

Reading Strategies

Preparing to Read:

- Find a time and place conducive to concentration. Are you too tired or hungry? Is it too noisy or too quiet? Are you too warm or too cold?
- Read sitting up, with a good light, at a desk or table.
- Keep background noise to a minimum. Loud music will not make you a better reader.
- The same goes for screaming kids, talking roommates, television or radio. Give yourself a quiet environment so that you can concentrate on the text.
- Keep paper and pen within reach.
- Relax. This promotes concentration.
- Before beginning to read, think about the purpose for the reading. Why has the professor made this assignment? What are you supposed to get out of it? Jot down your thoughts.
- Place the text in its historical, biographical, and cultural contexts.
- Determine the reading rate needed for the text (e.g., slower for scientific material).

While Reading:

- Don't just jump into a reading assignment and start highlighting. Have a plan!
- If you get stuck in the reading, contemplate why that particular place was difficult and how you might break through the block.
- When you don't understand the reading, slow down and re-read sections.
- Break long assignments into segments. Read 10 pages, then do something else. Later, read the next 10 pages, and so on.
- Translate difficult material into your own words.
- Answer the questions at the end of the chapter.
- Read the entire piece, and then write a one paragraph or one sentence summary.
- Answer these questions in your own words: What is the author talking about? What does the author want me to get out of this?
- Transcribe your notes in the book or handwritten notes into more formal notes on the computer. Outline and summarize.
- Mark up the text, bring it to class, and ask questions about what you don't understand.
- Think about the text in three ways:
 - Consider the text itself, the basic information right there on the page.
 - Next, think about what is between the lines, the conclusions and inferences the author wants you to draw.
 - Finally, go beyond thinking about the text. What creative and different thoughts occur as you combine your knowledge and experiences with the ideas in the reading?

Adapted from: Idaho State University Academic Skills Center, <http://www.isu.edu>.