

Strategies for a Reading Frame of Mind

Warning signs that you are not in a Reading Frame of Mind:

- You're not interacting with the text.
- The camera providing visuals in your head has shut off.
- Your mind is wondering to other topics.
- You can't remember what you just read.
- The clarifying questions you're asking aren't being answered.
- You're re-encountering a character who's been in the text before but you don't remember them.

If you're not in the right frame of mind for reading, do something about it. Oftentimes, reading issues are actually concentration issues. You must first ask yourself questions regarding your reading environment:

- 1) Have I chosen a place to read that will enable me to fully concentrate on the reading task at hand?
- 2) Have I set aside enough time to give this reading the attention it deserves?
- 3) Have I cleared my mind of other issues and turned to the "reading" channel of my brain?

Once you've made the necessary changes to your reading environment, here are some strategies you can use to keep your mind in the right frame of mind for reading—or bring it back when it gets lost.

- **Reread:** Monitor your reading so that you are aware of the exact location in the text where your understanding broke down. When confusion arises, reread the text where your comprehension faltered. Slow down your reading speed and carefully consider what the author is saying.
- **Ask questions and try to answer them:** Get in the habit of constantly asking—1) questions that simply clarify about a character, event or setting (who, what, when, where) and 2) questions that ponder (why and how). For example, questions about why characters do certain things or why the author made specific choices. Be sure to try your best to answer these questions as you read.
- **Stop and think/write/retell what you've already read:** When you encounter a confusing part of the text, stop and reconsider what's happened in the text/chapter up to that point. Think about it, write it down, or retell it aloud (a quick summary). Reviewing what you know already might provide extra insight into the problem area of the text and can get your mind back on track.
- **Adjust your reading rate:** Slow down or speed up the pace of your reading based on the importance of the section of text you're reading. Slow down when you encounter something difficult or unfamiliar. Speed up when something is familiar.
- **Visualize:** Create a "movie in your head" of what's going on in the text.
- **Connections:** Connect the text to your life, other texts, and the world around you.
- **Predictions:** As you encounter key information, predict what that hints will occur later. If it turns out to be true, note the selection of text earlier that inferred it. If it ends up wrong, don't ignore it. Go back and make a new guess—it's a chance to find information you may have missed.
- **Notice Patterns in Structure:** Once you are familiar with different types and styles of writing—newspaper articles, editorials, textbook chapters, or even different genres of novels, you can start to predict where the most important information is located.
- **Figure out the meanings of words you don't know:** When you come across words you don't know, figure out what they mean. Use context clues (take what you do understand in the sentence and predict when you think the word means). Look up the definition of the word and note it so that you can remember what it means.