

# READING TIPS

Reading is a key life skill; almost every daily activity requires reading. In college, constructing meaning from text will be one of the tasks most frequently required in classes. The following are suggestions to remember when reading textbooks, conducting research, reading literature or preparing for tests.

## LOOK FOR RELATIONSHIPS

When reading, look for the logical relationships the writer built into the passage. Consider the following:

- The sentences in a paragraph often relate to the main idea and to each other by
  - a. Example
  - b. Explanation
  - c. Comparison-Contrast
- Some words are guideposts that help you to understand relationships between sentences in a paragraph.
  - a. Some words continue or further the thought: *and, also, furthermore, in addition, moreover, besides.*
  - b. Some words change the direction of the thought: *but, yet, on the contrary, in spite of, nevertheless.*
  - c. Some words illustrate and/or explain a thought: *[this is so] because, the reason for this is.*
  - d. Some words show comparison or contrast: *by comparison, on the contrary, on the other hand.*
- Punctuation marks can help you to understand relationships within a sentence or paragraph.
  - a. Commas, dashes and parentheses set off background or explanatory information.
  - b. Colons introduce explanations or enumerations.

**EXAMPLE:** *Commas, colons, dashes and parentheses are often used to signal definitions that are useful in many vocabulary in context questions.*
  - c. Question marks tell you to look for an answer.
- In some cases, identifying the role a word plays in the sentence (noun, verb, adjective, adverb) will help you confirm the meaning of vocabulary words in context.
- Pronouns are used to substitute for nouns, and they often point to a word previously used in the passage. These pronouns are called referents because they **refer to** a word or words that are more specific. To better understand passages, make sure you can identify the specific word or words to which a pronoun referent refers.

## REMEMBER WHAT YOU READ

Have a specific purpose when you read. This will help you to:

1. *Associate:* relate ideas to each other.
2. *Visualize:* try to see pictures in your mind as you read.
3. *Concentrate:* having a specific purpose, associating, and visualizing will help you to do this.
4. *Repeat:* keep telling yourself important points and associate details to these points.

## FIND THE MAIN IDEA

- The main idea of a paragraph is often – but not always – contained in the first or last sentence of the paragraph.
- To find the main idea of any paragraph, ask three questions about the paragraph:
  - a. Who or what is the paragraph about?
  - b. What aspects of the who or what is the author concerned with?
  - c. What does the author want readers to understand about who or what the writing focuses on?