

Active Reading Skills

Active reading is smart reading. When you read actively, you don't just let your eyes roll across the text and turn the page when you get to the bottom. When you read actively, you pause, reflect, ask yourself questions, and use many skills that help you understand what you read. Active reading is a part of active learning. The more you refer to the chart, the more these active reading strategies will become a natural part of the way you read.

Skill/Strategy

What Is It?	Why It's Important	How to Do It
Preview Previewing is looking over a selection before you read.	Previewing lets you begin to see what you already know and what you'll need to know. It helps you set a purpose for reading.	Look at the title, illustrations, headings, captions, and graphics. Look at how ideas are organized. Ask questions about the text.
Predict Predicting is taking an educated guess about what will happen in a selection.	Predicting gives you a reason to read. You want to find out if your prediction is verified in the selection. As you read, adjust or change your prediction if it doesn't fit what you learn.	Guess at what will be included in the text by combining what you already know about an author or subject with what you learned in your preview.

What Is It?	Why It's Important	How to Do It
<p>Activate Prior Knowledge</p> <p>You have knowledge from your own experiences and from what you have read or learned in the past. That can help you understand what you are reading. When you activate this prior knowledge, you tap into it.</p>	<p>Activating prior knowledge draws on your own resources and helps you get the "I can do this" feeling. It also helps you connect new ideas and information to what you already know.</p>	<p>Pause and recall your knowledge and feelings about a topic. Ask yourself questions such as these: How does this fit my understanding? Does it agree with what I know? What part of this do I recognize?</p>
<p>Question</p> <p>Questioning is asking yourself whether information in a selection is important. Questioning is also regularly asking yourself whether you've understood what you've read.</p>	<p>When you ask questions as you read, you're reading strategically. As you answer your questions, you're making sure that you'll get the main ideas of a text.</p>	<p>Have a running conversation with yourself as you read. Keep asking questions such as these: Is this idea important? Why? Do I understand what this is about? Might this information be on a test later?</p>
<p>Visualize</p> <p>Visualizing is picturing a writer's ideas or descriptions in your mind's eye.</p>	<p>Visualizing is one of the best ways to understand and remember information in fiction, nonfiction, and informational text.</p>	<p>Carefully read how a writer describes a person, place, or thing. Ask yourself questions such as these: What would this look like? Can I see how these steps or events proceed?</p>
<p>Monitor Comprehension</p> <p>Monitoring your comprehension means thinking about whether you're understanding what you're reading.</p>	<p>The whole point of reading is to understand a piece of text. When you don't understand a selection, you're not really reading it.</p>	<p>Keep asking yourself questions about main ideas, people, and events. When you can't answer a question, review, read more slowly, or ask someone to help you.</p>

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<p>Respond</p> <p>Responding is telling what you like, dislike, find surprising, or find interesting in a selection.</p>	<p>When you react in a personal way to what you read, you'll enjoy a selection more and remember it better.</p>	<p>As you read, think about how you feel about the information or ideas in a selection. What's your reaction? Are you astonished? Pleased? Disgusted? Motivated to do something? What grabs your attention as you read?</p>
<p>Connect</p> <p>Connecting means linking what you read to events in your own life, to contemporary issues, or to other selections you've read.</p>	<p>You'll get into your reading and recall information and ideas better by connecting events, emotions, ideas, and characters to your own life and world.</p>	<p>Ask yourself questions such as these: Do I know someone like this? Have I ever felt this way? How is this like something I've heard about? What else have I read that is like this selection?</p>
<p>Review</p> <p>Reviewing is going back over what you've read to remember what's important and to organize ideas so you'll recall them later.</p>	<p>Reviewing is especially important when you have new ideas and a lot of information to remember.</p>	<p>Filling in a graphic organizer, such as a chart or a diagram, as you read helps you organize information. These study aids will help you review later.</p>
<p>Interpret</p> <p>Interpreting is when you use your own understanding of the world to decide what the events or ideas in a selection mean.</p>	<p>Every reader constructs meaning on the basis of what he or she understands about the world. Finding meaning as you read is all about you interacting with the text.</p>	<p>Think about what you already know about yourself and the world. Ask yourself questions such as these: What is the author really trying to say here? What larger idea might these events be about?</p>

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<p>Analyze</p> <p>Analyzing is looking at separate parts of a selection in order to understand the entire selection.</p>	<p>Analyzing helps you look critically at a piece of writing. When you analyze a selection, you'll discover its theme or message, and you'll learn the author's purpose for writing. Your analysis becomes a tool for your evaluation of the text.</p>	<p>To analyze any piece of writing, look carefully at its parts. Where does the introduction end? Find the parts that make up the middle. Recognize the ending. Identify the main idea, and supporting details. Examine each step in a process or each event that leads to an outcome.</p>
<p>Evaluate</p> <p>Evaluating is making a judgment or forming an opinion about something you read. Is the text reliable? Accurate? Persuasive? The answers to such questions are examples of judgments.</p>	<p>Evaluating helps you become a wise reader. For example, when you judge whether an author is qualified to speak about a topic or whether the author's points make sense, you can avoid being misled by what you read.</p>	<p>As you read, ask yourself questions such as these: Is this realistic and believable? Is this author qualified to write on this subject? Is this author biased? Does this author present opinions as facts?</p>