

STRATEGIES FOR READING IN FINE ARTS

Reading for art courses can be challenging because the material can be abstract, detailed, and sometimes quite obscure in meaning.

ART READING OFTEN REQUIRES YOU TO DO THE FOLLOWING TYPES OF TASKS:

- Determine the perspective of an artist or critic
- Understand theoretical concepts and relate them to the discussion of a particular art work
- Understand the historical context of a particular artist
- Keep track of your own personal reactions to the discussion or to illustrations included in the text

1. BEFORE YOU BEGIN, IDENTIFY YOUR PURPOSE FOR READING:

- Why do you need to read this?
 - Is it background?
 - Is it to be discussed in class?
 - Is it for a term paper?
- What do you already know about this topic?
 - brainstorm what you know
 - think about what you don't know and want to find out

2. CHOOSE YOUR READING APPROACH DEPENDING ON YOUR PURPOSE:

- **FOR BACKGROUND READING ON A TOPIC, GO FOR GENERAL POINTS**
 - Don't get too caught up in details.
- **FOR ADVANCE READING OF AN ARTICLE TO BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS—GET AN OVERVIEW OF WHAT IT SAYS**
 - Read the introduction and conclusion
 - Read the first sentence of each paragraph to see how the topic/discussion develops.
 - Make very brief notes or draw a map of the ideas.
 - Think about your own reactions to the topic or questions about the topic --make a note of these to refer to in class
 - Study the illustrations and note down your own personal observations
 - Don't worry if you don't understand everything—class discussion should help
- **FOR A RESEARCH PAPER-- FIGURE OUT WHAT THE CHAPTER/ARTICLE SAYS GENERALLY, AND WHETHER IT WILL BE USEFUL TO YOU**
 - Use the approach above to get an overview of the text
 - Make a brief note of what it says (one or two key phrases on a post-it note) before you move on

topic:
main aspects discussed :
useful to your paper? yes/no
where does it lead you to next?