

# Active Reading Strategies



*Writing Center*

989-964-6061, [www.svsu.edu/writingcenter](http://www.svsu.edu/writingcenter)

Here are some tips to effectively read and analyze a text:

## 1. Formulate Questions and Look for Answers When Reading

- What is the writer's main idea?
- Where have I heard about this idea before?
- What do I know about this subject?
- What evidence is the author using to support his/her point? (e.g., examples, comparisons, statistics, stories)
- What does the author assume I already know about this subject? (e.g., assumes I support environmental issues?)
- What is the author's purpose for writing? (e.g., change reader's mind, provide new information, report research findings)

## 2. Pay Attention to Language

- Does the writer use a word I don't know? Does the writer use a word in a new way? What does it mean here? (Use the dictionary to find the meaning in this context.)
- Based on the language, who do you think might read this article, book, document, text, or poem? (e.g., children? other professionals in the field? parents? school teachers?)
- What patterns of words does the author use to shape the reader's attitude? (e.g., "career politician" or "experienced politician"? "baby killer" or "supporter of women's choice"?)
- How does the author signal the organization of his/her writing? How do those signals help me understand the writer's structure? (e.g., transitions or headings)

## 3. Look for the Writer's Place in the "Big Picture"

- Into what field(s) of study does this topic fit? (Where does the study of widespread political corruption fit in criminal justice? in corrections and policing?)
- Why would this author write about this subject? (Is the writer representing an organization? presenting an opinion? announcing new research?)
- Where was this published? (e.g., academic journal? newspaper? popular magazine? website?)

## 4. Ask: What Have I Learned?

- What could I tell someone about this subject in 2-3 sentences?
- How does this information connect with information I already know?
- What new information have I gained?
- What different viewpoint have I seen?
- Do I agree with this author? Why? Why not? What evidence supports my perspective?