

Strategies for Effective Reading

- Read sitting up, with a good light source, at a desk or a table.
- Keep background noises to a minimum. Reduce distractions and find a place that is most conducive for you to be productive.
- Keep a pen/pencil and paper within reach. Be ready to take notes based on whichever platform you use to take notes.
- Before beginning to read, think about the purpose of reading. Eg: Why has the teacher made this assignment? What am I supposed to get out of this?
- Survey the reading. From topics, to subtopics, illustrations, graphs, etc. What stands out?
- Read the introduction and conclusion first. Then go back and read the whole assignment. Or read the first line in every paragraph and try to get a general idea about the progression of the topic and how you want to go about it.
- Ditch the highlighter (or have limited use for it) and start taking notes in the margins of the reading assignment or if it is a borrowed book, take notes in your style (handwritten on paper, e-notes etc.)
- Scan the whole reading and focus on the most relevant parts to read in detail.
- Pay attention to where you can skim and where you need to understand every word.
- Talk back to the notes you have taken. Ask yourself what you understood from this section, what interests you and which section was boring and why.
- If you get stuck, write down why you got stuck and ask yourself how you can break it down into smaller sections to get a better understanding of the topic.
- If the reading gets difficult, slow down and reread sections.
- Take breaks while reading long assignments. For example, read 10 pages, and then take a short break before moving on. When you start a new section, try to summarize what you read about up to that point.
- Don't skip prefaces and summaries! They can reveal details, author's intent, structure of the reading content etc.
- Talk to your TA/Instructor to get your questions addressed. Keeping a trusted study group helps with accountability to get work done.
- Look up additional reading/content on the topic and see what other authors have to say on the topic. It might help clarify any questions.
- Be OK to counter argue with the author. This will engage with your critical thinking skills and help create a critique on the topic.



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Adapted from: [Dr. Kathleen King's Reading Strategies](#)