

BECOMING AN ACTIVE READER

What is reading?

“Reading is an interactive process that goes on between the reader and the text, result in comprehension. The text presents letters, words, sentences, and paragraphs that encode meaning. The reader use knowledge, skills, and strategies to determine what that meaning is”.

What is active reading?

Active reading simply means reading something with a determination to understand and evaluate it for its relevance to your needs. Simply reading and re-reading the material isn't an effective way to understand and learn. Actively and critically engaging with the content can save you time.

When we read actively, we try to understand the text thoroughly by reading slowly and carefully, pausing to question a main idea or to re-examine a passage that confuses us, and interpreting the larger meanings and implications of the text we're reading. We try to keep our minds actively thinking about what the text means. In general, active reading allows us to

- Capture main ideas, key concepts, and details of reading.
- Engage with the text by making connections with our own knowledge and lives.
- Ask questions that help us think deeper about the content.

“Reading is an active process in which the reader constructs meaning from a text. Because readers bring differing experiences and knowledge to a reading experience, each reader will construct a different interpretation of a text. Readers need to be encouraged to take an active stance in their reading, asking questions and looking for points of agreement or disagreement with the author as they read.”

What is an Active Reader?

An active reader is someone who annotates as they read--underlining, circling, highlighting, writing questions or comments in the margins, and keeping a log of information. Active readers often use quick codes to remember important parts, quotes, or questions.

Ways to make your reading active

- Underline or highlight key words and phrases as you read. When you return to it later on, you can easily see which points you identified as important. Be selective - too much highlighting won't help.
- The best strategy to help you set and keep your reading purpose is annotating, that is taking notes in your text. Annotating is the process of writing the key information (such as major points, definitions, and examples) in the margins of your text. You are looking for and marking all of the information you will need to remember from your chapters. Because it gives you a purpose, you'll find that annotation helps you concentrate while reading and actually helps you learn from the text.
 - Text annotation work because it:
 - Gives you a purpose of reading
 - Improves your comprehension
 - Increase your concentration
 - Keeps you from having to re-read the chapter over again
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- Read critically by asking questions of the text. Who wrote it? When? Who is the intended audience? Does it link with other material you've studied in the module? Why do you think it was written? Is it an excerpt from a longer piece of text?
- Test yourself by reading for half an hour, putting the text away and jotting down the key points from memory. Go back to the text to fill in gaps.
- Explain what you've read to someone else.

Reading for comprehension

Much of what we have said already is contained within a well-known technique for actively engaging with and extracting meaning from content - SQ3R. It is good for revision as well as reading something for the first time. 'SQ3R' stands for the five steps involved.

1. **SKIM** through the text quickly to get an overall impression.

2. **QUESTION.** If you are reading it for a particular purpose (for example, to answer an assignment), ask yourself how it helps. Also ask questions of the text: Who? What? Where? When? How?
3. **READ.** Read the text in a focused, and fairly speedy way.
4. **REMEMBER.** Test your memory - but don't worry if you can't remember much.
5. **REVIEW.** Read the text in more detail, taking notes. Use your own words.