

PREFACE: The Cal Poly Shared Reading Program 2007
Tips for College Reading

PREFACE

General Tips for All Reading Tasks

1. Ask yourself what you already know about the topic.
2. Think about and predict what the text will be about.
3. When you begin, do not underline. Either write notes in the margin or separately in a journal or on note cards (5"x8"). Summarize the important points in your own words.
4. Have a voice in your head speaking to the text—argue, agree, etc.
5. Decipher the vocabulary from the surrounding text. Look up words later.
6. Adjust reading speed to the type of text you're reading (**People Magazine** v. a Shakespeare play).
7. Reread sections if you are confused. Sometimes reading aloud helps.
8. Be patient.
9. Discuss ideas/points with others.
10. Ask if your predictions have come true.
11. Practice rephrasing complicated sentences in order to understand their meaning.
12. Relate and connect your prior knowledge and experience to what the text tells you.

Reading Fiction

1. Anticipate the direction of the narrative after a few pages.
2. Be open to different kinds of story lines—flashbacks, unusual characters, strange organization and punctuation.
3. Remember every word counts!
4. Watch for hints.
5. As you read, ask yourself what the author might be up to.
6. Think about who the characters are, their characteristics, and if you like or dislike them.
7. Ask yourself what themes might be running through the story or novel.

Reading Textbooks

1. Pay attention to chapter titles and headings before you begin reading.
2. Check to see if there are summaries at the end of the chapters before you begin reading. Read the summary first.
3. Focus on important definitions.
4. Ask yourself what examples help make the general points concrete and specific. Remember those examples!
5. Summarize the important points in your own words.

Reading Non-Fiction/Essays/Newspaper Articles

1. Skim the piece quickly to get the gist of it.
2. Try to find out what the "ethos" of the writer is—is he/she an expert? What are his/her political persuasions? What about reputation?
3. Try to find where the introduction ends and the argument begins.
4. Ask yourself what the point of the piece is? It may be found early or at the end.
5. Find the best evidence for the author's position.
6. Be open-minded and skeptical.
7. Remember that the text is an ongoing conversation.

