

TIPS FOR DIFFICULT READINGS

Sometimes ordinary reading methods don't work. Every student gets stuck in a tough reading assignment sooner or later. Try the following tips to help you get through the reading.

REPETITION: Difficult material is often easier to comprehend the second time through. If you find that you have read an assignment and are completely lost, put it away for a while. Get some sleep, or go to a movie. Your mind will process the information while you relax. Then, when you re-read the assignment, look at it with a fresh approach.

ASK THE INSTRUCTOR: Make an appointment or see the instructor during office hours. Try to be specific with your questions, pointing out the particular paragraphs that are giving you problems.

READ OUT LOUD: Be an active reader. Read the passage aloud, putting expression into your voice, emphasizing certain words. Sometimes hearing the words makes them more understandable. Be creative--imagine you are giving a lecture.

KEY WORDS: If you are stuck on a paragraph, try reading the sentences without the adjectives and adverbs—look at important words, nouns and verbs.

REVIEW THE MATERIAL: After each paragraph, stop and explain the material to yourself, in your own words—or write a short summary in the margin.

USE ANOTHER TEXT: Find another textbook on the subject—the library is always a good place to search. If the material is explained in a slightly different way, you may find it easier to understand.

SEE A TUTOR: Check out THINK TANK. Tutors can give you a fresh perspective on the material. If you cannot locate a tutor in this subject, try starting a study group with other class members.

CHANGE POSITION: The more actively involved you are in reading, the more focused you will be. Try standing when you read, especially when you get mired down by a really difficult passage and decide to read out loud. Sometimes, standing or pacing can help with concentration.

SET A PURPOSE: Before you start reading a book or scholarly article, think about a goal you want to accomplish. Having a purpose or goal while you read can lead to more effective, efficient reading.