

## Writing Center Handouts

### Purposeful Reading

- Reading for Class vs. reading for Leisure
  - Usually use **surface-level reading**, or getting the “gist” of the text when reading things like news articles or novels in our down time
  - Need **close reading** for class-assigned texts because ideas, themes, and context of readings relate to ideas of the class
  
- Close reading is characterized by:
  1. Looking for the author’s purpose in writing the piece and the main intended audience of author
  2. Looking for the main ideas, organization, and style of the piece
  3. Understanding *why* the professor assigned the piece and *how* it connects to something learned in class
  4. Understanding the historical/cultural background of author and how it’s different from your own perspective
  5. Objectively determining if there are debatable points in the piece
  
- Strategies for habitual close reading:
  1. **Annotating**
    - A way to “talk back” to the author as you read, is most effective if you have a system rather than just random underlines:
      1. Mark the thesis, main points, and important ideas of the piece
      2. Mark key terms and unfamiliar words—look them up!
      3. Write your questions and/or comments in the margins of the piece
      4. Write any personal experience related to the piece
      5. Mark confusing parts or sections that warrant a reread
      6. Underline the sources, if any, the author used
  
  2. **Summarizing**
    - A great strategy for keeping track of multiple readings or 1 very complex reading
    - Forces you to discern the most important ideas from the text
      1. **Bibliographic entry style:** write citation of text and 1 paragraph of summarizing relevant points, best quotes
      2. **Double entry notes style:** divide paper into “what it says” section and “what it does.” In “what it says”, summarize a section of the

text, in “what it does” describe the functionality of the section in terms of the whole text.

### 3. Drawing Graphic Organizers

- Sometimes visual representations of ideas are just easier to understand than written words, especially when grappling with complex articles
  1. **Timelines** for history texts and fictions with weird chronologies
  2. **Family trees** and **flowcharts** for mapping complex relationships and keeping track of characters
  3. **Bubble maps** for thesis-driven articles with multiple sections

### 4. Rereading

- Necessary for when you’re answering reading-based analytical questions or writing a formal essay
- Will help you know a text inside-and-out, characterized by levels of writing:
  1. First reading: look up the background of the text and skim the surface for main ideas, introduction and conclusion
  2. Second reading: slow, meditative read. Have pen and sticky notes in hand to make annotations, ask questions
  3. Third reading: address questions made in second reading, look up unfamiliar concepts, tackle confusing passages.

Credit to the Colorado State University Writing Center Webpage:  
<https://writing.colostate.edu/guides/guide.cfm?guideid=31>