

TIPS FOR READING DIFFICULT MATERIALS

- ▶ Decide what's a manageable section of the text (part of a chapter, a few pages) to read during a study period.
- ▶ Begin with the first two steps in the SQ4R method—Scan your selection and ask Questions. Also check the Index to find related information.
- ▶ After scanning and making a list of questions, look for summary statements in the opening and closing paragraphs of the selection.
- ▶ While reading, make a vocabulary list of all words you don't know. Look them up; Put them on flash cards. Use them while reading the rest of the material.
- ▶ Scan your selection to grasp the main ideas before trying to master the specifics. Then, if necessary, read carefully for specific content.
- ▶ As you read, check off (with a light pencil mark) each paragraph you *completely* understand. Then, if your mind wanders, you can quickly recover your place—by going back to the last check mark.
- ▶ Don't read just words—read for *ideas*. Stop at the end of each paragraph and main section and ask yourself what ideas were presented in that section. Jot them down, then go back and check to see if you were right.

PROCESS FOR WRITING A RESEARCH PAPER

1. Get Started.
 - Make sure you understand the assignment.
 - Set deadlines for each step of the process.
 - Brainstorm possible topics—ask yourself why a topic interests you and what you hope to learn.
2. Choose a topic and decide on a focus.
- 3. Do the research.
 - Check the library and the Internet. Interview experts.
 - Read and look for clues to other materials.
 - Take notes and/or photocopy important information.
4. Plan the paper.
 - Analyze and organize your information.
 - Put similar ideas together. Is there a pattern? Can you find a central theme? (If not, is your topic too broad?)
 - Write a thesis statement.
 - Weed out irrelevant information and, if necessary, do more research to fill in any gaps.
 - Prepare an outline.
5. Write a rough draft.
6. Wait a day or two.
7. Edit.
 - Check content and writing style.
 - Check for technical errors (proofread).
8. Compile footnotes and bibliography.
9. Assemble the paper.