

READING AND TAKING NOTES

I. STRATEGY: READ WITH A PURPOSE

- Write a **general question**—What is the author trying to prove? What is the purpose of this text? What is the overall theme? What information am I trying to find?—and seek answers while reading. This helps you move more quickly through the text. If you write answers to questions, use **abbreviations**.
- Choose a **section of text that can be read in one sitting**. As you read, stop periodically and ask “What does that mean? What is the author trying to do?” After reading, **close book**, and write a **short—3-5 sentence—summary of what you just read**. Then you can go back to the text and fill in any gaps, add a few details, or correct errors

II. STRATEGY: USE A NOTE TAKING SYSTEM

- Write **Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?** in a chart format, and fill in while you are reading. **Bonus:** small spaces force you to annotate and use only the most important terms.
- Use the **PRO** method: **Preview/Prepare**—skim all or part of text and look for repeated words, main themes, point of view, etc.; **Read**—read same text straight through, **no writing** (because you will tend to write too much at this point); **Organize**—choose an organizational system (outline, flow chart, bulleted list) and list main theme(s), key points, important (repeated) vocabulary, etc.
- Use the **RRW** method: **Read**—scan, look for action, big picture, no writing; **Review**—Close text and paraphrase (the ‘look away’ method), ID main points and important sub-points; **Write**—organize paraphrased thoughts into summary, outline or chart. Check text for additions and accuracy.
- Use the **TIPS** method: What’s the **Topic**? What are the main **Ideas**? What are the supporting **Points**? How can you **Summarize** in your own words?

III. STRATEGY: USE A NOTE TAKING SYSTEM THAT REQUIRES ANNOTATION

- Choose a system that works with the writing style of the author
- During the Preview/Prepare/Skim stage of reading, think of various systems that might work
- Note Taking systems to try: **Outline, Note Cards, Graph/ Chart/Flow Chart, Timeline**

*Need More Ideas? See Reading and Note Taking Handouts at
The Center for Student Learning at the Addlestone Library,
www.cofc.edu/~csl 843.953.5635*

