

Becoming an Active Reader

- 1) Prepare for your readings by referring to any lecture, class notes, or outside source material to gain an overview of your topic.
- 2) If the language is difficult to understand do not hesitate to look words up in a dictionary.
- 3) Scan the contents of the text (chapter title, headings, subheadings) as it will give you an overview of the information that will be covered.
- 4) Study the visuals (maps, charts, and other graphic materials) as they are placed in the chapter for a reason.
- 5) Look at clues that signal emphasis, such as words that are:
 - a. **Boldface**: often signals a textbook heading and subheading.
 - b. *Italics*: places emphasis on a word or phrase.
 - c. Underlining: performs the same functions as either of the above
 - Bullets: set off items in a list.
- 6) Formulate questions as you read. Ask questions like:
 - a. What is the author saying?
 - b. How can I use this information?
 - c. Does this agree or disagree with other readings?
 - d. How does this information relate to my experience?
- 7) Make notes from reading. Taking notes not only provides a summary for quick recall of information later, but also forces you to organize information and check your understanding at the time of reading.
 - a. Try to be as concise as possible, putting information in **your own words**. If you are copying large slabs of information directly you are unlikely to be understanding the material.
 - b. Note the author's use of **bold**, *italics*, or HEAVY PRINT.
 - c. Pay attention to the words or phrases that indicate major points within the sections.
- 8) Reflect and review the information you have read. Go back to the questions you have developed during your reading and try to answer them, compare or make categories of information, and relate one part of the reading with another.