- f. Take breaks as needed (usually brain efficiency peaks within 15-20 minutes)
- g. DON’T look up every word you don’t know
- h. DON’T try to memorize everything in the reading
- i. DON’T worry if you only understand parts of the reading
  - i. See “Tips for Difficult Reading Passages” (separate handout)
  - ii. Remember: Confusion is the first step toward understanding!!

### 3. After you read

- a. Try to predict what concepts, points, examples, etc. might be brought up in discussion
- b. At minimum, try to come out with...
  - i. 3 main points or concepts
  - ii. 2 comments or connections
  - iii. 1 question
- c. Re-evaluate your strategies over time
  - i. Are you able to meet your goals? (to participate in class discussion, write the response paper, use the reading in another way...?)
  - ii. Consider using different strategies with different kinds of readings

## Dealing with difficult reading passages:

### Individual words/sentences

- Mark '?' and move on
- Look for clues in the rest of the paragraph
- Don't linger too long! You can always skip a passage (particularly if it's not that long).

### Short sections

- Adjust reading speed
- Read aloud
- Identify key words
- Focus on first and last sentences of paragraphs
- Make personal connections to anything in the text
- Consider WHY you don't understand. Is it...
  - a key word/concept (maybe Google it)
  - the structure (look for subject/verb)
  - too abstract? (try to make a connection)
  - boring or repetitive? (keep reading and look for connections)
- Bring questions to class to ask peers and/or instructor

### Most of the text

- Make sure you preview
- Map out the text—at least know keywords and topics
- Make your own Reading Log: main point/concept + comment/question/connection
- Don't be afraid to read secondary sources
- Don't give up—try to get at least a few points from the text!

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**Academic Reading Worksheet**

**PREVIEW and CONNECT:** [*purpose, genre, features, main topics, essential terminology, etc.*]

**PREDICTIONS**

(set-up for notetaking):

Page/ section	Main Idea, Quote, or Concept	Reaction or Question

**OVERALL:** (observations, comments, questions):