

Reading to Write

Dedicating yourself to a close and thoughtful reading of what you've been assigned often makes writing an analysis paper much easier when the time comes to demonstrate what you've learned. Try the following strategies to make the process a little easier:

Before you start reading

- Don't just read the numbered pages of the book – look at the cover, title, preface, introduction, epilogue, appendix, and footnotes
- Identify the genre, source of publication, and the author's intended audience
- Research the author
- Consider why the reading was assigned
- Make a reading schedule
- Write down reactions and questions as you read
- Read with a friend
- Check in with your professor to discuss the assignment
- Think about what the author hasn't included in the text

As you read

- Write brief responses to each section of text
- Make notes in the book or on sheets of paper
- Draw pictures, maps, and diagrams to help yourself understand patterns, relationships, and concepts

After you're finished reading

- Respond to the book as a whole
- Reread the parts you don't understand
- Make a writing schedule
- Plan a research strategy
- Write a rough draft that you have time to revise
- Get feedback from as many people as possible before you're ready to turn in your final draft
- Proofread and spell-check the paper one final time before delivering it to your professor
- When you get the paper back, pay attention to the instructor's comments and use them as a baseline for other writing you turn in over the course of a semester