

“The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go.”

Dr. Seuss, I Can Read With My Eyes Shut!



What Close Reading Actually Means

Mr. S's Reading Strategies

Mix & Match / Pick & Play

adapted from Cris Tovani, and from the Greece NY public schools website

Reading Strategies

How to Read Better

adapted from Cris Tovani "I read it, but I don't get it"

Make a connection

What is it: Good readers use what they know already to make a connection with what they are reading. So use memories, personal experiences, information about the subject, the author's style, and anything else to help you visualize, predict, ask questions, infer, stay focused, and remember what you have read. Sometimes recalling factual information can help you understand why an event is taking place. Remembering another story with a similar plot can help you anticipate what happens next in the story.

Try this

Ask yourself:

What does this remind me of?
Have I ever felt like this before?
Have I been somewhere like this before?
Do I know anything about this topic?

Check it out:

What do I know about this author?
What can I learn from the cover / back?
Can I predict what is going to happen next?
What can I learn from the author's style?

Make some predictions

What is it: Good readers anticipate what's coming next. By thinking about other things you've read, you can expect certain new things to happen next. Sometimes misreading words throws the prediction off. Instead of ignoring an incorrect prediction, good readers get back into the action by making a new guess. Predicting what will happen keeps you on track. It can help you stay interested in what you are reading, even if you are surprised by wrong guesses.

Try this

- (1) Ask yourself: "Based on what I have read, what do I think will happen next?"
- (2) Look for clues as to what might happen next and make a new prediction.
- (3) When you are wrong ask yourself if you missed something, or if this is just a surprise.
- (4) As you make predictions, you'll make mistakes, then you'll make better predictions ...

How to Read Better 2

adapted from Cris Tovani "I read it, but I don't get it"

Stop and Think

What is it: This one is so easy most students ignore it, yet it is one of the most useful reading strategies of all. Good readers stop to ponder what they have read. They connect newly acquired knowledge with information they already have. Stopping and thinking gives you time to figure out what you've read. It helps you ask yourself questions, to visualize what you have read, and to determine what is really important in the text.

Try this



Stop. Look. Listen. If what you have read does not make sense, stop reading. Go back and read it again, a bit slower. Look for words you don't know. Think about them from the context. What do you think they mean?

Use Caution Before moving on get some idea of what you just read. Try to visualize what is happening as if you were there.

Go ahead Try reading forward some more, but be ready to stop again ...

Ask Questions

What is it: Good readers ask themselves questions when they read. Curious about the answers, they continue reading. Sometimes these questions are answered directly in the text; Who? What? Where? When? Sometimes, answers to readers' questions aren't found in the text. These are the kinds of questions that don't always have simple answers. How? Why? In these cases, you are forced to go beyond the words to find the answer, either by drawing an inference or by going to another source.

Try this

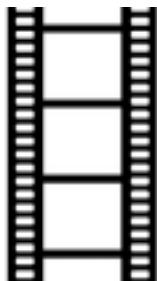
Ask yourself	Who / What / Where / When questions to help you remember what is happening in the reading. When you get stuck, ask these questions first.
Dig deeper	Ask why? Why is this happening? Why is the author telling me this? Why does this matter to me? Why is the teacher asking me to read this?
Write 'em out	Write some of your questions down to share in class, or to ask others. Learning is often more about asking the right questions, not finding the one and only right answer.

How to Read Better 3

adapted from Cris Tovani "I read it, but I don't get it"

Visualize it

What is it: When they get stuck, good readers consciously create images in their heads to help them make sense of what the words are saying. They use movies, television, and life to help them picture what is happening. When you can visualize what is happening, you understand it better. Go ahead. Make a video in your head. If you can “see it”, you can understand it.



Try this

Look for images Look again at the imagery used in this text. Picture the images as you read. Make a mental movie of the scene as you keep reading. What does it look like, smell like, feel like?

Put yourself in it Look for ways you can put yourself in the story and ask yourself what it is like to really be there.

Keep rolling Don't worry if your image is not perfect. Just keep rolling the images and watching what unfolds as you read.

Look for Patterns

What is it: Different writing styles have their own patterns. A mystery story works differently from a science text book. Recognizing how a text is organized can help you locate information more quickly. Some struggling readers believe that they have to read everything from cover to cover. Good readers look at how a text is organized to figure out where information is found. When you get stuck, you can stop and think how the text is organized and see whether there is something in the pattern that will help you understand the text better.



Try this

Sherlock it

Look for clues to what is happening. If it is a text book look at the charts, table of contents, glossary in the back. If it's a mystery, look at chapter titles for clues. Newspaper articles put the most important info in the first couple of paragraphs, and the least important info comes last. Skip a section if you need to and see what comes next. Maybe what's next will help you understand the part where you are stuck.

How to Read Better 4

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Change your Rate

What is it: Good readers don't read everything fast. They adjust their rate to meet the demands of the task. Many students try to read textbooks at the same rate that they read their favorite magazine. Good readers slow down when something is difficult or unfamiliar. They realize that in order to construct meaning, their rate must decrease. They also know that it's okay to read faster when something is familiar or boring. Reading faster sometimes forces the brain to stay engaged. Good readers select a rate based on the difficulty of the material, their purpose in reading it, and their familiarity with the topic.

Try this

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Start here | Recognize that you are just looking at words and not understanding what you are reading while doing your homework assignment. |
| Have fun | Pick something you like to read: a magazine, comic book, whatever. Read it for a minute or two and then ask yourself how fast you read each word. |
| Go back | Read the homework slower. Simple right? But it's easy to forget. Slow down when something gets hard instead of floating over all the words. |

Reread ... Part of it

What is it: Since this is the one strategy that most readers know automatically, it needs little explaining. Good readers know they don't have to reread everything. Sometimes rereading a portion of the text – a sentence, or even just a word – can help you understand. Struggling readers tend to think that rereading means they have reread everything again, and again, and ...

Try this

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| Start here | Recognize you are stuck, or that you are just floating over the words. |
| Next | Ask yourself where you got lost. |
| Go back a bit | Reread part of the last page, skip parts you understand, read the parts where you started to get stuck. |
| Read on | Try reading on and see if it makes any more sense than before |
| Repeat | As needed. With practice you can pick up clues and move ahead easier. |

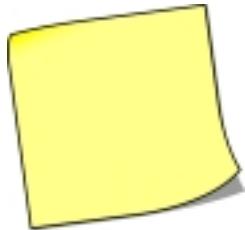
How to Read Better 5

adapted from the Greece NY Public Schools website

Sticky Notes

What is it: When you get stuck, try sticky notes! Good readers give themselves reminders about what they found important (surprising or unfamiliar) as they read. By making short notes as you read you have reminders you can go back to if you find something you need to ask about, a word you need to learn, or a sentence that is worth using in your next discussion or paper. Just slowing down enough to make a note will help you understand what you are reading.

Try this



Use 'em Keep sticky notes nearby as you read. Write yourself a reminder about what you just read and stick it to the page. Put the page number on the sticky in case it falls off the page later. Use them for:

something you want to share
something you don't understand
your favorite part

an unfamiliar word
a prediction you are making
a quote that is important

Highlighting

What is it: Highlighting is an art, but your purpose is not to turn a text into an art work, filled with all kinds of splashes of color. Less is more. Good readers know that less highlighting on a page makes the words you have highlighted stand out more. The starting point is to ask yourself why you are reading a text. Highlight the things that help you fulfill that purpose. By highlighting you have to take time to think about what you are reading, and then choose what is important.

Try this

- (1) This is not a contest to see how much you can highlight. Highlight only main ideas.
- (2) Don't highlight as you read. Highlight something after you finish reading a paragraph.
- (3) Ask yourself what your purpose is. Are you looking for a supporting quote, unfamiliar words, an example of something the writer has said?
Highlight on purpose ... just what you need, no more.
- (4) Add a sticky note if you need to remember why you are highlighting a specific text or want to add a reminder ...



How to Read Better 6

adapted from the Greece NY Public Schools website

Annotating

What is it: When the going gets tough good readers go to the text with questions. Keeping track of these questions is made possible through annotating a text. By annotating you write down your questions next to a text, underline important passages, and place small symbols next to the text for where you have questions, agree or disagree, or have something you want to add.

Try this:
But not in your school books! Or library books!

See Mr. S's packet on Annotating Texts for more detailed help with this reading strategy.

2 Column Notebook

What is it: Good readers interact with what they are reading, as they are reading it, just as people in a movie theater interact with what they are seeing. Instead of saying “Oooh and Aahhh” or eating popcorn like at the movies, a good reader interacts with a text by making connections between what is read and what they have experienced before, or what they can imagine about the reading. You can ask yourself what ideas or reactions come quickly to mind as you read. You can train yourself to interact with what you are reading by using a graphic organizer or just by drawing a line down the middle of a piece of paper. Give it a try. Feel free to have popcorn too.

Try this

Set it up Draw a line down the middle of a piece of notebook paper. On the left side write a word or phrase from your reading (and a page number), On the right side, write your reaction to what you have read. Keep it short and sweet. Try using these starters:

disagree or agree and say why	draw a graphic of it	write down your images
make a prediction	paraphrase the reading	ask why or how or what
make a connection between the reading and an experience in your own life		
make a connection between this reading and a movie, TV show, song lyric, or other reading		

How to Read Better 7

adapted from the Greece NY Public Schools website

Q-A-R

What is it: QAR stands for Question, Answer Relationships. This system helps you know what kinds of questions to ask and where to find answers as you read. Good readers know that not every question is answered directly in a text. Sometimes you have to put the clues together from different parts of the text, and sometimes you have to make a prediction or inference (guess). With QAR you can learn the four basic kinds of questions about a text.

Try this

Right there questions These questions have answers right in the text. They often start with, “According to the passage ...” or “How many?” or “Who is?”

Think and search questions This asks you to use info from two or more places in the text to figure out how to answer. Questions begin with “What caused ...” or “The main ideas are ...” or “Compare and contrast ...”

Author and you questions Here you have to think about what you have read and come up with your own answers. The text in front of you is a springboard to help you jump into your own answers. Your answers must be connected to the text but are more personal.

On my own questions “In your experience ...” or “In your opinion ...” or “Thinking about your own experiences, you ...” These questions are not usually included on tests because they ask you more for your opinions than about the text itself.

Apply it to your life

What is it: Good readers know to look for how what they are reading connects with their life. They ask themselves, “How can I use this information?” Notice that’s a better strategy than asking yourself, “Why do I have to read this stuff?” Finding a connection with what you are reading, and looking for ways to use it can help you stay interested and engaged.

Try this

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|------------|---|
| Ask | Can I make use of this information in any way?
How is this relevant to my life? (asked as a question, not said as a complaint)
Can I use this info in any other situations?
What does this remind me of in my life / experiences / memories?
How does this help me understand the world better? |
|------------|---|