Reading Suggestions

➢ Read sitting up with good light, and at a desk or table.

➢ Keep background noise to a minimum. Loud rock music will not make you a better reader. The same goes for other distractions: talking to roommates, kids playing nearby, television or radio. Give yourself a quiet environment so that you can concentrate on the text.

➢ Keep paper and pen within reach.

➢ Before beginning to read, think about the purpose of the reading. Why has the teacher assigned the reading? What are you supposed to get out of it? Jot down your thoughts.

➢ Survey the reading. Look at the title of the piece, the subheadings. What is in the dark print or stands out? Are there illustrations or graphs?

➢ Read the introduction and conclusion, then go back and read the whole assignment, or read the first line in every paragraph to get an idea of how the ideas progress, then go back and read from the beginning.

➢ Scan entire reading, and then focus on the most interesting or relevant parts to read in detail.

➢ Pay attention to when you can skim and when you need to understand every word.

➢ Write as you read. Take notes and talk back to the text. Explain in detail the concepts. Mark up the pages. Ask questions. Write possible test questions. Write down what interests or bores you. Speculate about why.

➢ If you get stuck in the reading, think and write about where you got stuck. Contemplate why that particular place was difficult and how you might break through the block.

➢ Record and explore your confusion. Confusion is important because it's the first stage in understanding.

➢ When the going gets difficult, and you don't understand the reading, slow down and reread sections. Try to explain them to someone, or have someone else read the section and talk through it together.

➢ Break long assignments into segments. Read 10 pages (and take notes) then do something else. Later, read the next 10 pages and so on.

➢ Read prefaces and summaries to learn important details about the book. Look at the table of contents for information about the structure and movement of ideas. Use the index to look up specific names, places, ideas.