



UCR Learning Center

AT209 - A free service for all UCR students

Improving Comprehension

Sometimes you will find yourself having difficulty comprehending a certain reading and becoming frustrated. What can you do?

Find the problem you are having in the left column. Then read through the strategy suggestions on the right side and try them until you find a solution that work for you.

COMPREHENSION STRATEGIES

Problems	Strategies
Having difficulty concentrating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take frequent breaks 2. Read difficult material when your mind is fresh and alert. 3. Make questions out of headings and read to answer the questions. 4. Find a quieter place to study. 5. Stop and write down distracting thoughts. 6. Stand or walk while reading.
Words are difficult or unfamiliar	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use context clues. 2. Analyze word parts—look for Latin or Greek roots that will give meaning for the word. 3. Skim through the material before reading. Mark and look up meanings of difficult words. Jot meanings in the margin. 4. Use glossary or margin definitions if available.
Sentences are long or confusing; ideas are hard to understand	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read aloud. 2. Rephrase or explain each sentence or paragraph in your own words. 3. Break long sections into shorter parts. 4. Take notes. 5. Locate a more basic text that explains ideas in simpler form or search the internet for simple explanations. 6. Study with a classmate, discuss difficult ideas.
Ideas are new and unfamiliar; you have little or no knowledge about the topic, but the writer assumes you do	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make sure you didn't miss or skip introductory information. 2. Get background information by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Referring to an earlier section or chapter in the book. b. Referring to an encyclopedia c. Referring to a more basic text d. Referring to the internet
The material seems disorganized or poorly organized or there seems to be no organization	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read the Table of Contents—it's an outline of the book and each chapter. 2. Pay more attention to headings. 3. Read the summary, if available. 4. Try to discover organization by outlining or drawing a concept map as you read.