

Guidelines for active reading

Previewing a written text

- Who is the author? What are the author's credentials?
- What is the author's purpose: To inform? To persuade? To call to action?
- Who is the expected audience?
- When was the text written? Where was it published?
- What kind of text is it: A book? A report? A scholarly article? A policy memo?

Annotating a written text

- What surprises, puzzles, or intrigues you about the text?
- What question does the text attempt to answer?
- What is the author's thesis, or central claim?
- What type of evidence does the author provide to support the thesis? How persuasive is this evidence?

Conversing with a written text

- What are the strengths and limitations of the text?
- Has the author drawn conclusions that you question? Do you have a different interpretation of the evidence?
- Does the text raise questions that it does not answer?
- Does the author consider opposing viewpoints and treat them fairly?

Asking the "So what?" question

- Why does the author's thesis need to be argued, explained, or explored? What's at stake?
- What has the author overlooked in presenting this thesis?

Guidelines for writing a summary

- In the first sentence, mention the title of the text, the name of the author, and the author's thesis. (See A1-c.)
- Maintain a neutral tone; be objective.
- As you present the author's ideas, use the third-person point of view and the present tense: *Taylor argues*. . . (If you are writing in APA style, see APA-3b.)
- Keep your focus on the text. Don't state the author's ideas as if they were your own.
- Put all or most of your summary in your own words; if you borrow a phrase or a sentence from the text, put it in quotation marks and give the page number in parentheses.
- Limit yourself to presenting the text's key points.
- Be concise; make every word count.

Hacker, Diana, and Nancy Sommers. "Guidelines for Active Reading."
A Writer's Reference with Exercises. 8th ed. Boston: Bedford/
 St. Martin's, 2015. 77. Print.