



READING TIPS for Comprehension and Speed

- Always ask: What is my **purpose** for reading? Why was this assigned? Is the purpose to absorb and memorize every detail or to understand the thesis, or to be able to discuss in class, or to write a response, or to gain background information before a lecture? Each assignment should not be read with the same approach.
- ◆ The basic steps to **active reading** are: get an overview of the entire assignment by pre-reading, read while taking margin notes, review by asking questions and summarizing.
- Take a **short break** after 30 to 45 minutes to stretch, get a drink, then return to read next section. See if you can summarize what you just read in a sentence or two.
- ◆ Practice **skimming** - Read introductory sentences and conclusion sentences, abstracts, and chapter summaries. Look for **italics and bold face** print. Turn headings into questions and read until you can answer the questions.
- ◆ **Marking methods**--underlining, checks, dots, lines and abbreviations in margins help you review and summarize what you've read. Then when it's time to review before a test, use your margin notes instead of re-reading the entire text.
- ◆ Old reading habits, learned at an early age, can slow you down. For most people, these include **re-reading** (regressing, starting again and again from the beginning) and **subvocalizing** (reading aloud or hearing the words in your imagination).

One way to break an old habit is to substitute a new one. Using a "**pacer**"(a 3x5 card, your index finger, a pen) can help you break the habits of regressing and subvocalizing. The pacer helps you stay on task, maintaining focus and moving your eyes across or down the page.

- To **increase speed**: Notice how often your eyes stop when reading one line of type. Practice by dividing the page into thirds by drawing vertical lines. Read one-third of a line, using your pencil to tap under each third. This will train you to begin reading by phrase, rather than word by word.

- ◆ Learning a new subject or discipline is like learning a new language. It requires building up a new vocabulary. Look up words you don't know, but remember your purpose - to be able to grasp the main idea and summarize.

- ◆ Speed and comprehension are two different things, but they go hand in hand. **NEVER read without comprehension**; it's a waste of time. If you lose focus, stop and return to where you dropped off. Then slow down and use active reading techniques.