

Strategies for Active Reading

Consider which of these strategies works best for you!

- **Ask yourself pre-reading questions.** What is the topic? What do you know about it? Why has the reading been assigned?
- Identify and define **unfamiliar terms.**
- Bracket **main ideas or the thesis of the reading,** and put an asterisk next to it. Pay attention to the introduction or opening paragraphs to locate this information.
- Put down the **highlighter** and make **marginal notes or comments instead.** When you feel the urge to highlight, write it down instead. Summarize text, ask questions, agree or disagree with the reading. Write down key words to help you recall important points. Strive to enter into a dialogue with the author.
- **Write questions in the margins** and answer them in a reading journal or on a separate piece of paper. If you are reading a textbook, change all of the titles, subtitles, sections, and paragraph headings into questions.
- Make **outlines, flowcharts, or diagrams** that help you to map and understand ideas visually.
- Read each paragraph carefully and **determine what it says and what it does.** Answer each in one sentence. Represent the main idea in your own words. Describe the paragraph's purpose within the text, such as "it provides evidence for the author's thesis" or "it introduces an opposing view."
- Write a summary of an essay or chapter **in your own words.** Do this in less than a page. Capture the essential ideas and one or two key examples.
- **Teach** what you've learned to someone else. Research clearly states that teaching is one of the most effective ways to learn. Explaining aloud what you've been studying helps you transfer information from short term to long term memory. You will also realize what you understand and what you don't understand.

*From: The McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning, Princeton University