

## Active Reading

Successful students approach reading with a strategy that helps them get the most out of their reading. These students read *actively*. They look for the main idea of the material, its themes, and for words they do not understand. The opposite of reading actively is reading passively. Passive readers simply skip over things they do not understand and have difficulty understanding the material as a result. In this course, we are going to practice active reading. You will find that active reading is more enjoyable, lets you understand more of what you have read, and leads to better test scores.

The first part of active reading is to read through the material once while making notes about anything you find interesting or important. It is okay to not understand everything the first time through. Make a note next to any words you may need to look up later. When you finish, stop for a few minutes and think about what you just read. What is your first impression? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not? What was the most memorable part of the reading? Did something in it surprise you? Take a few minutes to add these thoughts to the notes you took while reading.

Now, take a break and go do something else. Go for a walk, run an errand, or take care of some chores. Allow yourself to absorb what you read without thinking too much about it or worrying about what you did not understand. When you come back, use a dictionary to look up the definitions of the words you marked earlier because you were not sure what they meant. Look at any sections you did not understand the first time through and see if they make more sense now. If something is still unclear, review your notes and briefly read the material a second time. Any confusing parts will likely be much clearer now!

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