Subject Reading Strategies

COLLEGE of CHARLESTON
CENTER FOR STUDENT LEARNING

Stay on the Path to Your Goal Grades

Course type	Strategies	Objectives
Social Sciences (anthropology, history, government, sociology, psychology)	• Learn facts and definitions • Recognize common patterns (cause, effect, comparison, contrast, etc.) • Build to concepts, generalizations (inductive thinking) • Compare various theories, arguments • Distinguish fact and opinion	• Generate high-level questions and answers • Compare, contrast (analysis), synthesize and evaluate
Humanities (art, literature, music, philosophy)	• Determine perspective of author, thinker, artist • Draw logical inferences, implications • Identify objectives for reading (style, theory, relationships) • Keep track of personal reactions (marginal or separate notes)	• Analyze, evaluate, interpret, in order to generate and answer questions • Write papers and/or participate in class discussions
Mathematics	• Know terms and symbols • "translate" abstract formulas • Identify and contrast new theorems and formulas • Contrast problems	• Solve problems (application) • Identify problem-solving strategies (comprehension) • Evaluate effectiveness of problem-solving strategies (evaluation) • Compare types of problems (analysis)
Natural sciences (astronomy, biology, chemistry, physics)	• Read for common patterns (classification process description, factual statements, problem solving • Define terms • Check comprehension of terms by giving examples, comparing, etc. • Analyze sample problems	• Solve problems (application) • Compare types of problems (analysis) • Describe processes (comprehension) • Classify information (application)

FUNCHY, PUNJEE, AND BOB

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Fiction	Articles and Essays
• Who/what is the subject/topic? • What is happening in the plot? • Where does the story take place? • What is the time period of the story? • Why did the author write this story? • What is the message in the story? • Why is the message significant/important? • Consider doing some or all of the following while reading: *Read the preface. Examine the title for clues to content. Look for headings, notes, or other aids to understanding within the book. Check the publishing date for clues about context. Use index cards to create character files. Summarize each section of the book. Write specific questions about things you don't understand.*	• What is the author saying? What is going on? What is important? What supports the author's claims? • What is the next step? What might happen? Where could I find more information? • What conclusions can I draw? • How does this connect with my experiences? What is my opinion? How does this make me feel? • Is the work well-organized? Is the author's writing style readable? Is the author's argument effective? • Consider doing some or all of the following while reading: *Read the text that is bold or boxed. Look for notes or other aids to understanding. Look at the title for clues to the author's point of view. Use the topic sentences from each paragraph to create an outline. Look for facts and statistics that support the argument. Establish the author's purpose for writing the article. Summarize. Form questions to bring to class.*