

Being an Engaged Reader

An engaged reader delves into the text and intends to go beyond simply familiarizing themselves with the basic content. As an engaged reader, think of yourself as having a mental conversation, sometimes with yourself, and perhaps, even with the author.

Thinking Like an Engaged Reader

As you read, actively summarize, analyze, and/or critique the material.

Questions to keep in mind:

- What is the writer's main argument or point?
- How is the author making their point?
(i.e., with evidence, anecdotes, descriptive language?)
- What other information would help me further understand this reading?
- What makes the text so compelling? What makes the text "work?"

Techniques for Honing Your Reading Skills

Note taking helps you retain your reading insights which allows you to be an active study group participant. Mix and match the following to develop a style that suits you.

READ THE MATERIAL MORE THAN ONCE.

Some people like to use the first reading to get the "big picture." Others like to use the first reading to mark points of special interest, identify key people, etc. Whatever approach you prefer for the first reading, take the alternate approach in the second reading.

IDENTIFY PORTIONS OF TEXT THAT INTEREST OR PUZZLE YOU.

What are the salient points of the reading? Remember that questions and uncertainties can be important contributions to the discussion.

UNDERLINE OR RECORD NEW TERMS, EXPRESSIONS, OR VOCABULARY.

Look them up. Identify any special terms or style that are used by the author.

SUMMARIZE THE MATERIAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS.

Identify what you consider to be the main points of the text. Construct titles for sections or chapters as another way to encapsulate your thinking.

MAKE DIAGRAMS, OUTLINES, OR OTHER VISUAL CONFIGURATIONS.

This can help you organize the material and your thoughts.

Tip: *Write down your ideas and avoid highlighting as your sole form of note taking.*

Writing notes in the margins, for example, helps you recall why you thought a passage was important.