**Active Reading**

In order to closely read a complex text, it is necessary that students directly, or actively, engage with that text. Passive reading, where a student’s goal is simply to get to the end of the reading, has little to no value in an academic context.

Active reading requires students to read with pencil in hand, dialoguing with the text and its author, seeking to develop a closer understanding of the text’s individual words and their collective meaning and purpose. When students write active reading notes in the margins of a text (not in textbooks, please), they produce a written record of their experience with the text, which will serve as a valuable resource as they move forward.

**Active Reading Basics:**

* ***Clarify and define unfamiliar vocabulary words, making sure the definition fits the context in which the word is used in the document.***
* ***Process the text, summarizing and translating it into language***

***easily understood. This may need to happen word-by-word, sentence-by-sentence and/or section-by-section.***

* ***Analyze key words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs, breaking down the important elements and making meaningful connections.***
* ***Identify methods of organization and changes within the text.***
* ***Note writing techniques, literary elements and tone used by the author.***
* ***Ask and answer questions.***
* ***Approach the text like a detective, noting clues and seeking***

***logical conclusions.***

* ***Make connections within and outside of the text.***

\* Active reading notes will often be referenced as *annotations.*

\*\* Remember – this is a dialogue, so you must express your thinking in meaningful words, not just underlining or highlighting; though, using symbols, boxes, circles, underlining, bullets and short sentence fragments can help express your side of that dialogue. The more you put into actively reading a text, the more you will get out – guaranteed*.*