



SMCHS Guide to Active Reading



Reading is an **active** process. It takes more than just decoding words to really understand what you read.

Use these tips to boost your reading comprehension.

- 1. Annotate** Record your reactions to and questions directly in the margins of the book. Highlight significant passages.
- 2. Reread** Reread passages that seem difficult.
- 3. Keep a journal or reading log** Make notes about each chapter on a piece of paper. Include quotes and your feelings about the quote.
- 4. Consult a Dictionary** Look up words you do not know. Write a synonym in the margin.
- 5. Preview** Learn about the book *before* you read it. Read the Introduction, Preface, dust jacket, front and back covers, or review of the book on the Internet or an analysis in reference books such as the Gale Series in the library.
- 6. Outline** List the main idea of each chapter or section to discover how the book is organized.
- 7. Summarize** Write a passage that presents the main idea of the chapter or book.
- 8. Paraphrase** Use your own words to restate what you have read.
- 9. Question** Ask yourself questions and answer those questions as you read.
"Why is a character secretive?" "I wonder why it rains so much."
- 10. Visualize** Try to imagine the sights, sounds, smells, feelings, and tastes in book.
- 11. Predict** Try to anticipate what is likely to happen.
- 12. Connect** Think of other things you've already read that are similar to the text you are reading; Try to think of events in your life or feelings that you've had that are similar to the ones in the text you are reading.
- 13. Respond** Consider how the text makes you feel.
- 14. Contextualize** Place the work in an appropriate historical and cultural context. What was going on in the world when the book was written/published?
- 15. Reflect** What do your responses to the work reveal about your own attitudes?
- 16. Explore Language** Examine how style (diction, detail, imagery, symbol, figurative language) affects the meaning of the work.

17. **Look for patterns**

Are there clues about what the work values/disregards? Do characters or plot seem to be reinforcing an idea or repeating in some way?

18. **Compare and Contrast**

Does the work seem like any other you've read?