

## Annotation Strategy Using T.I.P.S. +

*You can use the TIPS+ Reading Strategy to help you annotate a text! Write your annotations in the margins or on "post-it" notes.*

*What is the topic of the article?*

### Tips for Active Reading

Topic: Some strategies for reading

*What is the main idea of the article?*

One of the most exasperating experiences of many college students is failure to understand what they read. Many students begin their college work, in fact, with a great distrust in their own ability to read college-level assignments and to perform such tasks successfully. Clearly, the ability to master reading is an essential skill critical to the success of each student. Here are a few proven strategies for mastering the content of academic reading. Readers who practice these tips create a retrieval system of information, but more importantly, they facilitate both short-term as well as long-term memory that will serve them well throughout their college career and throughout their lives in every arena that requires a thorough mastery of reading.

Main Idea: These reading strategies help readers understand texts better and remember information longer.

*What is the main point in this paragraph?*

Make use of your attention span--whatever it is! All of us have experienced the loss of concentration on what we read and our mind beginning to drift. Most of us feel guilty when we discover that we're wandering away from the page. Nevertheless, we can use that frustration to our benefit as readers. As you prepare to begin a reading assignment, step back and watch yourself reading the assignment. Make a mental note about where it was in your text where you caught yourself beginning to drift. Then ask yourself, "Is this where I interrupt the reading? Is this where I make the phone call, run the errand, raid the refrigerator?" Go ahead! Give in to the diversion, whatever it might be, but when you return to the reading, come back to it with a commitment to reading with attention the same length of passage before you give yourself permission to drift again. What you will find through this conscious effort is your attention span will increase little by little.

Point: Pay attention to your attention span as you read.

Support: "Watch yourself" read; note where you interrupted your reading. Take a break and come back prepared.

*What is the main point in this paragraph?*

Concentrate on paragraphs. For many of us, the idea of having to master the content of a whole book is simply overwhelming. We don't even know where to begin without specific assignments or study questions. The fact is, however, that most of us can master such massive amounts of information if we realize that the basic unit of written communication is not the book, not even a

Point: Understand the ideas in each paragraph.

Support: Understanding each paragraph leads to understanding the whole text.

chapter, but a simple paragraph! Most books are nothing more than a pile of paragraphs, each one strung together to the next and so on. If we can master the content of one, we can master the content of all of them. The problem ceases to be an "issue of the head" as much as an "issue of the heart"!

Read for the main idea of each paragraph. As you read each paragraph of a chapter, pause after each and ask yourself, "What did I just read? What was this paragraph about?" Then, fill in the blank: "This paragraph is about \_\_\_\_." What you place in your mental blank should be a short phrase, preferably framed in your own words.

Annotate the point in the margin or on a "post-it" note beside each paragraph. In a few words, write the main idea beside each paragraph. If you are using a highlighter, make sure to paraphrase what you have highlighted, so you are not simply highlighting random ideas in the text. Excessive and purpose-less highlighting does not help active reading.

You should also personalize a strategy for marking the text. Create a consistent pattern of markings, underlining only certain kinds of information, bracketing other, circling only key words or concepts. The key is to be consistent so that every time you scan a page, the markings themselves will signal a kind of meaning.

*(Adapted from: [distancelearningassociates.com/ENGL\\_1301\\_Exercises/Tips for Active Reading.htm](http://distancelearningassociates.com/ENGL_1301_Exercises/Tips_for_Active_Reading.htm))*

*What is the main point in this paragraph?*

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Point: Look for the main idea of each paragraph.

Support: Ask myself, "What did I just read?"

Point: Write down the main points in the margins or on "post-it" notes.

Point: Make my markings fit my style.

Support: Keep them consistent.

Write a summary of the article (*one to two paragraphs for short articles*).

The article, "Strategies for Active Reading," reveals strategies that help readers understand texts better and remember information longer. As you read, pay attention to your attention span. Watch yourself read and note where you interrupted your reading. Think about why you stopped reading and then take a break and come back prepared. Another good strategy for active reading is to understand and focus on the ideas in each paragraph. Understanding each paragraph leads to understanding the whole text. To help understand each paragraph, active readers look for the main idea of each paragraph. After you read each paragraph, ask yourself, "What did I just read?" Next, write down the main points in the margins or on "post-it" notes. To help you remember the information, make your markings fit your style and keep them consistent. These are great steps to help improve active reading.